

Bognor Regis Regeneration Board

Response to Arun District Council (ADC) Plan 2011-2031 Publication Version

1.0 The Bognor Regis Regeneration Board (BRRB)

The Board was established in 2007 to act as an independent advisory body, bringing together leading representatives from the key public, private and community stakeholders in Bognor Regis. The Board recognises that a collective and cohesive approach can generate and secure the economic benefits sought by those who live and work in Bognor Regis.

The Board has three key objectives:

- To collectively promote Bognor Regis as a great place to live, work, visit and invest
- To consider, give opinion and comment upon how to what extent planned and proposed developments contribute to:
 - the town's growth and development
 - addressing and overcoming the town's socio-economic challenges; and,
 - maximising benefits and opportunities for the town.
- To consider and evaluate strategies which impact upon the economic growth of Bognor Regis and offer comment, opinion and where appropriate modifications.

Board membership is drawn from the major private and public organisations including the University of Chichester, West Sussex County Council, Arun District Council, Butlins, Landlink Estates and Sime Darby London Ltd. Board members have completed investments in Bognor Regis of £120M and have further commitments of £70M over the next 2 years. A full list of Board members and contact details can be found on the BRRB website: www.bognorregisregenerationboard.com.

2.0 Executive Summary

BRRB considers that the Local Plan 2011-2031 provides a sound, well-reasoned and comprehensive vision for Bognor Regis positively addressing the economic and social challenges over the next two decades.

The Plan's strategic objectives include strengthening the economic base, providing local job opportunities through the provision of appropriate employment sites, better infrastructure including road access, quality affordable accommodation and the development of business support and partnerships, whilst reducing the need to travel.

This initiative will help address a number of employment and skills objectives to raise skill levels, increase employability and address the longstanding problems in the District including low qualification and skill levels which act as barriers to people accessing work.

The Board's comments below will be focused on the major elements of the Local Plan promoting the economic regeneration of the town.

3.0 Employment & Enterprise (Policy EMP SP & DM)

Arun District Council (ADC) has identified an Economic Growth Area in Bognor Regis which will be the focus for investment and employment opportunities. There are four key programmes: Enterprise Bognor Regis (EBR), Bognor Regis town centre, Better Bognor and the University of Chichester.

It is important that employment initiatives are robust to assist in transforming Bognor Regis from a dormitory town to a local economy that provides sustainable employment opportunities for its residents. To safeguard this objective the employment land identified in the Local Plan does need to be protected from an increased housing need over the period of the Plan. The government's Housing White paper (February 2017) suggested that if employment land has not been utilised within 5 years it should be considered for housing. This is contrary to a viable job creation policy and would have a negative impact on ADC's Employment & Enterprise initiatives as it often takes a longer period for land to be utilised for employment and the ultimate creation of jobs.

3.1 Enterprise Bognor Regis

Arun District Council has worked closely with landowners to identify 68 hectares which has been designated Enterprise Bognor Regis (EBR) primarily for B1/B2/B8 allocation. Employment land is required in the local area to avoid Bognor Regis continuing as a dormitory town with all that this entails – loss of income to the local economy, traffic congestion, poor local employment prospects and wages, etc. EBR will provide accessible sites to attract new businesses and also to retain local businesses that are growing. It is proposed that the EBR will generate 4,800 jobs. The 'shovel ready' status of the Oldlands Farm Business Park (one of the EBR sites) attracted Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to locate their new facility in Bognor Regis. ADC is implementing a range of initiatives to simplify future planning applications, including Local Development Orders (LDOs). The further planned development of an Engineering and Digital Technology Park on the University of Chichester, Bognor Regis campus, will promote and support partnership opportunities for local businesses and generate revenue into the local economy.

Both Rolls-Royce Motors and the Digital Technology Park will assist in creating higher skilled jobs and a cluster of creative and digital technology start-ups.

It has been recognised over recent years that employment land needs to be identified and brought forward to generate new jobs, reducing out commuting (about one third of Arun's residents travel outside the District), and the over dependence on low paid sectors such as agriculture, tourism and low-level service industries. EBR has been designed to serve and promote economic activity and consists of four sites at Oldlands Farm, Salt Box, Rowan Park and the former LEC Airfield.

ADC recognised the benefit of implementing Local Development Orders (LDOs) across the first three sites with the assistance of 'kick start' funds available from West Sussex County Council (WSCC). The LDOs will grant permitted development rights for new business-related development and allow owner-occupiers and developers to benefit from an accelerated and simplified planning process and a reduction in planning application fees. It will establish a regime of permitted development already conditioned to secure an appropriate level of mitigation as required and a measure of quality assurance in relation to use, layout, design and materials. It will not prevent or restrict other development (i.e. development not permitted under the terms of the LDOs) which will be dealt with in the usual way under the normal planning regime. The Lec Airfield site will be subject to a future LDO when a suitable road access to the site has been identified via the Bognor Regis Relief Road linking it to the A259 Felpham Way.

