

REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 10 JULY 2019**PORTFOLIO: ENTERPRISE****REPORT FROM: STRATEGIC DIRECTOR****SUBJECT: THE BEAGLE EVENT****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 To designate the Beagle Event as a SILVER project to be reported through the Council's Project/Programme Management Office.
- 1.2 To approve the drawdown of £50,000 from earmarked reserves to provide a working capital budget for the Beagle Event in accordance with the Budget and Funding Plan set out at Confidential Appendix A.
- 1.3 To underwrite the costs of the event up to £50,000 if these cannot be fully recovered from the projected income streams from ticket sales and sponsorship.
- 1.4 That the draft Event Management Plan and associated Equality Impact Assessments are reported back to the Executive before the Event Management Plan is submitted to the region's Safety Advisory Group.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To enable effective and timely planning and execution of the Beagle Event.

3 SALIENT INFORMATION**Background**

- 3.1 11th May 2020 is the 200th anniversary of the launch of HMS Beagle in 1820 which ended her illustrious career in the estuary mud of the River Roach. RSPB and RDC are working together to create an event at Wallasea Island on 30th and 31st May 2020 in commemoration (the "Beagle Event"). The Beagle Event will be delivered in accordance with the objectives of the Discover 2020 Festival.
- 3.2 The Beagle Event is a multi-form celebration of the history of HMS Beagle and its association with Rochford District as a Customs watch vessel in the late 19th century. The Beagle Event will also commemorate the lives of its Commander Robert Fitzroy, the father of modern meteorology and its most famous passenger, Charles Darwin. There will be a number of attractions over a 2-day period designed to stimulate and interest visitors to learn more about HMS Beagle's history; her role in combatting smuggling on the Essex coast; and her lasting legacy in the fields of science and engineering.

Target audience

- 3.3 The Beagle Event is as much about celebrating local communities as targeting visitors. The local population has a strong affiliation to the ship and has been instrumental in assisting officers in getting the Beagle Event to this point. Telling the story of how such an illustrious ship came to be part of our local social history and landscape is the central tenet of the event. The aim is to create a legacy that enthuses people and communities about the district and Wallasea Island long after the event.
- 3.4 The Beagle Event will primarily be targeting families with children and attractions will be curated to ensure appeal to younger children and teenagers alike. However, the wild and natural landscape of Wallasea Island will also hold appeal for walkers, bird watchers and naturalists of all ages. The landscape provides additional challenges for those with physical disabilities or limitations so the Beagle Event must be as inclusive as possible. It is anticipated that approximately 2000 people per day will attend the event.
- 3.5 Audiences with specialist interest in matters scientific and historical will be able to view authentic content appropriate for the amateur historian and the professional academic. The Beagle Event will be promoted as part of the Essex 2020 Year of Science and Creativity, an Essex wide, year-long festival of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics culminating with the British Science Festival in September 2020.

Attractions

- 3.6 The creation of the Wallasea Wetlands Project is itself a feat of modern engineering and it seems fitting therefore that RPSB's Wallasea Island is the venue for the Beagle Event. Wallasea Island has a natural vantage point from which the last resting place of the ship can be viewed. Three of the newly created lagoons will be named Darwin, Fitzroy and Beagle. Following a report to the Executive on 6 February 2019, a budget of £50,000 will be used to support works by the RSPB to make an observation platform and additional on-site car parking will be erected in time for the Beagle Event. It is intended that the observation platform will be 90ft long to replicate the length of HMS Beagle and give visitors a sense of scale.
- 3.7 In addition to the observation platform several other outdoor attractions have been planned for the Beagle Event. At the date of this report, these attractions are subject to change as no formal commissioning has yet been undertaken. The planned attractions are as follows:
- 3.7.1 Creation of a computer-generated 3D image of HMS Beagle which can be viewed via smartphone or tablet and which will enable visitors to visualise how the ship would have looked moored in the River Roach;
- 3.7.2 Guided tours of the nature reserve led by RSPB with special "young explorer" events for children;

