

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 52

Brighton & Hove City
Council

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| Subject: | Hove Civic Society Plinth | | |
| Date of Meeting: | Thursday 10 th January 2013 | | |
| Report of: | Interim Lead Cultural Services | | |
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| Ward(s) affected: | Central Hove | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 The Hove Civic Society was formed in 1961 and its object is:

To stimulate and promote community interest in the beauty, history and character of Hove and its surroundings.

1.2 As part of its ongoing ambitions, the Hove Civic Society wishes to erect a specially commissioned plinth on the King's Esplanade in Hove as a site for different temporary sculptural pieces.

1.3 The plinth will be subject to a planning application. This report is seeking the necessary Landowner's consent for the siting of the plinth on the seafront.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Economic Development & Culture Committee agree to grant Landowner's consent for the siting of the plinth on King's Esplanade in the position shown on the annexed plan.

2.2 That the Economic Development & Culture Committee agree for any final lease arrangements to be determined, subject to planning consent, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation to the Commissioner for Culture 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 Hove Civic Society is a registered Charity that has been in existence for over 50 years. It has a membership of 170 members, the majority of whom are Hove residents. Its aims are to:

Encourage high standards of architecture and town planning, and the conservation of buildings of historical interest

Monitor and comment on significant planning applications and attend meetings on conservation area matters

Promote actions to help Hove become more sustainable and reduce its carbon footprint

Monitor the seafront furniture and seek to improve access to the sea

Develop and launch campaigns to celebrate and improve the character of Hove, including restoring our Victorian tree heritage and a Public Sculpture Fund

Arrange a varied programme of lectures with expert speakers on a range of topics.

- 3.2 The Society wishes to install a plinth on the King's Esplanade, opposite the statue of Queen Victoria to the south end of Grand Avenue, to act as a site for a series of temporary sculptures. The dimensions of the plinth are: 2.5m in height, 2.5 m in width (east to west) and 2.25m in depth (north to south). It would be constructed from Roman stone which is similar in appearance to Portland Stone but has a greater resistance to weathering.

- 3.3 In addition to specially commissioned pieces, the Society would work to establish links with other leading sculpture foundations in the country such as CASS Sculpture Foundation and the Henry Moore Foundation for example, to facilitate the loans of works for the plinth.

- 3.4 The Society wish to establish the plinth with changing pieces for a range of reasons:

To provide a link between the heritage and history of the area and the contemporary world

To act as a complementary highlight to the excellent statue of Queen Victoria that stands at the south end of Grand Avenue; one of the best quality statues in the city but somewhat overlooked.

To provide a link between Brighton and Hove – i.e. the east and the west of the city and of the seafront

To provide stimulating and inspirational accessible pieces on a regular and changing year round basis; both borrowed and commissioned

To provide opportunities for local artists and cultural partners to exhibit

To contribute to the cultural calendar of the city by working with a range of programming partners

To continue the long tradition of statues and monuments in the city
To provide an exciting cultural focal point for Hove and contribute to the further enhancement of the seafront

- 3.6 The plinth with its changing exhibits would add a welcome feature to the seafront in this location. It would create an exciting focal point that linked the location to other parts of the seafront and city, enhancing the cultural offer in this part of Hove. Its installation would fit with the emerging Seafront Strategy in terms of enhancing the cultural offer and encouraging footfall along the seafront.
- 3.7 Support for the initiative has been expressed from a wide range of potential partner organisations; Brighton Festival, Rocket Artists (artists with and without learning disabilities), Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, Same Sky, Phoenix Arts Association and Gallery.
- 3.8 Support has also been expressed in writing from a number of relevant local and national organisations; the Regency Society, the Regency Square Association, the Chair of Landsdowne Area Residents Association, The West Pier Trust, The National Public Monument and Sculpture Association and Arts Council England.

4. CONSULTATION

The Hove Civic Society has undertaken a wide ranging consultation in the preparation of their ideas, including local ward Councillors, local MP, local residents' associations, relevant local and national bodies, other cultural partners, Sussex Police and relevant council departments.

