

*Subject to approval at the next meeting*

## BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION SUBCOMMITTEE

1 September 2014 at 6.00 pm

Present: - Councillors Bence (Chairman), Hitchins (Vice-Chairman), Bower, Brooks, Mrs Brown, Evans, Mrs Maconachie, Mrs Madeley and Wells.

[Note: Councillor Evans was absent from the meeting during consideration of the matters detailed at Minute 7 (part).]

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer has advised Members of interim arrangements to follow when making declarations of interest. They have been advised that for the reasons explained below, they should make their declarations on the same basis as the former Code of Conduct using the descriptions of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

#### Reasons

- The Council has adopted the government's example for a new local code of conduct, but new policies and procedures relating to the new local code are yet to be considered and adopted.
- Members have not yet been trained on the provisions of the new local code of conduct.
- The definition of Pecuniary Interests is narrower than the definition of Prejudicial Interests, so by declaring a matter as a Prejudicial Interest, that will cover the requirement to declare a Pecuniary Interest in the same matter.

Where a Member declares a "Prejudicial Interest" this will, in the interests of clarity for the public, be recorded in the Minutes as a Prejudicial and Pecuniary Interest.

Councillors Brooks and Wells declared a general personal interest in the items on the agenda as members of the Bognor Regis Pier Trust.

### 2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2014 were approved by the Subcommittee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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3. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Brooks and Wells as new members of the Subcommittee.

4. START TIMES

The Subcommittee

RESOLVED

That the start time of meetings for the remainder of 2014/15 be 6.00 p.m.

5. 4BR

The Chairman introduced this item as a matter of urgency as he wished the Subcommittee to be aware that a representation had been received from 4BR and he was of the view that there were a large number of supporters who could bring certain skills and ideas to the table and whose opinions should be considered in future discussions. He formally submitted the letter to the Economic Development Manager and it was agreed that it would also be circulated to all members of the Subcommittee.

6. ENHANCEMENT OF BOGNOR REGIS SEAFRONT

The Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Regeneration (ADPER) presented this report which was based on the findings of the Council's Consultants, Colliers International, in their Vision and Action Plan "Reviving the Concessions on Bognor Regis Seafront" produced in May 2013. He advised that at recommendation (1) section 5.6 should have been referred to rather than section 5.5.

A Seafront Strategy had been adopted by the Council in April 2009 but, due to factors detailed in the report, work to commence any projects had been put on hold. However, the Council was now in a position to develop certain elements of the Seafront Strategy and the report on the table sought approval to commence the process to work towards delivery of some of the schemes outlined. A note of caution was given that money for regeneration schemes was not as available as it once was and that fact had to be borne in mind when bringing forward ideas.

The ADPER highlighted that paragraph 5.2.3 of the Colliers Plan had put forward a proposal to create 'hub' retail zones along the seafront with the express aim of keeping a flow of visitors moving between the two perimeter attractions of Butlins and the Pier. A sum of £250,000 had already been put aside in the Capital budget for a seafront concession hub and it was proposed that up to £50,000 be drawn down to procure architectural/engineering consultancy support to develop a set of costed options and necessary site and ground condition surveys/preliminary design to progress the creation of a 'pilot

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seafront concession hub'. Members were reminded that the amount of space on the seafront was very limited and it might therefore be necessary to look at using the shingle beach as a base for this type of project, which in itself would create some technical challenges due to the dynamic nature of the beach.

The recommendations in the report also proposed that a 'beach on the beach' pilot project be considered for use during the summer 2015 season, subject to feasibility work being undertaken; for consideration to be given to improving the public convenience and showering/changing facilities for the Promenade as a whole; and, subject to funding being available, progress the development of a range of public realm designs for the Promenade between Butlins and the Pier. It was also being suggested that options be explored for the possible relocation of the skate park.

Prior to opening up the debate, the Chairman had requested that a full and comprehensive consultation exercise be undertaken with all interested organisations and the public to ensure that a good range of ideas and options could be explored to make best use of the Bognor Regis seafront and to make it an exciting and attractive destination for visitors and residents alike.

