

BOGNOR REGIS

REGENERATION BOARD

Members Meeting

WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL 2023, 6.00PM

Venue: *The_Track, Station Road, Bognor Regis, PO21 1QF*

ATTENDEES

Board Members

David Cooper, Rampion Consulting [DC][Chair]
Heather Allen, BR BID [HA]
Prof Stuart Harmer, Uni of Chichester [SH]
David Wride, BRRB Director [DW]
Andrew Tice, Landlink Estates [AT]
Matt Smith, Regis Group [MS]
Nick Laurence, Metamorph Management [NL]

Cllr Jacky Pendleton, ADC [JP]
Cllr Steve Waight, WSCC [SW]
Cllr John Erskine, BRTC [JE]
Jonny Key, Butlins [JK]
Sean Clarke, Covers [SC]
Caroline Wood, CWSP [CW]
Paul Wells, Unique Workwear [PW]

Officers

Rebecca White, BRRB [RW]
Denise Vine, ADC [DV]

Guests

Andrew Bohnet, Innovate Tax

Alex Berry, V2 Radio

Apologies

Nikki Ratcliffe, Butlins
Henry Green, Covers

Raof Daud, Dicentra Developments
Glenna Frost, BRTC [GF]

PRESENTING TEAMS

<i>The Esplanade</i>	Marie Tulley-Rose & Stephen Reed, Growth Programme Delivery, WSCC
<i>Premier Inn</i>	Louise Woodruff, Acquisition Manager, Whitbreads; Steve Jolly, Director, Marengo Comms & James Mitchell, Axiom Architects.
<i>Alexandra Theatre</i>	Paul Vicary & Emily Taylor, Dev Comms; Max Whitehand, Project Lead for ADC; Hazel Latus, Jo Latus, & John Thompson, Arun Arts

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

DC opened the meeting, welcoming all members, invited guests and presenting teams. Attention was drawn to the Board's role in providing a trusted forum for discussion and the agreement that all items remain confidential unless and until published in the minutes of the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & PROXY ARRANGEMENTS

No declarations of interest were raised.

3. PRESENTATIONS WITH Q&A

The Esplanade Public Realm Improvements, WSCC

Stephen Reed gave an overview of the three concentrated areas of planned development along the area of The Esplanade fronting the Regis Centre site to enhance the link between the seafront and the town centre and promote an improved pedestrian experience. These include road narrowing to

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reduce vehicle speeds, planting to enhance the visitor experience and the reconfiguration of parking & introduction of road level pedestrian strips to improve safety. Members raised queries regarding the loss of parking spaces; these were acknowledged as minimal. The improvement scheme had created the opportunity to introduce 6 EV charging spaces with an option for an additional 6 to be brought in once demand capacity had been established. To support local partnership work, the team had considered the Bognor Regis town values and associated brand identity, along with the Bognor Regis Wayfinding Strategy, and clear reference to these visuals had been incorporated to encourage thematic alignment. Marie Tulley-Rose noted that the project had been identified through the Arun Growth Deal and was designed to complement the refurbishment and development works ongoing within the area of the Regis Centre, a strategic development site identified within the current Bognor Regis Masterplan. More information on the Arun Growth Deal can be found at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/partnership-work/growth-deals/aron-growth-deal/>

Proposed Premier Inn, Old Fire Station site at The Esplanade/Clarence Road

An overview of the proposed development was given, with an opportunity to view design concepts along with details of expected economic and employment benefits to the town. Premier Inn [PI] were seeking to develop a 116 bedroom hotel and it was noted that the planning application had been submitted to ADC with a decision anticipated in Summer 2023. A pre-planning consultation exercise had been undertaken with 140 in-person attendees and over 600 website views. 72 individual feedback responses were submitted which were positive on the proposed design although concerns were raised regarding parking, planting and the history of the building. PI have considered this feedback when making amendments to the final proposals, including improvements to the treatment of the west facing façade as an area with considerable visual exposure to the surrounding area. The hotel will create 30 full-time equivalent jobs and PI will work with Job Centre Plus on local recruitment. PI data analysis of existing sites demonstrates an average guest spend locally of £82 per night, indicating that the proposed development will bring approximately £2.8million per annum into the local economy. Following the presentation, discussion took place with Board members raising queries regarding the measures Premier Inn will take to ensure the economic and employment opportunities provided by the development support the local area. Louise Woodruff assured the meeting that during construction, the procurement of the main contractor will include an obligation to use local contractors and although supply chains present less of a local opportunity due to the constraints of sourcing for a national chain, PI is committed to local recruitment and investment in apprenticeship programmes. A dedicated website was available for information and updates - <https://premierinn-bognor.co.uk/>

