

Subject to approval at the next meeting

LITTLEHAMPTON REGENERATION SUB-COMMITTEE

14 June 2017 at 6.00 pm

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

Councillor Ambler was also present at the meeting.

[Note: Councillor Dr Walsh was absent from the meeting during the consideration of the matters outlined in Minutes 6 to 9].

1. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Bicknell.

2. 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 6 [Littlehampton Seafront - Public Realm Design Plan] 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 6 [Littlehampton Seafront – Public Realm Design Plan] as members of Littlehampton Town Council.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting held on 9 February 2017 were approved as a correct record by the Sub-Committee and were signed by the Chairman.

4. LITTLEHAMPTON SEAFRONT – PUBLIC REALM DESIGN PLAN

(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 detailed report from the Economic Regeneration Officer which provided a progress update on the Littlehampton Seafront design scheme, an analysis of the public consultation undertaken and what were the proposed next steps for this project.

Firstly, the Sub-Committee was reminded of the background to this project. This was that:

- In July 2014, Members had been presented with a concept investment plan called the 9 Big Ideas for Littlehampton which provided a number of ideas linking the Town to its waterfronts.
- On 17 March 2015, 3 of the 9 Big Ideas had been supported by the Sub-Committee to progress to feasibility stage, as resources became available, and these recommendations were ratified by Full Council on 15 July 2015 – these were in respect of improving the promenade; the pier lookout; and the new green and beach link.
- In May 2015, the Council was awarded a Coastal Revival Grant in the sum of £29k which supported the preparation of design plans for improvements to the Littlehampton seafront.
- LDA Designs were appointed as the design consultants for the project and had since produced their own report supporting their findings [at Appendix 1 of the report].
- Extensive public consultation took place as part of this process in which 292 people contributed to the survey and the public displays that had been made available over a 3 week period.

Secondly, it was outlined that:

- The culmination of the consultation was now reflected in the proposals being presented to Members which provided a framework around which improvements could be made to the local economy in generating employment opportunities for businesses to invest in the seafront over a period of time and would then encourage further investment and activity in the area.

Subject to approval at the next meeting

- This piece of work followed the Public Realm Design Project for the Littlehampton Town Centre. The two schemes being linked through the Council's Vision for providing a connected pedestrian priority town centre, riverside and seafront.
- There were a number of proposals to consider through the attached Action Plan set out within the report.
- A broad range of comments and a variety of constructive input had been received from the community and key stakeholders, such as Littlehampton Town Council and Harbour Park.
- Officers were aware that Members had received a letter from a local stakeholder regarding the need to retain the coach parking facility in Banjo Road. Members were advised that Officers would consider the points made in the early stages of the action plan and that they appreciated the importance of identifying suitable alternative coach parking arrangements prior to considering any proposed changes to the frequently underutilised Banjo Road Coach Park.
- In responding to the comments made about the coach parking in Banjo Road, the Economic Regeneration Officer outlined that he had undertaken some research into coach and mini-bus usage in Banjo Road and this information was circulated at the meeting. This illustrated that the coach park was not overly used hence the proposals that had been put forward.
- Findings from income generated had shown in the peak summer school holiday period last year, the Banjo Road coach park had catered for 177 coach or mini-bus visits (in excess of 1 hour stays) which equated to 4.5 visits per day in a coach park that had capacity for 20 coach or mini buses.

In considering the Action Plan:

- Members aired concern over losing coach parking at Banjo Road stating that this would result in a loss of revenue. Officers responded highlighting that the site was underutilised and was a prime investment location.
- It was accepted that coach and mini-bus provision was crucial. However, it was also accepted that the Council needed to review its current coach parking function. If it was not provided at Banjo Road then an appropriate location would need to be provided elsewhere within the area.
- The Group Head of Economy provided Members with some background. The coach park had been established back in the 1950's when coach visits were more popular and when visitors came to enjoy the uniqueness of the greens and their sense of openness. Coaches today did not use the area in the same way that they used to. Coach companies no longer expected to park in prime spots along the seafront and were happy to drop off visitors to confirmed drop-off points. The Council would investigate where allocated drop-off and pick-up points could be and hoped to bring the Banjo Road area back to what it used to be which was a proper venue and

Subject to approval at the next meeting

facility for the Town. Members were reminded that the Council was continuing to have to make significant financial savings and so it had the responsibility to look at every single revenue stream that it had. The prime site of Banjo Road was an example of an area that could be used in a vastly better way and Members were reminded how the coach park location had previously been a café/restaurant, rose garden and bandstand.

- It was also mentioned that the coaches that did use the area caused pollution and noise to visitors trying to enjoy the green areas. It was agreed that further investigation was required.
- Officers were mindful of the importance of the seafront greensward as part of the Town's unique character and charm which they would continue to protect and retail.
- The complexities of the underground services system on the seafront were understood as this would impact on some of the concepts and further work required to clearly understand what was beneath the surface.
- It was outlined that the leasehold and freehold agreements and covenanted land relating to any proposals moving forward would need to be considered.
- It was confirmed that the Council understood that to make any changes to the traffic arrangements in Pier Road would require it to work closely with WSCC and local businesses, along with identifying funding opportunities to develop the concept of reducing Pier Road to a single carriageway.
- It was felt that these proposals offered more commercial opportunities for permanent and temporary concessionaire investment.
- Officers appreciated that the community would like to have shelters and so they would be looking into options and would report back to the Sub-Committee.
- It was recommended that there should be flexibility on the seafront to facilitate more events and activities above and beyond the 5 currently permitted annually. This was because the seafront was an ideal location to accommodate and develop quality events but the restrictive covenants in place inhibited the number and type of entertainment and hospitality permitted on the greens.
- Some of the proposals would require significant investment, the new promenade surfaces and concepts such as sloping footpaths between the seafront and greensward for example. These proposals might be achieved by applying for external funding. Other large proposals such as new concessions or leisure opportunities would need further consideration and the Council would need to look externally for private sector investment through partnerships. Some smaller interventions could be achieved through existing budgets and possibly by the support of community groups.
- The Sub-Committee was advised that the Council was not suggesting the designs proposed by LDA needed to be followed literally. These were conceptual and so further investigation would be required to determine whether or not they were economically

Subject to approval at the next meeting

viable. Although some flexibility would be required due to unforeseen pressures or new opportunities, it was important for Members to understand that as long as the principles of this study were supported, through one over-arching vision for the seafront, then the area could be enhanced over time.

Looking at the recommendations, Members were advised that at Recommendation (2), the last three words “and if required” were an error and needed to be removed.

In discussing the recommendations, it was acknowledged that what the Sub-Committee was being asked to approve were broadly conceptual design principles. Members were not being asked to approve conceptual drawings, these had been provided to present an illustration.

Looking at funding, it was acknowledged that external funding for the larger elements of the improvements were key to project delivery. Officers were encouraged to explore all other funding opportunities that could be pursued.

The importance of working in partnership, not just with public bodies, was outlined. Other stakeholders such as Harbour Park needed to be included along with others such as The Harvester and Windmill Theatre as there was real opportunity for investment in any or all of these at the same time.

The Chairman then spoke about the recommendations and in view of the comments that had been made he outlined some observations that he wished to put forward as amendments. These were that:

- Recommendation (1) – to add that a further review of parking requirements for coaches and cars be undertaken
- Recommendation (2) – as already mentioned the wording “and if required” be removed
- Recommendation (3) – looking at the Action Plan starting at page 14 of the report, that Actions 2 and 4 (all talking about car parking and coach parking) be merged. Although he agreed the principles behind each of these actions, it was his view that they could not be separated and needed to be looked at together and should be merged.
- A new Recommendation (5) be added to read “The proposed Action Plan for enhancing the Littlehampton Seafront is produced to prioritise individual concepts”. This would illustrate an order of project prioritisation. This was because it would be easier to deliver some projects such as the eastern 5 a side football and Oyster Pond exercise trail and recognising that the more major projects should be addressed as one package.
- Recommendation (5) in the report would then become Recommendation (6) and to be re-worded to say “A progress report be presented to the Sub-Committee annually or at ~~appropriate~~ **at shorter intervals if appropriate.**”

Subject to approval at the next meeting

The amendments were seconded by Councillor Dr Walsh.

In discussing them, the Sub-Committee supported them. Members accepted that the coach and mini-bus parking needed to be looked at again so that a better plan could be put into place.

The Sub-Committee then

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL - That

(1) the proposed conceptual design principles for Littlehampton seafront (as set out in Appendix 1) are approved but that a further review of parking for coaches, mini buses and cars be undertaken;

(2) the proposed conceptual design principles are delivered, as phased projects over the longer-term in partnership with Littlehampton Town Council, West Sussex County Council and other key stakeholders subject to the necessary funding becoming available;

(3) the proposed Action Plan for enhancing Littlehampton seafront and connecting roads from the Town Centre is supported with Actions 2 and 4 being merged;

(4) authorisation is given to the Director of Place to apply for external funding sources to support any of the seafront project proposals. This includes sponsorship for elements of the scheme to help finance parts of the project;

(5) the proposed Action Plan for enhancing the Littlehampton seafront be produced to prioritise individual concepts; and

(6) a progress report be presented to the Sub-Committee annually or at shorter intervals if appropriate.

5. SUMMARY OF TOURISM SUPPORT CURRENTLY PROVIDED BY ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Sub-Committee received a report from the Tourism Business Development Officer which provided information in terms of how the Council supported tourism to keep the District attractive, clean and safe for visitors and residents.

