

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Special Economy Committee – 20 November 2023
SUBJECT:	Redevelopment of the Regis Car Park, Bognor Regis
LEAD OFFICER:	Neil Taylor, Regeneration Lead
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Roger Nash, Chair of Economy Committee
WARDS:	Hotham / Marine
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: The redevelopment of the Regis Car Park will support the Council’s vision of an improved economy for its towns and to promote an increase in tourism across the district.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: The Council has a responsibility to bring forward regeneration activity across the district where possible. The redevelopment of the Regis Car Park will bring new leisure activity to the town that will increase footfall in the area and promote the economy prospects of the High Street and the Esplanade.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: The design feasibility work will be funded by two separate funding allocations: Local Enterprise Partnership grant funding £50,000 UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation £47,961 The design feasibility work will be tailored to fit the budget in the early stages however officers will seek further external funding to support the later stages. The additional external funding needed will be in the order of £125,000.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present members with the proposed brief for the design feasibility work that will explore options for the redevelopment of the entire Regis Centre Car Park.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) The Economy Committee consents to the production of a design feasibility for the future redevelopment of the Regis Car Park.
- b) The Economy Committee approves the project brief (appendix A) as the basis for the design feasibility work.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Esplanade, Bognor Regis, is the main seafront thoroughfare and the centre of the seaside tourist offer in the town. The Esplanade north side has been redeveloped over the recent period with mostly apartments. At the centre of the Esplanade is the Regis Centre and the Regis Car Park. The Council is committed to the refurbishment and extension of the Alexandra Theatre at a cost of £15.2M and is considering new uses for the former Brewers Fayre pub. Further east, Premier Inn are planning to build a new hotel at the Esplanade/Clarence Road junction.
- 3.2 To the north, the Council has committed to the refurbishment of the Bognor Regis Arcade. The Arcade provides the key pedestrian route between the town centre and the Esplanade and represents the key footfall route for the town economy.
- 3.3 The theatre and hotel developments 'bookend' the Regis Car Park site that is located adjacent to Place St Maur and Belmont Street.
- 3.4 As the substantial part of the Esplanade / sea frontage is given over to apartments, the Regis Car Park probably presents the last but arguably the best opportunity to provide a leisure focus to the seafront.
- 3.5 Accordingly, the proposal is to produce a designed feasibility study to explore options the deliver a flagship development on the car park site that provides the 'centrepiece' to the sea frontage and a leisure focused offer that looks to be season neutral in terms of attracting both visitors and local residents into the area.
- 3.6 Options to be explored will include:
- Redevelopment of the car park area only.
 - An option to include the demolition of the Brewers Fayre Pub to make way for a landmark building on the corner of Place St Maur.
 - Leisure offer on the lower floors including quality sea view restaurants to the first floor.
 - Option to provide car parking accessed from the Belmont Street elevation.
 - Option to have a further hotel offer on the upper floors.
 - Option to have some residential on the upper floors.
- 3.7 The key element to the work is the feasibility, in order for Bognor Regis to have a leisure focus flagship development there will need to be satisfactory business case that makes the project viable. All options will be considered, and officers will report back to member when the work has been completed.
- 3.8 It should be noted that whilst the objective is to give the Esplanade a focal point in terms of a destination leisure and food/beverage offer, in the experience of the officers involved, the financial viability of the scheme could rely on some residential on the upper floors.

4. DETAIL

The detail is provided in the brief attached at appendix A

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Members were consulted about their ideas for the redevelopment in January 2023 and those varied ideas have informed the brief. It is noted that a number of members consulted have since been replaced by new members.
- 5.2 As part of the design feasibility work, officers will be consulting with the local planning officer.
- 5.3 Once the design feasibility work is finished, officers will consult the public on the range of proposals in addition to consulting members further.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The option to offer the site to the development market has been considered however the concern is that, without a design feasibility study to use as part of the offer, members will simply get another apartment only development and Bognor Regis will lose the opportunity of a flagship leisure development to focus the tourism offer.
- 6.2 Another option considered is to leave the car park as a car park. This option will again lose Bognor Regis the opportunity to have a focus to the leisure on the seafront.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1 There are no additional funding implications for the Council at this stage.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The risk of carrying out a design feasibility are limited to public awareness and the management of the public perceptions of what the plans might be, hence the public consultation commitment.
- 8.2 There is a risk regarding the funding of the Regeneration lead post, see HR comments.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1 This report is seeking views from members on the proposed options regarding the development. There are no immediate legal and governance implications at this stage.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 10.1 The work covered by this report is being managed, in addition to other projects, by the Regeneration Lead officer. It should be noted that there is not currently funding for this post beyond December 2023.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

N/A

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

N/A

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

N/A

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

N/A

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

N/A

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

N/A

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix A – Regis Quarter Vision Briefing Document