

BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION SUBCOMMITTEE

2 March 2015 at 6.00 pm

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

14. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs Madeley.

The Chairman requested to have his thanks passed onto all Officers who had supported the Sub-Committee over the last four years recorded in the Minutes.

15. 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 declared a general Personal Interest in all of the items on the agenda as a Member of the Bognor Regis Pier Trust and as a voting member of Arun Arts.

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2014 were approved by the Sub-Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. BUSINESS SUPPORT AND ENTERPRISE IN ARUN

The Sub-Committee received a report from the Business Development Manager which provided an update on the range of activities that were taking place to support businesses and enterprise across the District.

The Business Development Manager explained that as a vast range of business support and enterprise services continued to be progressed and that some of these were new initiatives, it was therefore proposed that an update report on these activities be brought to the Sub-Committee on a regular basis to keep Members updated on the range of services being provided to the business community. It was outlined that this report was the first baseline report which would be updated for future meetings.

The Business Development Manager then worked through each of the current projects and services set out in the report and updates were provided on:

- **The Arun Business Partnership** – this delivered a range of services to local companies and each of these was explained, as set out in the report. The Chairman asked if the dates of Regeneration Sub-Committee meetings could be announced at future meetings of the Business Partnership allowing local businesses to attend these meetings to hear about the numerous projects that were developing.

The Business Development Manager provided some updates on the following services that were being provided to local companies within the Arun Business partnership – these were:

Worklessness – The Council was working alongside the Department of Work & Employment in gaining work experience placements to 18-24 year olds. This work was been undertaken by the company, Connects Media, that was working alongside the Council to look after the Business Partnership. As part of this work, a placement had been made within the Economic Development team for a period of 2 months with that person assisting the team in updating and contacting business. It was explained that the DWP had been delighted with the Council's approach to this work and that all targets had been met and so the Council had been invited to bid for a second year to continue this project. This was being progressed, The response from businesses had also been massively positive as some good work placements had been made often developing into permanent roles being offered to those taking part.

Learning Events – a great opportunity had been developed with The Body Shop resulting in a new project that was about to be launched called ‘Lunch and Learn’. Another event being developed was in association with the Council’s Arun Charter which encouraged all businesses to get involved with regeneration and gain Contracts with some of the District’s larger companies. An Arun District Council event had been held about 18 months ago and due to its success this was would be repeated on a larger scale in June 2015 at Fontwell Racecourse and would be called “Meet the Buyer” involving all neighbouring authorities along the coastal strip and the NHS.

The Chairman thanked the Business Development Manager for providing such an enthusiastic report and asked to have recorded, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, his thanks for the brilliant work that had been undertaken to date.

The Sub-Committee then noted the contents of the report.

18. ENTERPRISE BOGNOR REGIS

The Sub-Committee received a report from the Head of Economic Regeneration which provided an update on the detail and progress of Enterprise Bognor Regis (EBR) and the next steps in its development.

The Head of Economic Regeneration outlined that as EBR was such a significant project, it had been decided that it would be easier to set out some of the detail of recent activities within a separate report to Members instead of including this within the regular Regeneration Position Statement.

The report before Members set out how various stages of the project were progressing. The importance of the site was highlighted and in the context that this was the largest commercial site for development in the Coastal West Sussex area. EBR comprised four adjoining sites that could support a mix of business accommodation for advance manufacturing; warehousing; offices and small business/studio units. Each of these had been set out within the report and were explained in more detail to Members.

The Head of Economic Regeneration outlined that the Council was currently preparing a Local Development Order (LDO) covering sites 1, 2 and 3 which would grant permitted development rights for new business-related development and would allow owner-occupiers and developers to benefit from an accelerated and simplified planning process. Members were advised that work on this was within the closing stages of completion and that a report proposing the LOD would be submitted to the Development control Committee taking place on 25 March 2015 with recommendations then being presented for approval by Full Council in July 2015. Statutory consultation would then commence after that prior to final adoption in September 2015.

An update was then provided on the Enterprise Zone proposal. The Council had met with the Coast to Capital LEP last week and had been asked

to redraft its previous application and so this application was still a very serious proposition.

Looking at Transport Infrastructure it was reported that massive progress was being made locally. Transport infrastructure had always previously been a barrier to any future development but the opening of the first part of the Bognor Regis Relief Road and soon the second, along with funding coming forward for the A29 and A27, it was agreed that the fruition of these infrastructure projects would provide a very positive message for EBR.

Finally, the Head of Economic Regeneration stated that the Council would continue to drive forward the successful implementation of EBR and she outlined what the key priorities in progressing this work would be.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Economic Regeneration for providing the Sub-Committee with a very encouraging report and especially after so many years of bad news and following the many difficulties that the Council had faced in moving forward regeneration projects. It was acknowledged that the exciting prospects outlined in the report had been a result of years of hard work and partnership working.

The Committee then noted the contents of the report and the updates provided to the meeting.

19. HOTHAM PARK CAFÉ PROJECT, BOGNOR REGIS

The Sub-Committee received a report from the Senior Regeneration Officer which provided an update on the development and progress of the Hotham Park Café in Bognor Regis. The report also provided detail on how other ancillary projects were developing within the Park.

