

Subject:	Rottingdean Terraces		
Date of Meeting:	1st May 2014		
Report of:	Assistant Chief Executive Executive Director of Finance & Resources		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ian Shurrock Toni Manuel	Tel: 29-2084 29-0394
	Email:	ian.shurrock@brighton-hove.uk toni.manuel@brighton-hove.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	Rottingdean Coastal		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 A Notice of Motion was presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 20th March 2014 requesting the Committee to allocate £4000 towards the cost of a ramp to facilitate access to the Rottingdean Terrace stage. The Committee agreed that a report should be presented to a future meeting, in order that the request could be considered with the appropriate background information. The council has already supported Rottingdean Parish Council (RPC) with resources and advice in relation to the ramp amounting to approximately £1000. Therefore a recommendation is for Members to agree an allocation of up to £3000 towards the cost of the ramp.
- 1.2 A broader issue is also covered in the report recommendations; the need to ensure that agreements with community groups are formalised in relation to the funding of specific projects at the outset. This is to ensure that when the offer of funding (or no funding is available) for a project is made by the council, community groups are clear that if they proceed with the project it is on that basis. Partnership working between the council and community groups is very important and it would be beneficial for this relationship to be sustained by the formalised mutual agreement of the funding of projects.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members agree an allocation of up to £3000 towards the cost of the ramp to the Rottingdean Terrace Stage subject to satisfactory granting of planning permission.
- 2.2 That the Committee instruct officers to develop a model form of legal agreement with groups such as parish councils who wish to fund projects on council land or apply for funding.

3. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Rottingdean Terraces is a council owned; man-made structure built into the side of the cliff and dates back to at least the 1930's. In 2011, the council (assisted by funds from Rottingdean Arts and RPC) made improvements to the space creating an outdoor stage for performance and a public seating area. The area of land is part of the council's Seafront remit with bookings and events on the stage managed by the council's Outdoor Events Team.
- 3.2 At the request of RPC, Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) officers met with Rottingdean Parish Councillors on site to look at the viability of installing a ramp to enable wheelchair access to the middle level of the Terraces. This is where audiences sit during performances and where the public can access at all other times.
- 3.3 The installation of a ramp to negotiate the level changes within the Terraces is feasible. However, the landscape does not lend itself to the installation of a suitable ramped approach from the pavement level as that initial slope is very steep (see Appendix 2). Following consultation and advice from the Federation of Disabled People, the final plans developed for access for disabled people were a combination of signage to alert users to the steepness of the initial slope down to the Terraces from pavement level, advice on the safest route for wheelchair users (see Appendix 1) plus a new tiered ramp up onto the Terraces structure itself.
- 3.4 Although acknowledged as not ideal in terms of access for disabled people, providing signage informs people of the existing access limitations and, should a new, suitably designed ramp be provided for the actual Terraces, it could improve access for wheelchair users, ambulant disabled people and those pushing prams and buggies.
- 3.5 RPC was advised by BHCC Officers from the outset that funding for the ramp was not available towards the cost either from the Seafront maintenance budget (which is prioritised for health and safety requirements) or from the council's limited DDA/Access Improvement budget. Both budgets are heavily oversubscribed.
 - 3.5.1 In terms of the funding available for works to the Seafront, there is not enough for all of the works that need to be undertaken at any one time. Issues around maintenance, repair and development of the Seafront infrastructure are currently being investigated through a Members Scrutiny Panel. Representatives from RPC were invited to take part in this process and recently gave evidence at a public meeting of the Panel. The Scrutiny process has identified a whole range of issues relating to the Seafront which need to be addressed, many of which have significant implications for the city as a whole. The scale of the works required by the council to restore the seafront infrastructure is immense and the costs have been estimated at between £70m - £100m.
 - 3.5.2 In terms of the DDA/Access Improvement Budget: A limited annual allocation of funding is made available for prioritised access improvement works across all city council buildings and spaces from the Asset Management Fund (AMF). Access audits are undertaken of buildings and spaces where the city council provides

services to the public. This helps to highlight, prioritise and broadly cost the removal or avoidance of identified physical and sensory barriers. City council buildings are given an overall rating and year on year barriers to services are removed to improve the number of buildings deemed to be as accessible to the public as far as is reasonably possible.

3.5.3 Where the council is the main service provider, priority is also given to those improvements that remove barriers within buildings and spaces that have the greatest usage, thereby making a positive impact for the greatest number of citizens. Examples of works undertaken include the reconfiguration of building approaches and internal layouts, converting lifts for safe evacuation in the event of fire, upgrading automatic doors, provision of handrails, installation of hearing enhancement systems and improvements to various accessible toilets, such as the recently completed new provision within Rottingdean Grange Library, Art Gallery and Museum.

3.6 Rottingdean Parish Council indicated that they wished to proceed with the ramp and provide the funding. The council has supported RPC with resources and advice in relation to the ramp amounting to approximately £1000.

