

*Subject to approval at the next meeting*

## LITTLEHAMPTON REGENERATION SUB-COMMITTEE

9 February 2017 at 6.00 pm

Present: - Councillors Bicknell (Chairman), Dingemans (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Ayres, Blampied, Cates, Gammon, Mrs Porter, Dr Walsh and Warren.

### 7. 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.

Councillor Dr Walsh declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 5 [Littlehampton Town Centre Public Realm Project Delivery] as a member of Littlehampton Town Council and West Sussex County Council.

Councillors Mrs Ayres, Gammon and Warren also declared their Personal Interests in Agenda Item 5 [Littlehampton Town Centre Public Realm Project Delivery] as members of Littlehampton Town Council.

### 8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2016 were approved as a correct record by the Sub-Committee and signed by the Chairman.

9. LITTLEHAMPTON TOWN CENTRE – PUBLIC REALM PROJECT DELIVERY

*(Prior to consideration of this matter, Councillors Dr Walsh, Mrs Ayres, Gammon and Warren having declared their Personal Interests at the start of the meeting remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote.)*

The Sub-Committee received a report from the Economic Regeneration Officer which provided a progress update on the Littlehampton Town Centre public realm improvement scheme and information on the application for Coastal Communities Funding (CCF) which was required to deliver the scheme.

The following key updates and points were made:

- A developed blueprint design had been produced for Littlehampton Town Centre following extensive consultation through focus groups with key stakeholders and through public consultation.
- Developing this piece of work to such an advanced level had enabled the Council to qualify to apply for external funding to help deliver the scheme.
- In June 2016 the Council submitted a Stage 1 grant application for £4.85m to Round 4 of the (CCF). £90m had been made available through this fund to apply for across the country. In October 2016, it was confirmed that the Council would be invited through to the Stage 2 application process.
- In December the Council completed a second CCF application which required considerable work to produce.
- The application submitted included all associated costings necessary to deliver the scheme such as professional fees, Highway Engineers and Quantity Surveyors, etc. The application also budgeted for the cost of a S278 agreement [a requirement by WSCC] to deliver schemes on county land. This amounted to 9% of the schemes capital costs, equating to £347k for the town centre. It was hoped that WSCC would reduce this amount to support the scheme moving forward.
- The CCF had confirmed that they would announce in Spring 2017 who would be successful on all or some of the Grants.

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- Members were made aware that if the Council was successful in receiving the funding it would need to:
  - Commence work within 6 months of the grant being awarded
  - Would need to spend the grant and deliver the scheme by 31 December 2019
  - Be aware that should the Council decline the grant offer, that there would be no other funding to deliver major public realm enhancements to Littlehampton Town Centre
  - Be aware that the delivery and build of the scheme would impact on the operation of Littlehampton Town Centre businesses and traffic within the town during construction phases.
  - Be aware that the final design details would need to be agreed during construction phases, prior to the High Street work commencing.

The Economic Regeneration Officer then drew Members' attention to the two recommendations outlined within the report. These sought approval for the grant to be formally accepted by the Council, should the application to the (CCF) be successful – this would then allow the funds to be drawn-down and spent. Authority was also sought to provide the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Chairman of the Sub-Committee to agree the spending of the grant as required throughout the life of the project; that progress reports be made, as required, through the Sub-Committee's Position Statements.

In discussing the recommendations, some concern was expressed over the LDA design proposals in terms of what these actually included. The point was made that Members needed to be fully included and consulted on the delivery of proposals relating to essential features and appropriate street furniture to be selected. Questions were asked about the area by the lighthouse down by the seafront. It was confirmed that this would feature in a future phase of work which would be reported to Members in due course.

A further concern was raised by Councillor Dr Walsh over proposals to pass to the Director of Place, the Section 151 Officer and the Chairman of the Sub-Committee authority to agree CCF spending. It was his view that this did not leave the Sub-Committee involved with any aspect of progressing this project. Members needed to be consulted on the details of the scheme which should be considered as a partnership and not left for one Officer to make the decisions.

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In response, the Sub-Committee was advised that the recommendations proposed needed to be approved so that in the event of the Council being successful with its grant, procedures were in place to push forward the scheme without further delay. Once news on the grant application had been received, a professional team would be established to determine which of the four phases of work outlined in the report would be developed first. What the Sub-Committee had to consider was that the Council might not receive the full amount of grant applied for. In this instance it would be for the Council to decide what it would and would not progress. An announcement would be made this Spring on who had been successful with CCF. Should the Council be successful it would be required to commence work on the scheme within six months and would need to adhere to a very tight timetable of work.