- 3.7.3 A flotilla of local boats in Paglesham Reach, including the Essex Police marine unit launch and the Crouch Harbour launch (subject to availability);
 - 3.7.4 Signage and interpretation;
 - 3.7.5 Roving “community plays” performed by the University of Essex’s E15 Stage School across the site;
 - 3.7.6 Outdoor cinema displaying digital footage (subject to separate approval of purchase of equipment);
 - 3.7.7 Display of Rigid Inflatable Boat by Essex Police marine unit/ Border Force; and
 - 3.7.8 Food and beverage vendors.
- 3.8 In addition to the outdoor attractions it is planned that there will be a marquee on site which will host displays and academic talks relating to the HMS Beagle’s history; her role in combatting smuggling on the Essex coast; and her lasting legacy in the fields of science and engineering. There will be a strong focus on the history and its modern-day equivalents with presentations from the University of Southampton, the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge, Royal Museums Greenwich and the Met Office.
- 3.9 It is also intended that there will be an art/photography competition which encourage visitors to share their artistic impressions of the Beagle Event.

Travel logistics

- 3.10 A transport plan is being drafted on the basis that access to the Beagle Event will be through “park and ride” facilities, the cost of which is included in the ticket price. The park and ride locations will be sited at key points along the main road routes.

Budget

- 3.11 The Beagle Event is intended to be cost neutral to the Council and currently there is no allocated budget for its delivery and no committed costs. The expected costs of delivering the attractions outlined above are intended to be recovered through sponsorship, grant funding and ticket sales.
- 3.12 The key financial risk of the Beagle Event is that it does not generate sufficient income to cover its costs; in addition, there is a requirement for sufficient cash-flow to enable effective and timely commissioning of events and infrastructure.
- 3.13 A draft Budget and Funding Plan is set out at Confidential Appendix A with a total budget of approximately £47,550 for the two days. The detailed plan is confidential due to the commercial sensitivities of ensuring best value can be obtained through a procurement process.

- 3.14 It is estimated that c.2000 people will purchase tickets for each day of the Beagle Event. Ticket sales comprise approximately 70% of the overall projected income. Consequently, if ticket sales are less than 100% there will be a proportionate cost which the Council will have to underwrite. This equates to approximately £3200 for every 10% (200 tickets) not sold for a single day. It is proposed that this risk is mitigated by various plans which will be put in place as part of the project framework to generate demand. Engagement with stakeholders to date has been overwhelmingly positive and there is a reasonable expectation that demand for this event will be significant. However, if demand falls below 60% i.e. fewer than 1200 tickets are sold for a day then the viability of the event and the project as a whole will be reviewed.
- 3.15 It is therefore requested that the Executive agrees that £50,000 be drawn from earmarked reserves to provide working capital to fund the event costs, plus an additional small contingency of £2,450 (5% of projected costs). The Executive is also asked to acknowledge that it will be underwriting the risk that costs may not be fully recovered if income streams are not as high as predicted in the financial model.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There is always an option for the Council to fund the entire Beagle Event from the public purse. However, such an approach would be unusual and, as stated above, there is no available ringfenced budget.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The nature, location and scale of the Beagle Event requires close working with stakeholders as part of the regional Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and initial linkages have already been established. As the lead body, the Council is accountable for the health and safety and other event management responsibilities for the Beagle Event. A full and detailed Event Management Plan (EMP) will be completed and submitted to SAG for approval. The Beagle Event cannot proceed without SAG support and as such SAG approval is on the critical path for project management purposes. It is proposed that a further report will come to the Executive before the EMP is submitted.
- 5.2 A Project Team has been set up to deliver the event and project management will be assisted and reported by the Council's Project/Programme management Office (PMO) as a SILVER project. This categorisation is defined as a project where "any financial benefits of the project are not directly linked to the MTFS but the project still links to wider strategic themes within the framework for projects and investment. The project does not involve specific new investment but it does involve partnership working and/or is otherwise politically sensitive". Work has already begun to identify the critical path and supporting work streams.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Crime and disorder implications will be considered as part of the project's risk register and SAG.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Environmental implications will be considered as part of the project's risk register and SAG.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 These are set out in paragraphs 3.11 to 3.15 above.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Legal implications will be considered as part of the project's risk register and within the context of the RDC/RSPB Memorandum of Understanding for the wider Heritage Growth Project.

10 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Parish implications will be considered as part of the project's risk register and SAG.

11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Before the attractions are finalised and commissioned and before the EMP is submitted to SAG it will be necessary to have regard to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty, and Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out then.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

LT Lead Officer Signature: _____



Angela Hutchings
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Background Papers:-

None.

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