The Senior Regeneration Officer reminded Members that this was a significant project that the Council was funding as a new regeneration asset for Bognor Regis. The Sub-Committee was advised that it was anticipated that the café would open in June 2015 and that the construction and design of the café had been undertaken using all local contractors.

As Members had always been clear that the cafe should open in the evenings, it had been necessary for the Council to very carefully consider providing a safely lit pedestrian route to and from the café. It had originally been envisaged that evening opening would be a later phase of the café's operation, however, the Senior Regeneration Officer was pleased to be able to report that the café operator had recently informed the Council that it planned to open in the evenings from the outset. In response to this, a high quality bespoke lighting design, sympathetic to the heritage nature of the park, had been created which would allow users of the café to arrive and leave the café safely in hours of darkness. It was anticipated that the lighting, which had now been tendered and costed, would be operational to coincide with the opening of the café.

Another initiative coming forward was a proposal to make the park more accessible and welcoming to leisure cyclists. The Leisure, Tourism and Infrastructure Working Group, at its meeting held on 5 February 2015, had considered proposals for cycle paths to be utilised for a two year trial period. The Sub-Committee was advised that these proposals had formed a series of recommendations which Full Council would consider on 11 March 2015.

Finally, the Sub-Committee was advised that press releases were being prepared as key milestones of the project were achieved and that the café had also been advertised in this year's Sussex by the Sea Visitor Guide.

In discussing the update report provided, Members praised the progress that had been made in moving this project forward. Some comments were made about the café's location, in that some of the concerns that had been expressed by the public earlier had been turned to positive comments as it was felt that the revised location of the café blended in very well with the rest of the park. Members stated that they very much looked forward to the café opening and that this would provide a real boost for the park and the Town during the tourist season.

The Sub-Committee stated that the supply of safely lit pedestrian routes to and from the café was essential and would boost trade in the evenings. One Member of the Sub-Committee referred to the funding that the Council had allocated to this project and he hoped that some of this had been able to fund the lighting part of the project and that there was sufficient funds remaining to fund the landscaping around the café. That Member hoped that the café would be profitable, though he still had concerns about its location and the amount of rent that the Council proposed to charge. The Head of Economic Regeneration was asked if the budget allocated to the project had been fully spent and she responded stating that she would ensure that this information would be provided to the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee then noted the contents of the report.

20. BEACH ON THE BEACH PROJECT, BOGNOR REGIS

The Sub-Committee received a report from the Senior Regeneration Officer which provided an update on the concept detail, delivery route and progress for the Beach on the Beach project which sought to provide a new attraction for the seafront at Bognor Regis.

The Sub-Committee was reminded that this project would provide a new sand play area for small children based on the seafront at Bognor Regis. Cabinet, at its meeting held on 9 February 2015, had approved funding for this one year pilot project which had been funded from corporate identified underspends for 2014/2015.

Members were advised that this was a trial project which would be reviewed at the end of November 2015. Officers were making best

endeavours to have the project ready to launch during the Easter school holidays.

Having received this update, some Members of the Sub-Committee expressed concern about the Council's proposals to use decking material to cover the sandpit when not in use. This was because decking materials when covered in frost or dampened by rain often became very slippery. Members did not want accidents to occur which might shine a negative cloud over what they saw as a great idea for the Town.

Looking positively at the project, some Members felt that more seating should be provided to further enhance use of the facility. The Senior Regeneration Officer outlined that if the budget and time allocated to this project allowed for this, it would be considered, though the project was time limited to ensure an opening for this Easter. Potentially, Stage 2 of the project would look to see if there was a need to install the enhancements suggested by the Sub-Committee.

Finally, in looking at the location of the sandpit, which was on the seafront to the west of the Bullnose, opposite the western end of Place St Maur, a question was asked about whether this would mean that concessions in that area would need to be relocated? The Senior Regeneration Officer stated that she would look into this query and would provide an answer to the Sub-Committee.

21. BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION POSITION STATEMENT

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

- **Regis and Hothampton Sites** – An advert had now been placed in the local press regarding the next round of consultation and how this would take place. There would be a series of further adverts placed in the press explaining the process.
- **Town Centre Initiatives** – Remedial work in London Road and construction work at Station Square had started.
- **Seafront Strategy** – This was moving forward as scheduled.
- **University of Chichester** – The University's investment news had now been confirmed.
- **Butlins** – An update was still awaited from Butlins. At the moment they were still considering their future investment in the area.
- **Old Town Creative Hub** – An initiative from West Sussex County Council called "Making Bognor Regis Better" was looking at ideas to create a digital and creative quarter – these were still embryonic details.
- **Railway Station** - Conversations were continuing about improvement.
- **Transport and Car Parking** – It was confirmed that the advert for the Traffic Regulation Order for London Road had gone out. The Council was now waiting for WSCC to take this forward.

- **BT Building, Gloucester Road** – no further update provided.

The Sub-Committee in noting the remainder of the report thanked the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Hitchins, for the time and effort he had given to talk and liaise with traders in Station Road and London Road about improvement ideas. Such discussion had confirmed that they were all in favour of the continuance of the public realm improvements.

(The meeting concluded at 7.00 p.m.)