The Subcommittee then participated in a detailed discussion on a number of issues which centred on:-

**'Beach on the beach'** – there was a divergence of opinion on this option as some Members felt it could be a "honey pot" attraction whereas others felt it was a waste of time and money as there was already sand on the beach. However, it was pointed out that the beach (sand) was only accessible when the tide was out, whereas the 'beach on the beach' would be available at any time and would provide a safe environment for young children with their parents. It was agreed that work would be undertaken to see if it was feasible and viable to provide this attraction for the summer 2015 season – it would be a one year pilot in the first instance to assess its success or otherwise. A suggestion was made that recommendation (3) should be amended to seek the use of any revenue budget underspends for this project. As a result it was agreed that recommendation (3) should read

(3) subject to the cost for a preferred option chosen for the 'pilot seafront concession hub' being below the approved budgeted amount, vire up to £20,000 from the Capital budget allocation for the pilot hub to create the 'beach on the beach' ***and as an alternative funding source officers be requested to investigate and report to Cabinet any actual revenue savings to the 2014/15 budget that could be utilised to meet the costs of operating a one year trial in 2015 of the 'beach on the beach' project.***

It was further agreed that officers would undertake the necessary work to enable the project to be in place for the summer 2015 season, without going out to further consultation, and that progress would be reported through the Position Statement, which was a standing item on all the Subcommittee's agendas.

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**Skate Park at Esplanade Site** – it was suggested that this site could potentially be used for a restaurant/café facility to provide a similar attraction to that at the East Beach, Littlehampton. However, whilst Members supported investigative work on this, it was stressed that the skate park would need to be relocated to a suitable alternative location as it delivered an essential facility for teenagers, free of charge. It was felt that it would be useful for Members to be provided with information regarding the useage of the skate park and how many young people took advantage of the facility, together with details of potential alternative sites should relocation be eventually agreed.

**Public Conveniences** – it was recognised that such facilities on the seafront needed to be improved

General comments were raised as follows:-

- A concern was expressed with regard to the use of design and engineering consultancy support and a request made that the Council's own expertise should be used where possible.
- It was felt that a number of projects highlighted in the report were in fact covered by the St Modwen brief and therefore there should be no duplication of work.
- Paragraph 2.21 – It was requested that the Seafront Project Officer Group invite two Members to sit on the group, in addition to relevant officers from Arun District Council and Bognor Regis Town Council and the Town Centre Manager.

It was reiterated throughout the debate that ideas must be sought and encouraged to ensure that the Council did not end up with something boring. However, it was also stressed that any options had to be viable as, unfortunately, the financial implications were a significant factor in what could be delivered.

The Subcommittee then

**RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL – That**

(1) a work plan be prepared for the evaluation, feasibility and deliverability of other possible enhancements to the Seafront as listed in section 5.6 of the Bognor Regis Seafront Concession Plan – Colliers International 2013, having regard to the Council's medium term financial strategy and the prioritised Capital programme for 2015/16 and beyond;

(2) up to £50,000 be drawn down from the approved Capital budget allocation of £250,000 to procure architectural/engineering consultancy support to develop a set of costed options and necessary site and ground condition surveys to progress the creation of a 'pilot seafront concession hub'

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(3) subject to the cost for a preferred option chosen for the 'pilot seafront concession hub' being below the approved budgeted amount, vire up to £20,000 from the Capital budget allocation for the pilot hub to create the 'beach on the beach' and, as an alternative funding source, officers be requested to investigate and report to Cabinet any actual revenue savings to the 2014/15 budget that could be utilised to meet the costs of operating a one year trial in 2015 of the 'beach on the beach' project.

(4) the statement that 'improvements to the public conveniences and changing/showering facilities for the Promenade as a whole should be considered as a priority, but also consideration should be given to whether it is more logical for these to be delivered as part of the Regis Centre development and as part of any development on the Gloucester Road car park site rather than stand-alone facilities' be supported;

(5) subject to funding being made available, the development of a range of public realm designs for the Promenade between eastern end (Butlins) and the Pier be progressed'

(6) Esplanade Theatre Site:-

(a) officers be requested to consider options for the possible relocation of the skate park; and

(b) officers to report back to the Subcommittee at a future date regarding (a) above and any other relevant and related matters.

