

Subject to approval at the next meeting

LITTLEHAMPTON REGENERATION SUB-COMMITTEE

17 March 2015 at 6.00 pm

Present: - Councillors Bicknell (Chairman), Dendle, Dingemans (substituting for Councillor Mrs Bowyer), Elkins (Substituting for Councillor Mrs Pendleton), Mrs Emberson, Gammon Mrs Neno and Northeast.

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Bowyer, Mrs Pendleton and Dr Walsh.

13. 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 interest of clarity for the public, be recorded in the Minutes as a Prejudicial and Pecuniary Interest.

14. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2014 were approved as a correct record by the Subcommittee and signed by the Chairman.

15. BUSINESS SUPPORT AND ENTERPRISE IN ARUN

In presenting this report, the Business Development Manager advised a correction to paragraph 2.iii Enterprise and Incubation Units in that the Sainsburys S106 funding allocated for enterprise projects in Bognor Regis was £125,000 and not £125!

The Business Development Manager advised that the report brought Members up to date with the range of activities taking place to support businesses and enterprise across the District and she gave a brief summary of each of the initiatives that were currently running. She was particularly pleased to highlight that, under Worklessness, the Council was working alongside the Department of Work & Employment to gain work experience placements for 18-24 year olds and that, only 5 months into the contract, it had already exceeded its targets.

In considering the items, a number of questions were asked as follows:-

- Enterprise and Incubation Units – a query was raised as to when the Enterprise Centre as part of the Morrisons S106 Agreement would be available? A response was given that that it was hoped to see movement on that soon and officers were pushing very hard on that.
- LEAP Project – this seemed to relate to Bognor Regis and was it going to be rolled out to Littlehampton? In answer, the Business Development Manager stated that it was focussing on Bognor Regis at present because that was the condition of the S106 monies coming from Sainsubrys. If funding could be found from elsewhere it would certainly be expanded.
- Apprenticeships – where were these advertised? The meeting was advised that, there was a specific website which linked into West Sussex County Council and which advertised most of the vacancies in the County. Companies were approached and there were more opportunities available than were advertised.

Comment was made that this was an interesting report and the Business Development Manager was commended for her work with the Business Partnership - her enthusiasm and dedication did not go unnoticed. There were signs that the business outlook was improving and the initiatives detailed within the report would certainly help with that.

The Subcommittee noted the report.

16. LITTLEHAMPTON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION 2014 REVIEW

The Town Centre Regeneration Officer presented a comprehensive report which summarised his work over the period April 2014 to February 2015 and, following his presentation, the Subcommittee participated in discussion on a number of the points highlighted as follows:-

Subject to approval at the next meeting

- With regard to the fundraising campaign for a defibrillator, it was advised that discussion was being had with Sainsburys that it could be placed on their wall in the High Street and that other traders would have access to it when it was required. Comment was made that every second counted when there was a need for this equipment and it was therefore suggested that dialogue should be had with others who already had it to ensure the most efficient arrangements were put in place.
- Whilst acknowledging that the report was informative, Members would have liked to have some feedback as to how well the various initiatives and events had been received by traders, visitors and residents. The Town Centre Regeneration Officer said he had already identified the need to undertake surveys and engage with the public in the future and he advised that feedback from the Traders Partnership had seen him take on board their comments on what had or had not worked.
- Members were pleased to hear that action was being taken on street drinking and that CCTV was being used in terms of evidence and prosecutions. Dispersal Orders were being used and there was good cooperation with the Police.
- The new signage was welcomed and comment was made that it helped to give a more modern and updated feel to the town.
- The Town Centre Regeneration Officer stated that he wished to expand and develop the use of social media but time was an element. Members wished to encourage the use of social media because it was seen as an ideal way for the public to find out about events, etc.

Further questions were asked and responded to at the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Town Centre Regeneration Officer for his interesting report in highlighting the achievements over the year and the Subcommittee then noted the report.

17. 9 BIG IDEAS FOR LITTLEHAMPTON

The Economic Development Manager reminded Members that the 9 Big Ideas had first been aired in 2014. Officers were now exploring how these could be progressed, particularly to maintain momentum following the recent improvements that had been made in the town and it was therefore considered timely to consider the next phases of investment and regeneration activity for the town and the seafront. She presented this report which suggested a way forward, taking account of the current financial constraints that all Councils were facing at the present time.

Subject to approval at the next meeting

The 9 Big Ideas had been drawn up by Consultants and was a high level investment framework that could be implemented to improve the environment, public spaces and highways of the town and increase its attractiveness. The projects varied in scale, type and complexity and could be implemented in phases. Officers had carried out initial work to ascertain the deliverability of the projects and had devised a scoring matrix which illustrated which ideas would be able to the most practicable to implement.

It was being proposed that the three highest scores should be taken forward at this stage, these being:-

- Improve the Promenade
- Pier Lookout
- New Green and Beach Link

Detailed work would be undertaken on design, costs and funding sources and a further report would come back for Members' consideration.

In participating in a lengthy debate, Members broadly supported the recommendations but did raise concerns that no mention had been made of public involvement in the process. A number of Members spoke with regard to that and stressed that the public must be engaged and their views sought, it was important for the Council to have the support of the community, and the use of social media was highlighted as being an ideal medium to achieve that. Following further discussion, it was agreed, having been formally proposed and duly seconded, that an additional recommendation be included to read:-

“the social media strategy be extended with a facebook page to gauge early public opinion and to start public debate on the 9 Big Ideas.”

The Economic Development Manager acknowledged that the views of the community were important and its involvement would be sought and encouraged. However, if the Council started with a blank sheet it would take a long time for anything to come to fruition. The 9 Big Ideas had been introduced and Members had previously considered them. At this time approval for initial feasibility work was being requested to progress the more easily deliverable projects to ensure the regeneration of the town continued. It was also pointed out that, for the Council to be able to access national funding sources, any bid would have to be at a fairly well advanced stage to meet the criteria set so things had to get moving.

The Subcommittee discussed a number of further issues, which included the Oyster Pond; the Seafront Green; and the link between the railway station and the seafront.

The Chairman thanked officers for bringing this report forward and the Subcommittee then

Subject to approval at the next meeting

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL – That

(1) the proposed prioritising of projects for progressing the next steps be supported;

(2) the proposed next steps be supported and the prioritised projects be progressed to feasibility stage as resources become available; and

(3) the social media strategy be extended with a facebook page to gauge early public opinion and to start public debate on the 9 Big Ideas.

18. LAST MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

As this was the last Subcommittee meeting of this Administration, the Chairman thanked Members and officers for their support and input and he wished good luck to those Members who were standing for re-election.

(The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm)