

LITTLEHAMPTON REGENERATION SUB-COMMITTEE

11 March 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Miss Seex (Chairman), Bicknell, Buckland, Mrs Caffyn, Goodheart, Gunner, Miss Rhodes and Dr Walsh

Councillors Cooper, Mrs Cooper, Dixon, Edwards and Roberts were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

Apologies: Councillor B Blanchard-Cooper

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the last meeting of the Littlehampton Regeneration Sub-Committee held on 7 October 2020 were approved and it was agreed that the Chairman would sign these as soon as practicably possible.

21. SEAFRONT REGENERATION REPORT

The Director of Place presented this report, which was requested by the Covid-19 Recovery Working Group to consider regeneration matters relating to the sea front. The report brought together ideas put forward for Littlehampton, but it was made clear that officers had not put forward a specific plan of actions and had rather provided members with a list from which they could decide for which they would like to seek more information. He noted that the report had been written before the latest central Government Budget announcements. In particular the Levelling Up fund was brought to members' attention. Arun District Council had the opportunity to consider making a bid for funding under the scheme and members could consider whether any of the ideas in the report might go into a bid submission. The bid process would be competitive, and any submission would need to refresh and tightly focus a lot of the information this report already picked up on to demonstrate the Council's vision, as well as garner support from the local MP. He reminded members that the issue of financial resources was previously responsible for limiting regeneration ambitions.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Place for his report and opened up the debate to members. Members raised many points including support for improvements to parking facilities, support from the leaseholders of Harbour Park who were keen to move things forward and supported many of the ideas in the report, the need for 'oven ready' attractive project proposals that could be worked into visually exciting bids and how key the Levelling Up fund would be to delivering these, the need to develop the staying guest market with their larger spend per head, the possibility of investigating private sector funding opportunities in support of development, allaying the fears of

local businesses by working in liaison with them and the need for members to provide direction and leadership and give the public confidence that they can deliver.

Members also raised concerns over the age of the evidence in the report and whether any progress had been made since their original publication, the ordering and potential prioritisation of the projects that did not seem to reflect the scoring system employed, accommodation not being mentioned in the report and the current movement in the hospitality and tourism sectors that may hinder partnership.

The Director of Place provided members with answers to all points raised. The Chief Executive concluded the debate by stressing to members that firstly officers needed to establish what councillors wanted and secondly that officers needed the delegated power to determine how best to get there.

The Sub - Committee

RECOMMENDS TO FULL COUNCIL that;

- 1) the sub-committee supports the development of projects, including possible bids for funding to the levelling up fund, for new green and beach links, improvements to the Promenade and secondly the creation of a vision for the redevelopment of the harbour park and windmill area, exploring options for the provision of a cinema/theatre in the town.
- 2) the sub-committee supports engagement with any leaseholders
- 3) a progress report be submitted to the Economic Committee.

22. ARUN CYCLE WAY FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Director of Place presented his report. Members then took part in a full debate where a number of points were raised including a perceived lack of content to the study, whether a cycling proposal should more appropriately be considered at County level or by the Environment and Leisure Working Group, the high cost and the possibility of reducing that cost through redesign, whether other cycle routes should be prioritised that better connect outlying communities or improve commuter links between Arundel and Ford train station, the economic benefits of cycling and the benefits to tourism, the potential of using such a cycle way as an entrance to Littlehampton upon which guest accommodation could be located and as this was external funding earmarked for cycling infrastructure it was better to use it than lose it.

The Director of Place provided members with answers to all points raised and concluded that the cycle way was an exciting project in an attractive location making more of an underdeveloped resource from a tourism perspective which was one of the objectives of the Arun Local Plan. The Chief Executive confirmed that the funding was coming from the Business Rate Pool fund and was to deliver particular projects for cycling development.

The Sub – Committee noted the report update.