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The analysis of the access issue is considered in 3.2 – 3.4

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 There has been on-going communication between the council and Rottingdean Parish Council on this issue.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Although BHCC officers were clear verbally that there was no funding in existing budgets for the cost of the ramp, there was no written agreement with RPC confirming this formally in writing prior to the commencement of the planning and design work. RPC are clearly of the view that the city council should make a contribution financially towards the ramp and had not agreed in writing to proceed with the ramp as sole funder. In the spirit of partnership and as a goodwill gesture, it is recommended that funding is made available in this case (subject to satisfactory granting of planning permission). The recommendation that an allocation of up to £3000 is made is a reflection of the resources and advice already provided amounting to approximately £1000. Any future joint work should be subject to a prior written agreement as to funding arrangements.

6.2 Formal, signed agreements on the funding of projects by community groups on council land would assist in future in maintaining clarity and sustaining partnership working.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 7.1 Funding issues are explained in section 3.5 above. The £3000 contribution, if approved, would therefore need to be allocated from the 2014/15 One-off Risk Provision.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 04/04/2014

Legal Implications

- 7.2 To avoid any misunderstandings and ensure that there is a clear audit trail for community funded projects on council land, it is proposed that a single model form of agreement is developed.
- 7.3 Any other legal implications are set out in the body of the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce

Date: 02/04/14

Equalities Implications

- 7.4 These are considered in the body of the report.

Sustainability Implications

- 7.5 None

Any Other Significant Implications

- 7.6 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1. Access route for wheelchair users as advised by Fed Centre for Independent Living (using eastern side of the High Street slope)
2. Steep slope down from Rottingdean Village

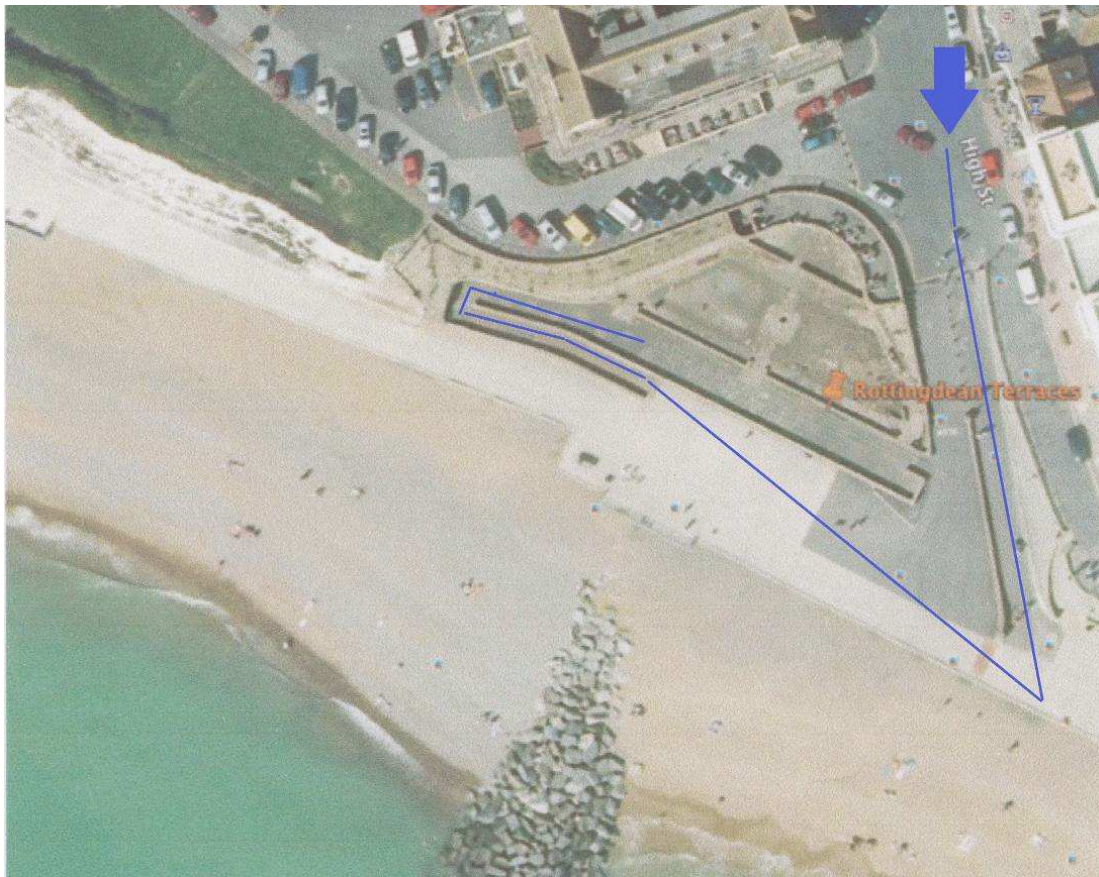
Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

Access route for wheelchair users as advised by Fed Centre for Independent Living (using eastern side of the High Street slope)



**Steep Slope Down From Rottingdean Village
(With Terraces to the Right at the Bottom)**