Councillor Dr Walsh outlined that despite this explanation he wished to propose that a third [additional] recommendation be added to read “subject to recommendations (1) and (2) being approved, further consultation is undertaken with the stakeholders and the Sub-Committee on the finer details of the scheme”. This additional recommendation was agreed unanimously by the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee then

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL - That

(1) should the application to the Coastal Communities Fund be successful the Council will accept the grant to draw down the funding;

(2) authority be given to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Chairman of the Littlehampton Regeneration Sub-Committee to agree the spending of the grant as required throughout the life of the project; and progress reports made, as required, through the Sub-Committee’s Position Statement; and

(3) subject to recommendations (1) and (2) being approved, that further consultation is undertaken with the stakeholders and the Sub-Committee on the finer details of the scheme.

11. LITTLEHAMPTON REGENERATION POSITION STATEMENT

The Sub-Committee received and noted the Position Statement and worked through each project listed making the following observations:

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- The St Martin's Development – the Head of Economic Regeneration explained that it had not been possible to bring an update report to this meeting of the Sub-Committee due to other work pressures. Until just recently there had been no significant change to report since the Feasibility Study undertaken by Turner Townsend had been completed looking at commercial development of the site. The Sub-Committee was advised that through the Council's Local Plan process, The Littlehampton Economic Growth Area [LEGA] had identified that some residential housing could potentially be allocated on the site in a future development brief, if supported by the Council. This could change the viability of the site making it more attractive. If the Council was successful with the CCF, the High Street could be improved which would add to the attractiveness of the environment in the area assisting to attract commercial interest. Concerns were expressed over the shifting emphasis for this site as it was a vital part of Littlehampton providing much needed car parking and was a magnet draw for retail shoppers. The Sub-Committee had concern over possible housing expressing its view that a mixed retail/leisure facility was what was needed for the Town Centre.

- Public Realm Design Project Littlehampton Seafront to Greens and River [from Littlehampton Town Centre] – a request was made to look at the lighthouse area as it was felt that currently this was a wasted opportunity. As there was no public shelter along this part of the seafront to shelter from variable weather it was agreed that shelters would be included in this piece of work. Comments were made about the adverse images created along the town quay by the mooring of untidy and unsightly old yachts which attracted adverse public attention. The Littlehampton Harbour Board (LHB) was progressing this matter by writing to yacht owners. It was felt that the Council also needed to put similar pressure to this effect onto owners as the landowner. The Economic Regeneration Officer updated on the work undertaken to improve and enhance the pedestrian connectivity from the Town Centre to the Seafront. Members were invited to remain at the end of the meeting to view plans prior to public consultation undertaken covering a three week period from 8 to 29 March 2017.

- High Street Vitality – it was explained to the Sub-Committee that although vacancy rates were still relatively low, it was difficult to attract retailers to the Town. Although Littlehampton was quite a vibrant High Street compared to others, the difficulties in filling shops were often down to the buildings themselves in terms of their size and how they functioned.

- The Arcade – a small budget had now been identified so that some of the improvements requested previously could be undertaken. The Sub-Committee asked if the blocked out window at Kampsons could be addressed to improve the look of the Arcade. The issue of pigeons nesting remained a problem.

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- Town Centre Safety – the new policing arrangements [business wardens service] had had some impact with anti-social behaviour problems – this service would be reviewed in the future and the issue of future funding would be known soon.

- Town Traders Partnership – the Littlehampton Town Centre Regeneration Officer continued to meet frequently with traders who set the work programme for the Town Centre Manager. The Business Network Breakfast meetings run by the Council's Business Development Manager in Bognor Regis would hopefully commence soon for the Littlehampton area as these were an effective way of helping business to understand how they could work together. It was hoped that similar work undertaken on the Development Charter for Bognor Regis could be rolled out to Littlehampton.

- Markets – The Artisan Market continued to operate successfully. The Portuguese Market had also been very successful and was expected to return again during the year.

- Littlehampton Promenade Shelter Project – the Sub-Committee was advised that invitations for Expressions of Interest had been advertised to source proposals in terms of what could be achieved for this site. Three organisations had come forward with proposals and had been interviewed. As a lot of the information was commercially sensitive it was not possible to report details to this meeting. The Sub-Committee was reassured that information on the successful applicant would be reported to its next meeting in June 2017.

- Littlehampton Long Bench Slat – Engraving Scheme - harsh weather conditions had resulted in some of the slats needing maintenance and repair. The Economic Regeneration team had been researching opportunities to relaunch the scheme at zero cost to the Council allowing the public to purchase slats again. An update would be made to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

- Arun Coastal Conference – the purpose of the Conference held in October 2016 had been to showcase the work in and around Littlehampton. Due to the success of this Conference it was hoped that it could be held by-annually in the future as it was a good way of sharing good news stories with partners.

(The meeting concluded at 7.12 pm)