23. LITTLEHAMPTON REGENERATION POSITION STATEMENT

The Littlehampton Town Centre Regeneration Officer provided members with an overview of each item contained within the position statement. Members were then able to ask a series of questions of which are highlighted below;

- What powers would Community Wardens have and what was the source of the funding of the £90k contribution received from the Safer Arun Partnership and how would success be evaluated on this and finally would the Wardens be active throughout the entire town and what were the controls for these areas? The Regeneration Officer advised that a member briefing was to be organised by Community Safety colleagues an answer on his questions would be provided in writing outside of the meeting.
- Clarification was sought on why the Community Wardens in Littlehampton were being subsidised by Arun District Council when the Bognor Regis Community Wardens were subsidised by the Bognor Regis Bid.
- In reference to the Littlehampton Traders Partnership update, clarification was sought on those businesses who were not part of the partnership specifically if they made financial contributions to the parking fund.
- In reference to the Market and events update, there was general discussion of support for a Youth Market to be organised as well as clarification sought regarding if the Artisan Market would be continuing. The Regeneration Officer advised that there would be a number of events planned on easing of restrictions and that they may incorporate elements of the Artisan Market.
- Clarification was sought in terms of whether funding was directly coming from Arun District Council for the Art Works and answers were provided by the Regeneration Officer and the Chief Executive.
- Free Parking over the Christmas period was raised as an interest point and would this be considered again for December 2021.
- Gigabit West Sussex the Regeneration Officer advised Members that a further update had been provided too late to update members prior to the meeting today, he advised that this update would be circulated after the meeting.
- Fitzalan Link, Lyminster Bypass it was confirmed that by end of May 2021 the link road (northern section) would be completed and the Southern section by September 2021. Members raised a number of concerns that had been driven from members of the public specifically relating to the height of the fence that was to be erected as well as concerns over the agreed 40mph speed limit of the new road. It was confirmed by the Chairman that all complaints that had been received were in the process of being dealt with and the Director of Place advised that he was in the

process of reviewing all of the reports and would provide all members with a comprehensive update report outside of the meeting.

- St Martins Car Park, it was confirmed that progress on this item had been stifled due to the pandemic, however there were several options still being considered for this area, development being one of those.
- Concern was raised regarding the number of empty shops in the town centre. The Director of Place provided a response to this concern.

The Chairman then invited the Director of Place to provide an update to members on the Littlehampton Public Realm project management. Following this update members then raised the following points;

- The Leader of the Opposition felt that this project had been a public relations disaster and that the Leader of the Council did not have a handle on the project, stating that it was behind schedule by 2 years not 2 weeks as the Sub-Committee had been advised. The Director of Place provided full and detailed response on the points raised.
- Concerns raised over the consultation process with Members, it was stated by the Chairman that she felt that members had not been consulted specifically in relation to Beech Road section of the plan. She sought reassurance that progress would be made swiftly.
- Further concerns were raised by members on the possibility of changing some of the decisions that had currently been made in reference to Phase 3 being stopped and the monies that would have been spent there being redirected to Phases 1 and 2. The Director of Place advised on the consequences of this decision being made and that it would involve going back to the drawing board entirely.
- Further discussion was had in reference to concerns that had been made in November 2020 and again in January 2021. It was stated that the Leader of the Council advised in January 2021 that work would start in May 2021. It was also queried of the Leader of the Council sat on the Project Board membership. The Leader of the Council provided full and detailed response.
- Further discussion was had on the membership of the Project Board, and clarification was sought from members as to who were the correct Officers to liaise. The Leader of the Council and the Director of Place advised that attendance of the project board meetings could be discussed outside of this meeting and that for clarity if members have questions in relation to this project the officer to engage with was the Director of Place.

The Chief Executive advised members that he listened and taken on board the comments that had been made very passionately tonight. He stated that improvements were needed in how good, open communication with Members is key to keep everyone in the loop. He reassured members that he would be having discussions to move this forward.

The Chairman then thanked all those in attendance at the meeting tonight and a closed the meeting.

Subject to approval at the next Littlehampton Regeneration Sub-Committee meeting

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(The meeting concluded at 9.39 pm)