

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 42

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Black Rock Temporary Use		
Date of Meeting:	Thursday 15th November 2012		
Report of:	Interim Lead Cultural Services		
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Ward(s) affected:	Rottingdean Coastal		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 In July of this year the Policy & Resources Committee agreed the recommendation of the Black Rock Project Board to reject revised proposals submitted by Brighton Arena Limited relating to the Black Rock site.
- 1.2 It also agreed that the site should be subject to a fresh procurement and re-marketing exercise and that the future strategy for the re-marketing of the site should be worked up in conjunction with the cross party Project Board, including future possible uses on the site (including an ice rink) being feasibility tested and subject to soft market testing, prior to the council returning to the market.
- 1.3 It was further agreed that in the interim period, the site should be marketed forthwith for a temporary use to ensure that the overall appearance of the site can be improved and the site can be used productively until the outcome of a full procurement exercise is known.
- 1.4 It was also agreed that any temporary use of the site would be agreed by the Economic Development & Culture Committee, taking into account the recommendations of the Project Board.
- 1.5 This report seeks approval to grant Landlord's consent, subject to final Lease arrangements being determined, subject to Planning consent, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation to the Head of Property and Design, with the Seafront Estates Surveyor acting in consultation with the Seafront Development Manager and the Head of Legal Services.
- 1.6 This report details the process that officers have undertaken to market this site for a temporary use and selection process which has resulted in the preferred operator being chosen.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Economic Development & Culture Committee agree to grant Landlord's consent for the temporary 3 year letting to Brighton Sand Sculpture Festival.
- 2.2 That the Economic Development & Culture Committee agree for final Lease arrangements to be determined, subject to Planning consent, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation to the Head of Property and Design, with the Seafront Estates Surveyor acting in consultation with the Seafront Development Manager and the Head of Legal Services.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

- 3.1 The Black Rock site was marketed in early September 2012 and advertisements were placed in the Estates Gazette, Leisure Opportunities, The Argus, the council website and seafront notice boards). The marketing period lasted 4 weeks with a closing date of 1st October.
- 3.2 Letting particulars for the site were sent to over one hundred businesses, including existing seafront tenants.
- 3.3 The council received 4 proposals in total. Two of these proposals were for a mixed retail, art and leisure making use of sea containers for the infrastructure. One proposal was for a drive-in cinema and the other for a sand sculpture festival park.
- 3.4 The Black Rock Project Board met to consider the proposals on 4th October 2012. At the meeting all the proposals were assessed using a scoring matrix. The criteria included: sustainable business case; track record; seasonality; destination attraction; demand; environmental impact and planning considerations. One of the sea container proposals was discounted early on in the assessment due to the requirement from the operator for a 5 year minimum Lease.
- 3.5 As a result of the assessment process the proposal which scored most highly was the Brighton Sand Sculpture Festival (see the appendix). Members of the Project Board felt that the operator had a proven track record having successfully operated in another seaside resort for 7 years. The other operators, whilst having had some experience in their chosen fields, were venturing into new territory with their proposals.
- 3.6 The initial proposal for the Sand Sculpture Festival is to operate from April – October with potential for extending this season to fit with other events and holidays throughout the year. The Drive-In Cinema proposed a year round provision; however the screenings were restricted to after dark thus not offering a destination or any leisure provision during the daytime. The remaining sea container proposal did not appear to provide a viable all year round offer.

- 3.7 A proposal for shared use of the site between the drive-in cinema and the sand sculptures was suggested by the Project Board. However, further investigation revealed that this option was not considered viable on the part of the operators of the drive-in cinema.
- 3.8 Of the schemes the Sand Sculpture Festival was considered to have the lowest adverse environmental impact in terms of visual appearance, site set-up, traffic flows and infrastructure.
- 3.9 The Sand Sculpture Festival appeared to provide an excellent synergy with the operation of the Volks Railway, by offering an attraction which will appeal to families and proposes an accessible entry price. A previous sand sculpture event on this same site resulted in a record year of passenger numbers on the railway as a direct result of the attraction. It should be noted that the operator for this latest sand sculpture festival is not connected to the previous operation.
- 3.10 Further operational items such as design of site, catering options, site set up, and lighting are still to be confirmed.
- 3.11 Officers will work closely with the operator to ensure the attraction plays a significant role into the year round, city wide events calendar and becomes an integral part of the seafront offer. A key aim is to assist the operator to maximise the opportunities available and to extend the season beyond the proposed April – October period.
- 3.12 The introduction of the Sand Sculptures Festival will not only contribute to the overall visitor offer but it will also help to redress the seasonality of the seafront. An attraction such as this on the Black Rock site will play a significant role in increasing footfall for existing businesses in Madeira Drive, as well as improving the connectivity between the Marina and other attractions on the seafront.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The proposals were assessed by the Black Rock Project Board consisting of cross party Member representation along with officers from Finance, Planning, Legal, Estates, Major Projects and Tourism & Leisure.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

The financial implications of the proposed 3 year lease will be determined during negotiations under delegated authority with due regard for obtaining best consideration.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington

Date: 02/11/2012

5.2 Legal Implications

The procurement process has been properly managed and clear evaluation procedures were followed by the Project Board. It is proposed by the recommendations in this report that the preferred bidders are appointed and that a 3 year lease is entered into, the terms of which will be settled in accordance with Part 6.3 Part B.II.XV of the council's constitution (Scheme of Delegation to Officers, specific delegation to the Head of Property and Design).

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce

Date: 02.11.12.

5.3 Equalities Implications

There are not considered to be any specific equalities issues arising from this report. The Brighton Sand Sculpture Festival will be open to all members of the public and the pricing structure will also offer concessionary rates.

5.4 Sustainability Implications

The Black Rock site is a prominent seafront location and is currently unused. It is important the council makes full use of its assets in order to maximise revenue and create an attractive and vibrant seafront environment. The Black Rock site is a key destination on the seafront and is a vital link between Brighton Marina and the attractions on Madeira Drive.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications

Granting consent for this proposal will ensure that a currently derelict site considered by many to be an eye soar on the seafront and which is a subject to vandalism will be brought into use. It is anticipated that the attraction will attract a great deal of visitors and bring improvements to the built environment. The proposal will bring controlled activity and security in a currently underutilised area of the seafront.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

5.6.1 It is anticipated that passenger numbers to the council owned Volks Railway will increase as a result of this attraction on the Black Rock site.

5.6.2 There is a reputational risk to the council if the Black Rock site remains derelict indefinitely. Without a tenant on the site the area will continue to deteriorate and is likely to be subject to further vandalism.

5.7 Public Health Implications

There are not considered to be any specific public health issues arising from this report.

5.8 Corporate / Citywide Implications

The Seafront plays a vital role in the economic impact of the Tourism offer in the city. The operation and further development of the seafront is considered against

the backdrop of the council's current priorities and those contained in more recent strategic consultation such as Tourism Strategy and emerging Seafront Strategy.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)

6.1 These are set out in the main body of the report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 These are set out in the main body of the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

Brighton Sand Sculpture Festival proposal