The report also set out the key activities that were either led by the Council or where the Council played a significant part in their delivery.

The Tourism Business Development Officer provided a presentation which outlined:

Subject to approval at the next meeting

- The visitor economy value to the District. The Council commissioned an annual report by the regional tourist board and industry experts Tourism South East. These reports were delivered each August/September for the previous full calendar year and so the 2016 report would be available around September 2017.
- Sussex by the Sea was the tourism brand of the Council and was used to promote the District to visitors and residents as the official source of tourist information for the District. It did this by via the web using its own web site; by using social media; the visitor guide; and many others tools such as marketing and lamppost banners. It was reported that web site page views were down by 7.9% due in part to the changing trends in the way that people looked for information. In reflection, social media figures had increased confirming that this was how increasing numbers of people now looked for information and how more and more businesses were using this as an advertising tool now.
- The annual Sussex by the Sea Visitor Guide continued to promote lots of events and attractions in the District and Members were reminded that this was designed completely in house by the Tourism Development Officer working with one of the Council's two graphic designers.
- The Council continued to strive to get more income from advertisements as these assisted to fund the production cost of the guide. Arun Times was also used [What's on Pages] to promote the District.
- Visitor Information Points – the Council continued to work closely with partners to deliver a Visitor Information facility in its three district towns.
- Customer Service – despite all of the activity online, customer enquiries and visitor guide requests continued to be received at a rate of around 30/40 per week via the website; email; phone and the occasional letter.
- Working with Tourism partners – work continued to cross-promote information and marketing ideas with all three town councils.
- Coastal West Sussex Tourism Project – the work was ongoing.

Having thanked the Tourism Business Development Officer for her presentation, the Chairman invited questions from Members.

One Member was interested to know what partnership work the Council did with Southern Rail and coach operators to promote the Arun District using posters at stations. It was explained that the Council paid for an advert to be placed in the Coach Drivers Year Book which promoted the three towns and on their web site too. Other marketing opportunities were taken up as and when they arose.

Subject to approval at the next meeting

The Chairman was interested to know if the Council, as part of its working with tourism partners, liaised with the National Park who promoted food portals and other areas of interest. The Tourism Business Development Officer confirmed that the Council worked very closely with the new Sustainable Tourism Lead at the National Park on areas such as these.

Other questions asked were:

- Was enough funding provided by the Council to promote tourism? The existing budget was carefully utilised using economies of scale and working with partners wherever possible
- Did the Council use Butlin's to promote the District. It was explained that the Council had a good relationship with Butlin's and it did utilise promotion ideas where possible
- Could an Ice Cream Parlour be provided in the Town Centre. This idea would be looked at with the Town Centre Manager and Business Development Manager who worked hard to identify to encourage a range of businesses to the Town and District, subject to suitable premises being available
- There seemed to be a need for more family camping places – were there any in the Eastern part of the District. Several details were shared at the meeting.

Following some further discussion, the Sub-Committee then noted the content of the report provided.

6. LITTLEHAMPTON REGENERATION POSITION STATEMENT

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

- Littlehampton Town Centre Public Realm Scheme – it had been a disappointment to not have succeeded with the Round 2 funding application. Most of the funding had been awarded to Councils in the western and northern parts of the country. As the scheme had been developed to an advanced level, Officers were ready to proceed in submitting further applications to any funding pots that became available and so were looking at every opportunity. Officers were currently looking at the WSCC transport funding budget and would be applying for CCF Round 5 phases.

Councillor Mrs Ayres asked if the Crafters Corner at the end of Clifton Road could be considered for funding. The Economic Regeneration Officer undertook to look into this.

- Littlehampton Seafront Public Realm Design Scheme – this had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Subject to approval at the next meeting

- Tourism Support – this had been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Town Centre Safety – The new enforcement officers commissioned through East Hants County Council were having an impact. It was reported that fines had been issued. Officers confirmed that an update report setting out the detail of the spot penalty fines issued would be provided to the Sub-Committee for its next meeting.
- Town Traders Partnership – The Town Centre Manager continued to work with other promoters such as Spirit FM, ETC Magazine and the Littlehampton Gazette to promote the Town Centre.
- Markets and Events – Officers were asked if they could look into the parking on the former Waitrose site which was constantly being used as this was free car park.
- Littlehampton Promenade Shelter Project – No further details could be provided due to the commercial nature of the scheme.
- Littlehampton Long Bench Slat Engraving Scheme – The scheme would be relaunched in the Summer. At the moment information on the operator of the new partnership scheme was commercially sensitive.
- Littlehampton Arcade – cosmetic work was continuing to improve the look of the arcade.

7. START TIMES

The Sub-Committee

RESOLVED

That the start times for meetings during 2017/2018 be 6.00 pm.

(The meeting concluded at 7.22 pm)