## 7. BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION POSITION STATEMENT

The Economic Development Manager (EDM) presented the Position Statement and comment was made on the following:-

- **Enterprise Bognor Regis:** The EDM was pleased to advise that a planning application for 2 industrial/warehouse units of 40,000 sqm was approved on 27 August, with an additional condition requiring an Employment and Skills plan to be prepared by the occupier. Work on the site would start in the autumn 2014 and the facilities likely to be fully operational by 2016. This was considered to be a significant step forward for Enterprise Bognor Regis as the prestige of the new occupier would have a transformational effect on the regeneration of the town and would attract other businesses to locate in the area. Already feedback had been received that this proposed development had generated new interest from businesses and investors. The Subcommittee considered this to be fantastic news and recognised the importance of Rolls Royce coming to Bognor Regis and thanks were extended to everyone concerned in achieving such an excellent outcome, particularly the planning officers for their hard work and commitment.

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The EDM also highlighted that

(i) work on the local development order was progressing well and formal consultation would be held early in the New Year. This order would speed up the planning process for potential applicants and make the site more attractive to businesses;

(ii) £13m had been allocated in the Local Growth Fund as a contribution to the improvements to the A29. There was significant support from local businesses for these improvements and the successful planning application above was a further reason to improve the road network into Bognor Regis;

(iii) the Council had been asked to develop the business case for the north/south link road from the new Bognor Regis Relief Road, which would open up the former LEC airfield site and make better road connections to the seafront, Butlins and the University of Chichester Bognor Regis campus;

(iv) the University of Chichester was working with the Council on its plans to extend the Bognor Regis campus, which would include an Institute for Sustainable Enterprise and align with proposals for future phases of Enterprise Bognor Regis.

- **St Modwen** – a significant update would be provided at the Full Council meeting on 10 September 2014.
- **Policy Site 6** – the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure advised that he was attending a meeting with Nick Gibb MP to request the County Council to honour its commitment to provide a new educational facility rather than just expand the Downview School.
- **Butlins and Watersports Centre** – it was agreed that the Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Regeneration would invite Butlins to a meeting of the Subcommittee in the New Year to advise on their investment plans for the future.
- **Town Centre Initiatives** – The EDM advised that the final cleaning and coating of paving in London Road was due to start in a few weeks. Favourable comments had been received regarding the public realm improvements from both residents and retailers. Work on Phase 2 of the project, Station Square, had been funded from the Coastal Communities Fund £1.65m grant from central government and was due to commence in the autumn following a tendering exercise to appoint a contractor to deliver the scheme. The scheme had to be completed to a set timescale.

She was also pleased to advise that discussions with Southern Rail regarding their plans to improve the station were progressing well and it was hoped that a more detailed update would be provided for the next meeting.

- **Hotham Park Café** – Planning permission had been granted on 27 August 2014. The contract had been placed with Falcon Homes and project build costs were within budget. Work would start on site by the end of September 2014 with an anticipated opening in the Spring of 2015. A preferred operator had been selected and legal matters and the lease agreement were being finalised.

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A question was asked that, when approving the supplementary estimate of up to £140,000 for the café, it had been agreed that the Leader and the Chairman of the Subcommittee would be looking at the costs to ensure these would be kept to the minimum and had that been done?. The Chairman advised that he and the Leader had scrutinised the costs and some saving had been identified but the full amount was still required for contingency purposes as the project had not yet commenced on site. However, he was confident that the high quality design and specification of the build would provide an exceptional asset for the town

- **Old Town Creative hub** – a request was made that the Bognor Regis Pier Trust and other local groups be kept fully informed of progress.
- **Transport and Car Parking** – Discussion took place on steps that could be taken to ensure a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) was put in place for the London Road precinct.

The Subcommittee noted the remainder of the report.

(The meeting concluded at 8.10 pm)