

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION SUB-COMMITTEE ON 4 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: BOGNOR REGIS PLACE BRANDING

REPORT AUTHOR: Caroline Gosford/Denise Vine – Group Head of Economy
DATE: 16th February 2021
EXTN: 37854/37846
PORTFOLIO AREA: Economy Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This report updates Members on the place branding initiative and requests that the Council adopts the place branding outputs detailed in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended to Full Council that:

1. The findings of the place branding perception study are noted as a reflection on community perceptions following the public consultation exercise.
2. The place branding Core Values and “Brand Filter” approach are adopted for all Council activity in Bognor Regis.

1 BACKGROUND:

1.1 What is a Place brand?

A place brand is a comprehensive strategy that defines a completely new and community-led identity for an area through a process shaped and developed by that area’s community, and then communicates that positive “story” to its target markets.

1.2 By embedding this new positive narrative in all communications and activities for the town, a place brand can:

- Unify public sector organisations, business, residents, community groups and faiths under one brand identity and tone of voice
- Improve internal and external perceptions
- Increase business inquiries and investment
- Increase visitor numbers
- Attract and retain talent
- Create a platform for future development
- Be a springboard for marketing activity that will help the town achieve its goals
- Enable a coordinated approach to place making and improvements to the public realm
- Empower people and raise aspirations supporting opportunity and big thinking.

1.3 What are the benefits of using the Place brand for Bognor Regis?

The new shared narrative as expressed in the “Core Values” of the place brand provides a common framework and consistent message for all stakeholders to reference when delivering initiatives for, and communicating messages about Bognor Regis

- 1.4 Embedding the Core Values of the place branding in all stakeholder decisions affecting Bognor Regis, and all communications about Bognor Regis is an effective strategy to bring about long-term transformation. A shared narrative, underpinned by the Core Values identified by the people of Bognor Regis, applied by all stakeholders in a focused and consistent way is a key tool in the post-pandemic economic and social recovery of Bognor Regis.
- 1.5 The overall aim of the place brand is to emphasise, develop and communicate Bognor Regis’s positive attributes to residents, businesses and visitors by presenting the town as a forward-thinking, ambitious, enterprising, creative, dynamic and vibrant place to visit, work, study, invest and live
- 1.6 The place brand and new shared narrative would be consistently applied and repeated over and over to challenge and ultimately change pervading negative perceptions of Bognor Regis through everything that is said and done.

1.7 The development of the place brand

In 2016, HemingwayDesign was appointed to develop a place brand for Bognor Regis jointly by Arun District Council, West Sussex County Council and University of Chichester.

- 1.8 Following initial workshops with local stakeholders (including Members), a wider public perception study was undertaken which included focus groups, online surveys, participative workshops and group discussion. This thorough consultation process, which was widely promoted to residents and visitors to the town, resulted in over 700 local people contributing to the evidence base. The full consultation results are attached as Appendix A.

1.9 The Place branding Core Values

HemingwayDesign’s analysis of the community-generated perception data identified three Core Values which encapsulate the town’s individuality and unique narrative:

A BEACON FOR A BOLD FUTURE – Bognor Regis a place of opportunity, looking forward and futureproofing our designs, developments and people, attracting investment and talent;

BLUE SKY THINKING – celebrating Bognor Regis’s fabulous natural assets and environmental credentials, innovative thinking and going beyond the expected;

READY FOR FUN – Bognor Regis is a unique and quirky place, always ready for fun!

Further explanation and examples of how these three Core Values can be delivered across a range of contexts is attached as Appendix B.

- 1.10 Examples of where the Core Values have already been implemented in Bognor Regis include Bognor Regis BID’s partnership with Bognor Regis Town Council to introduce the “fun” giant flowerpots in Queensway, the joint Bognor Regis BID and Bognor Regis Regeneration Board “Space to...” promotion campaign showcasing the town’s natural

assets, and the recent “tongue in cheek” positive media spin on the Sun Newspaper’s front page “Looks like it’s Bognor again this year, dear.”

