

Management Committee

12 December 2017

Brief for improvements to lighting on Weymouth Esplanade

For Decision

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Richard Kosior – Tourism, Culture & Harbour

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Report Author:

T. Hurley, Leisure Commissioning Manager

Statutory Authority

Localism Act 2011 – ‘general power of competence’.

Purpose of Report

1. To present to the committee the draft brief for the design of a new lighting scheme on Weymouth Esplanade to be implemented in partnership with the Dorset Coast Forum.

Officer Recommendations

2. That Management Committee:
 - a) notes the report on community consultation (Appendix A) as undertaken by the Dorset Coast Forum;
 - b) approves the draft brief (Appendix B) for the design of a new lighting scheme on Weymouth Esplanade;
 - c) requests the submission of a further report in 2018 setting out the design options for the scheme for approval.

Reason for Decision

3. To enable progress to be made with the implementation of the project to improve lighting on Weymouth Esplanade.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

4. In July 2017 Management Committee agreed to enter into a contract with Dorset County Council (as the accountable body for the Dorset Coastal Connections Project) to undertake a project to develop and install a new artist-led lighting scheme for the Esplanade in Weymouth.
5. The project has been made possible by the Dorset Coast Forum securing a major grant from the government's Coastal Communities Fund. The grant allocated to the Weymouth Esplanade Lighting project is £200,000 and this will be used by the Forum as follows:
 - £153,850 – fabrication and installation (including contingency)
 - £24,500 – design fees
 - £21,000 – project management fees (Bounce Back Arts)
 - £650 – planning application fees
6. The overall Dorset Coastal Connections project (comprising capital projects along the coast in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole) secured funding from the government on the basis that it would include significant community consultation and include high-quality, artist-led designs. The funding for the Weymouth Esplanade project cannot, therefore, involve like-for-like replacement of existing lights or the installation of commercial lighting solutions.
7. Project roles: In taking forward this project, each partner has been allocated the following specific roles:
 - Bounce Back Arts (community interest company) helped instigate the funding bid and will provide project management support throughout.
 - Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) will monitor progress on the overall project and release the grant in tranches. The Forum is also responsible for undertaking all community consultation making use of a separate budget.
 - Dorset County Council hosts the Forum and is also the accountable body for the grant.
 - W&PBC – the council is responsible for appointing the designer to work up the final scheme and for letting the contract for fabrication and installation. The council will also be responsible for long-term maintenance and all running costs – it is important, therefore, that these long-term costs are scrutinised by the Committee as the project progresses.
8. It is important to remember that the Esplanade lies within a Conservation Area and in an important coastal landscape. Any changes to the appearance of the area as a result of new lighting infrastructure (posts and cables) and additional illumination, will have an impact on the environment and its setting and will require planning permission and consultation with statutory agencies. Any new lighting scheme on the Esplanade will, therefore, only be successful if it compliments the existing infrastructure, conserves and, where appropriate, enhances the Conservation Area and is supported by the community.

9. It is a requirement of the grant that the project must be informed by public consultation and in order to shape the scheme from the outset a programme of public engagement was designed and implemented by the Dorset Coast Forum. This comprised widely-advertised public consultation sessions in Weymouth aimed at engaging both with residents and visitors. A consultation session at Weymouth College also sought to ensure that the views of local young people were recorded. In addition, the community was able to submit their views via an online consultation tool. The results of all this programme of engagement are set out in **Appendix A**.
10. As a result of the consultation, a brief for the design of the new lighting scheme has been drafted by Bounce Back Arts and is set out in **Appendix B**. This brief will enable the council to procure the services of an appropriate designer to be awarded the contract to develop a full technical specification and detailed design for the scheme. During the design process, the chosen designer will be required to develop concept designs which will be used to test their ability to meet the selection criteria. Ultimately the design will need to be approved by Management Committee before any submission for planning consent is sought (if required).
11. Following approval of the final design by Management Committee, the council will let a contract for the fabrication and installation of the new lighting scheme. This work will be overseen by council engineers.
12. The project is being overseen by a project team comprising key officers (from engineering, planning, conservation and leisure), key partners and the briefholder for Tourism & Culture (Cllr Richard Kosior). The project team will meet on a regular basis throughout the development of the scheme and will have an input into future reports to Management Committee.
13. Once options for the design of the new lighting scheme have been worked up, a report will be presented to Management Committee in early summer 2018 for approval prior to the submission of a planning application (if required).
14. It should be noted that this new lighting scheme for the Esplanade in Weymouth is being undertaken without incurring any cash expenditure from the borough council although a significant amount of officer time is being dedicated to ensure that the scheme is properly procured, enhances the Conservation Area, complies with any planning requirements, and is affordable to operate.
15. As the scheme has been funded by a government grant, it has the potential to gain more than local recognition for its innovation and contribution to the quality of the built environment in Weymouth.
16. The intention is for the scheme to be completed by March 2019 at the very latest although officers will keep the timetable under close scrutiny in order to bring this completion date forward. However, as the scheme may require planning and conservation area consent the programme needs to remain sufficiently flexible to accommodate possible delays and amendments to the design.

17. The public consultation exercise has prompted questions about the future of the existing laser installations on the Esplanade. The laser scheme was installed with funding from Arts Council England and it has been estimated that the existing modules will reach the end of their operating life within approximately the next 5-years. The cost of the replacing the laser modules was set out in the report to Management Committee in July 2017. The grant secured from the Dorset Coast Forum cannot be used for the decommissioning and removal of the lighting installations, including the laser units and pylons.
18. The Committee is requested, therefore, to note the result of public consultation (Appendix A) and to approve the brief for the scheme design (Appendix B). Once approved, the brief will be used to procure the services of a design studio.

Implications

19. **Corporate Plan.** *Improving Quality of Life: Safeguarding and providing opportunities to enjoy the natural and built environment now and in the future.* The need to develop proposals for a new Esplanade lighting strategy is also identified in the Management Committee's Action Plan.
20. **Financial.** In order to draw down the grant from the Coastal Communities Fund the council will need to comply with the funding agreement with Dorset County Council, the local accountable body for the Fund.
21. If a new lighting scheme is installed on the Esplanade then the council will need to allow for operating and maintenance costs in future revenue budgets from 2019 onwards. Any warranties for the design and the installation will need to be novated to the successor council with responsibility for the Esplanade if local government re-organisation proceeds.
22. **Equalities.** Consideration will need to be given to ensuring that any revised lighting scheme on the Esplanade is compatible with the needs of users with visual and physical impairments. An equality impact assessment will need to be undertaken in due course to inform the design process.
23. **Economic Development.** Enhancements to the Esplanade can make a significant contribution to tourism and economic growth.
24. **Risk Management (including Health & Safety).** The primary risk is the council's ability to make a commitment to future running costs of any new lighting scheme given that this is a discretionary service.

Consultation and Engagement

25. In developing the brief for the new lighting scheme for the Esplanade the Dorset Coast Forum has undertaken significant community engagement. The draft brief was also circulated to the Member Arts Advisory Panel for comment.

Appendices

26. **Appendix A** – Weymouth Esplanade Lighting Scheme consultation summary report. Dorset Coast Forum. November 2017.
Appendix B – Draft brief for design of new lighting scheme on Weymouth Esplanade. Bounce Back Arts. December 2017.

Background Papers

27. Information on the public consultation work undertaken for this project by the Dorset Coast Forum can be viewed at:
<http://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/weymouth-promenade-lighting>

Footnote

28. Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Report Authors: Tony Hurley (Leisure Commissioning Manager).

Telephone: 01305 252317 **Email:** thurley@dorset.gov.uk