There has been further consultation with relevant council officers in planning and conservation in the writing of this report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

All installation and ongoing costs, such as maintenance and insurance, would be borne by the Society and would be subject to legal agreement. It is expected that a peppercorn rent will be charged.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington Date: 11th Dec 2012

5.2 Legal Implications

It is proposed that the lease to the Society is granted under delegated powers. Initial Heads of Terms will need to be agreed if the Society wish to twintrack the negotiation of the lease with the necessary planning application. The lease will cover issues such as rent (if any), insurance, maintenance and the

use to which the site can be put and the Heads of Terms can cover other issues such as the timing of the works and when the lease is to be granted.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce

Date: 07.12.12

5.3 Equalities Implications

The Hove Plinth would provide free access to artworks for a full range of audience. The site is fully accessible with both steps and ramps from the Hove Lawns area down to the Esplanade. The programming of the plinth would have to comply with the spirit of current equalities legislation as outlined in legal agreements between the city council and the Hove Civic Society. The intention of the Society is to engage with as wide and diverse a range of communities as possible in the programming of the plinth.

5.4 Sustainability Implications

In terms of the long term practical sustainability of the Hove Plinth, regard has been given to the use of appropriate materials for the location and the design for the plinth uses Roman stone. The sustainability of the temporary pieces will also be taken into account on a piece by piece basis. Any lighting sources will be energy efficient and low cost replacement. In terms of the longer term financial sustainability of the plinth and the programme of temporary pieces, the Society will both raise funds and work in partnership with other commissioning organisations.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications

The Society has consulted with the Sussex Policy Crime Prevention Design Advisor and the detailed advice given has been used to inform the detailed design and dimensions of the plinth. All materials used will be vandal proof as far as is possible. The installation of the plinth and temporary pieces is likely to increase footfall and surveillance in the area and the Society plans to ask its extensive Membership to take an active role in monitoring the condition of the plinth on an ongoing basis.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

The risk implications in terms of the potential for vandalism are covered under Crime and Disorder implications above. The conditions of any planning consent, the Lease arrangements and any further legal agreements will be designed to minimise any inherent risk in the installation or ongoing programming of the plinth. The council will have a place on any programming group as an observer and the Society itself is an established Charity with charitable objects to protect and enhance the urban landscape.

5.7 Public Health Implications

The plinth is likely to become a local landmark and given its location, would lend itself to inclusion as a significant milestone in published walks such as healthwalks, or as part of an outdoor walking tour for residents or visitors.

5.8 Corporate / Citywide Implications

The Seafront plays a vital role in the economic impact of the Tourism offer in the city. Additional attractions and enhancements on the seafront are encouraged as part of the emerging Seafront Strategy.

6. **EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)**

- 6.1 Consideration was given by the Society to alternative locations for the site of the plinth. The chosen site combined the aspects of; good sightlines from the length of Grand Avenue to the seafront, a complementary position to the statue of Queen Victoria, full disabled access to the site, a wide area surrounding for vehicular and pedestrian access, a sense of connectivity between this site and the Peace Statue on the border of Hove and Brighton. Other sites considered near this location did not combine all of these features.

The Society also considered a permanent installation for the plinth instead of the changing programme. A permanent piece would not allow the flexibility and scope to respond to the widest range of audience, nor the opportunity to work across the city's cultural calendar with a range of partners to mirror events in the city for a Hove location.

7. **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The Hove Civic Society is a long established and well regarded charity. The initiative would be positive for Hove seafront and provide an enhanced local cultural focal point for this part of the city and an opportunity to connect with other parts of the city and its cultural calendar. It would develop the traditions of the past for an audience today and create a changing and interesting feature in the landscape for residents and visitors.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

Map of location

Mock up of plinth in situ from north

Mock up of plinth in situ from east

Design and access statement from planning application

