

Briefing Notes on Bognor Regis Regeneration Board Meeting 24th January 2018

1. Chamber of Commerce

The Chair welcomed David Wride, Vice Chair of Chamber of Commerce who is replacing Nick Stuart-Nicolson on the Board. The Chair, Gill Brown thanked Nick for his contribution to the Board and noted he had also been involved with the Joint Steering Group prior to the Board's presence. Nick thanked the Board for all the memories, and was presented with a gift to thank him for his service.

2. Board Membership

Sime Darby is stepping back from the Board as their land interests in Bognor Regis are now fully developed out. Their representative Raof Daud, Vice - Chairman of the Board, will continue membership with his own development company Dicentra. The Board's Steering Group has approved this request and look forward to having the continued advantage of Raof's presence.

Berkeley Homes is coming to the end of their involvement in Site 6, so will leave after the next Board meeting.

3. Town Centre Regeneration

Sir Richard Hotham Project Planning Appeal

ADC representatives declared an interest in this item, and made no comments or response to this discussion.

This appeal is being reviewed by the Inspector on the 20th February. The Board had been circulated for their views; the last letter of support from the Board on a majority basis was in October 2016, and the majority view is still the same, although there is concern about various aspects.

Linear Park

By way of background, in March 2017 ADC supported the "Gardens by the Sea" concept designs for Regis and Hothamton sites. The Regis site is a mixed development including residential, retail, pub/restaurant, car park, theatre with an all year, all weather cultural hub within the Winter Gardens. These are ambitious designs but we do need to be ambitious for the town.

The Hothamton site includes a new urban park for Bognor Regis known as the "Linear Park" which connects town and seafront via a network of pedestrian routes and creates a green corridor. The west side will be residential, if possible including the Health Centre site. The park design received full council approval on 10th January 2018 with an allocation of £300k to fund the project to the planning stage. It is understood that there is a new round of Coastal Communities Funding coming up however designs need to be at RIBA Stage 3 or 4 to be considered. Raof Daud commented that it was a well thought-out proposal and a positive step, and that work should be done asap to demonstrate action is happening after so long. It was also suggested that to bring the designs to life, some design boards could be displayed on the site. Jim Brooks raised several concerns including the option of removing the NHS health centre with 1900 patients. However it was confirmed that this is a decision for the health authorities to make not the council.

4. Local Plan – Progress

Consultation on the main modifications (not the overall Plan) is in progress with a deadline of 23rd February, and aim to adopt the Plan by April. ADC explained that officers were looking at how to provide houses and the necessary infrastructure, and the need to bid for funding to get the roads delivered first before the houses, and also looking at how to split sites into several developers (5-6) under an overall site masterplan, as smaller packages should produce faster home production.

5. Town Centre BID Update

The Xmas ice rink was a great success and hopefully it will be there next year as well. Footfall is up 2.8% on previous year, vacancy rates coming down, and a couple of new business openings recently. The Arcade is being marketed with good commercial interest and should be a good investment for ratepayers.

The train station is now fully refurbished and reopened; Network Rail will be cleaning, decorating and repairing the glazed concourse roof in the near future. Jim Brooks reported that the gateway to the station from the train i.e. the pub wall, bridge and signal box etc is still in very poor condition; this has

been reported to Network Rail by Arun DC. The BID will commence from April 1st with Toyubur Rahman as BID Manager reporting to the BID Board.

6. EBR Updates

a. Saltbox

Landlink Estates planning application for the Saltbox development was unanimously approved at ADC's December Control Committee with very positive comments. However the Board was disappointed that Coast to Capital LEP had not been able to fund any of the infrastructure for the site. Paul Hanson, Landlink Estates, acknowledged the strong support for the LEP funding from Arun DC, the Board and others. The LEP decision was not fully explained at a subsequent debriefing and analysis of the winning bids showed the majority from the public sector which will be sending the wrong signals to the private sector.

The Board agreed that Nick Gibb MP should to be appraised of the Board's disappointment with the LEP decision and that their process needs to be fully transparent when allocating public funds.

b. Oldlands Farm

Members of the Board on the Development Control Committee excused themselves from the discussion.

The Board sent a letter objecting to the Hanbury planning application to vary the uses on their site which will soon be considered by the Development Control Committee. The variation is to allow food retailing with the introduction of Lidl who want to transfer to a larger site from their existing one. Oldlands Farm has always been slated for high end manufacturing and an Asda application was rejected in 2008 with the Board supporting this principle over many years. Looking at Shripney Road, there is a rejuvenated retail offer which is in accord with the Masterplan, but to allow Lidl onto this site would compromise the town centre which is already an uphill struggle, so this is not the time to waver. Unfortunately a previous planning application has set a precedent for retail on the adjacent Southern Cross industrial Estate, so even if it is refused, it could go to appeal and be overridden. ***Post Meeting Note – the application was approved by the Development Control Committee in February. The planning officer stated 'the level of trade diversion and impact are not expected to cause trading difficulties for food stores located within Bognor Regis town centre'***

c. Engineering & Digital Technology Park (Tech Park)

The buildings are looking great and changes can be seen day to day. Professor Higson reported the project is on schedule for 1st August handover, and on budget. There will be a new influx of students to come in September including degree apprenticeships; there are 2 such courses running now and by September there will have 12 courses with businesses fully engaged. The University is launching 33 new courses (not including apprenticeships) which is the largest UK STEM course launch since the 1960's. The aims are to upskill local youngsters and businesses, and positively impact the town's economy.

8. AOB

Jeremy Pardey reported that each of Butlin's three resorts are holding jobs fairs; 600 people turned up in Skegness. This is coming soon to Bognor Regis. He also reported that that the Butlin's staff accommodation at St Josephs will be fully completed in March, and will house 112 team members.

Caroline Wood reported that the Big Bang was being organised in partnership with the University. There are 600 young people registered for this STEM event at Butlins.