

Subject to approval at the next Subcommittee meeting

BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION SUBCOMMITTEE

23 October 2017 at 6.00 pm

Present: - Councillors Hitchins (Chairman), Mrs Madeley (Vice-Chairman), Bence, Bower, Mrs Brown, Charles, Dillon and Wells.

[Note: Councillor Charles was absent from the meeting during consideration of the matters referred to in Minute 13.]

Councillor Oppler was also present at the meeting.

8. APOLOGY

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Maconachie.

9. 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.

Councillor Wells declared a personal interest in the event of any discussion on the Town Centre BID (Business Improvement Development) as a town centre trader.

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Councillors Bower, Dillon, Hitchins and Wells declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5, Sainsbury's Bognor Regis Section 106 Funding, should any reference be made to relevant planning applications as they were members of the Development Control Committee. Councillor Charles also declared a personal interest in the same item as the Cabinet Member for Planning.

10. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2017 were approved by the Subcommittee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(Prior to consideration of the following item Councillors Bower, Charles, Dillon, Hitchins and Wells had declared a personal interest and remained in the meeting and took part in the debate.

During the course of discussion, Councillor Wells declared a further personal interest as a member of the Bognor Regis Pier Trust which had identified funding to put towards work in the town.)

11. SAINSBURY'S BOGNOR REGIS SECTION 106 FUNDING IMPACT

The Subcommittee received this report which provided an update on the projects undertaken as a result of Section 106 funding from the Sainsbury's store built on the derelict LEC factory site in 2012.

On taking Members through the delivery of initiatives outlined in the report with respect to Transport Initiatives and the Town Centre, the Senior Regeneration Officer advised on the difference the funding had made to the Town Centre and was particularly pleased to highlight the match funding that had been generated – an additional £2m to deliver the public realm improvements in the town. Southern Rail and Network Rail were involved in the arrangements to improve Station Square and this had directly resulted in a £2m refurbishment project at the railway station; these works were due to be completed in January 2018.

The Business Support Manager advised that the three paragraphs in the report did not fully reflect the excitement she felt at what had been achieved. Businesses had greatly benefited from the business grants that had been awarded, which in turn had attracted match funding of £69,000 and that had led to a successful bid by the Council to the West Sussex Strategic Infrastructure Fund for additional funding for a countywide LEAP (Local Enterprise & Apprenticeship Platform) Scheme. £71,000 had been awarded, together with match funding of over £139,000 and, in total, 75 businesses had benefited from the grants.

The apprenticeship funding had also been very successful, with 12 apprenticeships being supported in Bognor Regis, together with a further 8 across the District as part of the countywide LEAP Scheme.

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Finally, the Business Support Manager paid tribute to the University of Chichester for the tremendously successful business support programme they were providing.

In discussing the matter, all Members applauded the work that had been undertaken and was continuing to be done to support businesses and apprenticeships. It was highlighted how beneficial Section 106 contributions could be when used in the right way and how that, in turn, could lead to additional funding being accessed. Acknowledgement was expressed for the contribution LEC had made to the regeneration of Bognor Regis.

A question was asked as to whether provision had been made for on-going maintenance of the public realm works and a response given that the County Council would be taking over the lamp posts as part of its PFI contract, together with some of the street furniture, with the remaining street furniture being dealt with by Arun. The decoration of the Esplanade hoardings on the seafront site was being led by the Town Council.

A question was also asked about additional sources of external funding such as the LEP and others and a response given at the meeting.

The Chairman thanked all those involved for their efforts and the Subcommittee then noted the report.

12. TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION

The Subcommittee received a report from the Town Centre Manager, Mr Toyubur Rahman, which focussed primarily on the BID (Business Improvement District) Scheme. He advised Members that there were 24 empty shops at the present time out of a total of 262, a percentage of 9.2 compared with a 14% high in 2012, with an average footfall of 9,800 per day being recorded.

In turning to the BID, he was pleased to inform the Subcommittee that the vote in the summer had been successful with a 60% turnout – 179 votes were recorded and 143 were in favour, with around 80% support both in terms of votes cast and percentage of rateable value. Comparing these results with other BID ballots, the turnout was much higher – it had been only about 40% - and the level of support for the BID was also exceptionally high. He considered it a tremendous result for the town centre and paid tribute to the support received from businesses, Arun District Council, the Town Council and the University of Chichester, all of which was very much appreciated. The really hard work had now commenced to ensure the scheme would go live on 1 April 2018.

The primary aims of the BID would be to promote:-

- A well known town centre through branding and marketing
- A welcoming town centre, i.e. clean and safe
- An active town centre at night by stimulating the night time economy
- Better parking and actively promoting the two hour parking scheme

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Members welcomed the initiative and thanked the Town Centre Manager for his efforts. It was exciting news and showed that businesses had confidence in the town. Comment was also made that the purchase of the Arcade by the District Council had illustrated its commitment to the town and it was felt that that purchase alone would generate more shops coming to Bognor Regis, which in turn would improve the shopping offer.

The Chairman thanked the Town Centre Manager for his positive presentation and looked forward to the scheme going live in April 2018.

13. POSITION STATEMENT

In receiving and noting the Position Statement, the Subcommittee was advised and made comment on the following:-

Enterprise Bognor Regis – A suggestion was made that, with the development envisaged for the town, some thought should be given to a Park & Ride Scheme to assist with the potential shortfall in parking provision that might arise. It was explained that financial viability was a key consideration to progressing such a proposal. It was put forward that Members contact the Transport & Highways Committee with any concerns about future parking in the town as that was the best forum to have such discussion.

Seafront Regeneration – detailed discussion took place with respect to the planning application that had been deferred for public toilets on the Promenade following concerns raised by Members of the Development Control Committee and the public. An assurance was given by the Group Head of Economy that the application was being adjusted, where feasible, to address the concerns raised.

Transport & Car Parking – It was reported that a suggestion had been made to JWAAC Highways & Transport that the next Bognor Regis Highways project should be the junction near the railway station and Picturedrome. This attractive corner of the town was dominated by the traffic and the junction, and a roundabout with wider pavements and narrower road would slow traffic, make it more pedestrian friendly and enhance the ambiance of the area. This would be an agenda item for its next meeting. A request was made that West Sussex County Council look at the problem of the bus stop at the junction of Station Road and Longford Road as part of its future highways work around the station as severe problems were caused by the buses not being able to pull in.

Placebranding & Promotion – It was agreed that the online perception survey being conducted should involve different age ranges.

(The meeting concluded at 7.21 p.m.)