



DECISION OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

IN CONSULTATION WITH SECTION 151 OFFICER

DECISION NO. 15/16 DE 276

SUBJECT: Retention of design advice to develop proposals for the future of the Tropicana site

Background:

The Council resolved at its July 2014 meeting to authorise officers to investigate and report on works to accommodate a multi-use seafront event/concession space.

Following this meeting officers established a list of works of refurbishment to the Tropicana building that would enable the start of creating a seafront event/concession space. The works were detailed to the Council in a report to its meeting in September 2014 and endorsed at that meeting. These first phase works have been completed enabling the opening of the Bay café which has traded since early June 2015 together with public toilets available from mid-July.

A Multi Use Events and Concession Space with International Potential

In August 2015 Banksy's Dismaland opened on the site and generated worldwide publicity and recognition for Weston-super-Mare. The event attracted in the region of 200,000 additional visitors to the town in the five weeks it was open, and contributed an estimated additional £20m to the local economy.

The event has created significant interest and associated proposals for events at the site and Weston-super-Mare as a whole, which will allow the council an opportunity to establish the role that a vibrant multi-use arts and entertainment venue can play in the wider regeneration proposals for the town as a centre for learning, living and lifestyle.

Hosting Dismaland at the site has demonstrated its potential as a venue for arts and entertainment, and established it as such in many people's minds. In light of the previous attempts at development and taking into account such experiences, it was agreed at 10th November Council to undertake minimum necessary designs and costed proposals to enable the former outdoor multi-use pool area and bowling alley area to safely accommodate events for which a budget allocation of £550000 was also approved. These works are nearing completion and bring the site to a basic health and safety level.

At the same time the opportunity has been taken to locate a basic Visitor Information Facility within the front of the building to the right of the central foyer. This is being progressed in partnership with Weston Town Council who will provide minimal staffing. The project is being progressed on a trial basis for the 2015/16 season and is expected to become operational from Easter 2016. It is being pursued on the basis that it may not be able to continue in the long term if other more permanent proposals come forwards for the site.

Sustaining The Banksy Legacy – through Nationally Recognised Designer and Coastal Town Regeneration expert – Wayne Hemingway

In November 2015 The Director of Development and Environment was approached by Wayne Hemingway MBE of Hemingway Design

Hemingway Design –born out of the Red or Dead design studio has a national reputation for bringing forwards unique coastal regeneration projects including Dreamland Margate, Boscombe Pods as well as being retained to design furniture for John Lewis and M&S and for running a national programme of vintage /retro fairs and events with strong linkages with the national events scene. The consultancy is also engaged with major city regeneration residential schemes.

Following dialogue with Wayne Hemingway including a site visit to the site and wider town centre it has been established that he is a unique resource capable of continuing the dialogue with national and regional arts and events organisations. He has offered to undertake this work at a significantly discounted rate due to his personal interest in the site.

It is therefore proposed that his Consultancy be retained on a two phase project brief with a break clause between the phases to develop a design concept and business plan for the site to bring forwards a sustainable set of proposals which deliver the Councils ambition for the site to become a premier event and cultural activity space of both regional and national significance. The first phase commission is funded from within the November budget provision and is capped at £30k. This phase is to be completed by May 2016.

Phase 1 outcome to include:

- 1. An agreed vision for the site based on a facilitated engagement with local, regional and national creative and cultural sectors and local community interests*
- 2. Articulation of draft conceptual design options / themes, potential future funding sources and delivery options*
- 3. Demonstrable ongoing creative/ cultural sector and funding agency interest in the future of the site*
- 4. Positive media engagement and promotion of the sites offer*
- 5. The above to be drawn together into a Phase 1 Report containing an assessment of delivery / design options together with recommendations of work activity required under Phase 2 to finalise a sustainable business plan and design solutions for the site*

The Hemingway Design input is being co-ordinated with the wider town centre regeneration programme and is aimed at ensuring that it makes a positive contribution to the Councils emerging cultural and lifestyle ambitions for the Town and District as a whole.

DECISION: To retain the services of Hemingway Design to complete a review of options for the future development of the Tropicana site as a nationally and regionally significant multi use arts and events space.

Reasons: To continue the momentum created by Dismaland to secure a long term sustainable future for the Tropicana site

Other Alternatives Considered: The alternatives included:

1) Going to the market to achieve potential design inputs:

This was discounted on the grounds that the Authority is being offered access to a national design advisor at significantly below normal market rates.

2) Developing proposals in –house

Whilst some in-house capacity and expertise exists it was considered the better outcome to link this with external expertise.

3) Do Nothing

Momentum to secure a long term sustainable solution for the site would be lost

Risk Assessment:

None

Financial Implications:

£30k from within the approved Capital budget for the renovatiuon of the site

Implications for Future Years:

The report outcome could result in a long term sustainable solution for the site .

Signed..........

Director of Development and Environment

Dated..........

Signed.....

Section 151 Officer

Dated.....21/3/14.....