Alexandra Theatre Design Proposals, Arun District Council

An overview of the proposed development was given detailing the internal layout of the building with the improved main theatre, studio space and lobby area. A pre-planning consultation exercise had been undertaken with over 300 residents attending and survey responses indicating strong support. Questions were raised regarding the potential treatment of the eastern façade and it was suggested that visual improvement of this part of the building could be examined post-construction. The empty Brewers Fayre building was noted as a sensitive location and concerns were raised around whether this would remain empty during the development. DV assured the meeting that the Arun District Council were already reviewing options for the site and it would not be left empty or in disrepair. Members asked whether any funds would be ringfenced to ensure the new site was promoted to its full potential to deliver the proposed number of additional visitors. It was noted that the criteria for the Levelling Up fund meant that the current funding was for the development only and was time sensitive. Arun Arts confirmed they have a marketing strategy in place for the promotion of the improved facility and noted that there is already a waiting list for the new studio space. A dedicated website was available for information and updates - <http://www.regisrejuvenation.co.uk/>

4. MEMBER FORUM

DC thanked the presenting teams and invited Members to make general comments on the various proposals. RW noted that to attract visitors, places needed to provide things to do, places to stay and a generally positive experience and stated that all the presentations, along with the projects already delivered such as the Place St Maur & Sunken Gardens renovations as well as the new projects being driven by Bognor Regis Town Council, the BID and BRRB, including lighting trails, bike repair stations, a perception campaign and a wayfinding scheme all combined to improve both the visitor and resident experience and delivered on the Bognor Regis Masterplan's identification of the Regis Centre site as the 'leisure heart'. It was noted that there was a good representation across the public and private sector in the meeting and that the general commentary was one of support, although Members were clear in their feedback that delivery of the various proposals was key to meeting residents expectations and improving the perception and credibility of the town as a place to visit, enjoy and invest in. PW commented that all the proposals looked to improve the built environment and asked whether improving the social wellbeing of the town centre would be a future discussion subject for the Board. DC agreed that this would be a very valid subject for the Regeneration Board but noted that whilst significant investment and improvements had already been secured through projects such as The Royal, the University of Chichester's Tech Park, the Butlin's resort development and Hotham Park, these were some years ago and the town needed some 'quick wins' in terms of delivery of these proposals to support positive social change and attract future investment. DC closed the discussion by thanking all for their input.

5. MINUTES OF 1ST FEBRUARY 2023/MATTERS ARISING

RW noted minutes had been previously circulated with no member queries. There being no matters arising the minutes were proposed for signature by DC as a true record and unanimously approved.

6. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/DIRECTORS ACTION FOR NOTING

The Management Committee report to the membership had been circulated and was noted as follows:

- a) The financial position to the 31st March 2023 was noted as £37,179.33.
- b) The Executive Director's quarterly report on activities had been circulated in advance and was noted.
- c) The Associate Membership application by Unique Workwear had been approved.
- d) In response to the challenging economic outlook and to encourage the recruitment of new members to ensure diverse local representation, the Committee members discussed and agreed a funding policy which aligns with the existing membership structure This approach will be monitored and reviewed over the coming months.

7. MEMBERSHIP UPDATES & FORWARD PLANS

Bognor Regis Town Council - JE informed the members this would be his last meeting representing BRTC as he would be standing down from the Town Council at the end of the current term. DC thanked JE for his work with the BRRB and wished him luck for the future.

BR Business Improvement District - HL gave an update on the BID's partnership work in securing UKSPF funding for a variety of projects within the town centre including new bins, thematic trails and a perception campaign. BID was also examining options for delivery of crime reduction services including outsourcing data collection & sharing and taking a shared approach with local government.

Arun District Council - DV gave an update on The Arcade which is owned by Arun District Council. Although shop occupancy is good, first floor occupancy is a challenge and ADC will be examining alternative strategies.

Butlin's - JK advised that construction was well in hand for the new Activity Centre which was anticipated to open in Summer 2024. Proposals for like for like replacement of the Skyline Pavilion

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were progressing, with consideration being given to keeping as much of the affected site area as possible operational during construction to ensure continued guest enjoyment.

University of Chichester - SH advised that the funding for the 'Business Hot House' programme, which had delivered funding and support to start ups across the region, would be ending in May, noting that this was very disappointing and raises concerns as to how to sustain University engagement with and support for local businesses. He also advised that the University were in discussions with potentially developing an Aeronautical Degree course which would utilise the local airfield with a longer term ambition to connect with sustainable aviation development.

8. AOB

RW advised that due to availability, the AGM would have to be rescheduled from July. The scheduling of the Town & District Council annual meetings, at which representatives to the Board would be determined, meant that a meeting in mid-June would be challenging in terms of ensuring those representatives were up to speed and available. This was particularly important for the membership's consideration of the leadership and Management Committee positions of the Board. The proposed date of the **AGM was therefore Wednesday 13th September 2023**. RW noted that this would still allow the BRRB Ltd to meet its accounts filing deadline of 31st January 2024. An invitation would follow in due course.

DC closed the meeting, thanking the members, guests and those presenting for their contributions to an interesting and stimulating discussion.