1.11 As a further example, Arun District Council is currently trialling use of the “Brand Filter” process in relation to the Place St Maur enhancement scheme. Feedback from the Stakeholder consultation and resulting design concepts have been “put through the Brand Filter” and tested against the Core Values to assess whether the designs are: innovative, forward-looking and future-proof; bold enough to attract people to the town; effectively reflecting and celebrate the adjacent natural asset of the seafront; environmentally friendly and sustainable; hitting the right quality point; fun - do they raise a smile? Only concept designs that have successfully passed through the “Brand Filter” have been selected to proceed to the next stage.

1.12 Place branding Visual Identity

A secondary element of place branding is a strong visual identity which reinforces the Core Values through representative colours, typography, wordmarks and graphic devices to enable a unified brand identity to be communicated. The initial draft designs from HemingwayDesign are being developed locally, with completion in spring 2021. It should be noted that the visual identity is subordinate to the adoption of the Core Values; HemingwayDesign who are a leading national agency with a successful track record of place branding work estimate that the visual element contributes only 10% of the overall effectiveness of any place branding strategy.

1.13 Implementation of the place brand

HemingwayDesign have delivered their contractual responsibilities to define the Core Values and create a starting point for a visual identity. Responsibility for the implementation of the place branding is now at local level.

1.14 A multi-agency stakeholder Delivery Group has been formed to take forward the development and delivery of the place brand. It includes representatives of Arun District Council, Bognor Regis Town Council, West Sussex County Council, Bognor Regis Regeneration Board, Bognor Regis BID, University of Chichester and Town Square (operator of The Track Digital Creative Hub).

1.15 Bognor Regis Regeneration Board as an established strategic public-private group were identified as a pre-existing partnership of relevant stakeholders best positioned to steward the place branding strategy, and this responsibility has been accepted by their Board. All participants in the Delivery Group have committed to support and deliver the place branding initiative and, at the time of writing, adoption of the Core Values and associated visual identity is being formally proposed within all respective organisations.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

2.1 To ensure that all partners are acting and delivering to a unified and agreed set of Core Values and communicating key messages and a shared narrative about the town, it is proposed that the Council supports, adopts and implements the place branding in all of its activities in Bognor Regis including the visual identity where appropriate.

2.2 The range of activities delivered by the Council is diverse, therefore the range of activities where place branding is implemented will be equally diverse. Every proposed activity will be checked against the “Brand Filter” to ensure that the activity is aligned with

the Core Values and incorporates the visual identity where appropriate. This could cover Communications activity, new and refurbishment projects from across the Council, investments and developments and community and social projects and more.

2.3 Specifically, the proposals are that:

2.3.1 The findings of the place branding perception study are noted as a reflection on community perceptions following the public consultation exercise.

2.3.2 The place branding Core Values and “Brand Filter” approach are adopted for all Council activity in Bognor Regis.

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 To recommend the findings of the place branding perception study are noted as a reflection on community perceptions following the public consultation exercise are noted
OR not to recommend to Full Council that the findings of the place branding perception study are noted as a reflection on community perceptions following the public consultation exercise are noted

3.2 To recommend to Full Council that the place branding Core Values and “Brand Filter” approach are adopted for all Council activity in Bognor Regis.

OR not to recommend to Full Council that the place branding Core Values and the “Brand Filter” approach are adopted for all Council activity in Bognor Regis.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council	X	
Relevant District Ward Councillors	X	
Other groups/persons (please specify)	PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS	

**5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES:
(Explain in more detail at 6 below)**

	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal		X
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		X
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		X
Sustainability		X
Asset Management/Property/Land		X
Technology		X
Other (please explain)	X	

6. IMPLICATIONS: All Council areas operating in Bognor Regis will need to be aware of and use the Core Values and visual identity in their work

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To improve and grow the economy of Bognor Regis through co-ordinated development and positive promotion with a consistent narrative focusing on the Core Values to promote the opportunities that the town offers.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Bognor Regis Regeneration Sub Committee – February 2017](#)

Appendix A – Public Survey Data

Appendix B – Core Values/Brand Filter