EBR is recognized and supported by Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (C2C LEP). The LEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) optimises the use of public sector and private sector investment, together with resources from Government and the EU. The SEP

identifies EBR as one of the most strategic growth locations into which investment will be targeted, including a major investment programme in transport infrastructure. The SEP identified 4,800 jobs and 92,000 sq m of employment space as a direct result of EBR. The SEP also recognises within EBR the importance of the continued development on the University of Chichester, Bognor Regis Campus.

3.2 Bognor Regis Town Centre

The town centre development sites provide the opportunity to change the perception of Bognor Regis and reorientate the consumer experience from edge of town retail sites to a more vibrant and exciting day and night time economy. The Local Plan's vision for growth in employment and new homes will bring a demand for the town centre to have improved consumer choice and competition.

The successful development of the two town centre development sites; the Regis Centre and Hothampton Car Park, will need to address this requirement and are fundamental to the economic future of the town. Outline plans for these sites are covered in the town centre February 2017 Masterplan Options Report. These ADC owned sites need to be brought forward as soon as possible, subject to finance and planning considerations, with the objective of revitalising the town centre fulfilling its potential as a sub-regional centre for leisure, entertainment, retail activities with high quality town centre living. The potential of the sea front location of the Regis Centre offers a unique opportunity for a sustainable scheme to meet the aspirations of residents, ADC and visitors. The funding sources for the development need to be defined in the near term to enable progress on both sites. These could be a mix of private (development partners) and public (including Coast to Capital LEP)

The concept of Gardens by the Sea/Winter Gardens across both sites will provide an important boost to the Visitor Economy whilst attracting local residents and businesses to a more vibrant town centre impacting positively on day and night time economies. It will be necessary to establish transport links from the new housing developments to assist in sustaining the development and maximizing the local Gross Value Added (GVA).

3.3 Better Bognor

It is proposed to develop a cluster of digital and creative technology businesses based initially around a digital hub at Bognor Regis railway station. The key facilitator for this is the refurbishment of the station by Network Rail, with funding from WSCC and linkage with the University of Chichester. This will assist in bringing higher skilled labour into the local economy whilst providing the University's graduates with employment opportunities. The establishment of a digital cluster strengthens the case for Bognor Regis to capture new digital businesses from the Brighton area as both higher labour and housing costs become increasingly unsustainable in that part of Coastal West Sussex.

ADC, WSCC and the University of Chichester have commissioned a 'Place Branding' project to improve the perception of Bognor Regis as a progressive, vibrant destination for business and visitors. It will be an important element in encouraging inward investment.

3.4 University of Chichester

The University has a dual campus model with sites in both Chichester and Bognor Regis. This has resulted in a £12m Business School investment in Bognor Regis which has proved a very valuable resource for local businesses and the community. It is demonstrably supporting local business with its range of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes

and its business start-up support services and incubation facilities. It also has experience of supporting local businesses through Knowledge Transfer Programmes.

The success of the Business School has led to a further £35m commitment in an Engineering and Digital Technology Park which is planned to bring 1,500 additional students over a three year period to Bognor Regis with the first students starting in September 2018.

The Park will include a Department of Engineering and Applied Design offering a practical project-orientated engineering workshop, fabrication laboratory, specialist 3D printers, and hands-on education spaces for the schools and colleges. As well as a Department of Creative and Digital Technologies with specialist facilities including a 300 square-metre television production studio, with auxiliary 100 square-metre special effects room, and a 400 square-metre media operation centre.

This will boost the local town economy by an estimated £5m per annum, whilst ensuring that employers in the area will be able to gain access to young people with the right skills in the local labour market. The University's plans are fully compatible with the Local Plan's wider regeneration proposals and economic strategy and will be an important element in improving the local economy.

4.0 Transport Infrastructure (Policy T SP1)

The Local Plan identifies the need for an improved regional and local road network to cope with the projected growth in jobs and new homes. The Government investment in regional and local road infrastructure has been negligible in the last two decades. The main east/west A27 trunk road has significant pinch points along its coastal route and is a proven deterrent to economic growth in the Coastal West Sussex sub region. After the recent cancellation of the Chichester A27 improvements the government will need to be convinced by local authorities and businesses that funding has to be provided for local improvements: the A27 Arundel by pass, the A27 Chichester by pass and the A29 junction at Fontwell where the A29 from Bognor Regis joins the A27.

A major road project has been completed with the construction of the Bognor Regis Northern Relief Road (BRNRR). This £26m route takes the A259 away from the built-up areas of Bognor Regis allowing improved access between Chichester, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton. It is significant that this project has been totally funded by the development of 750 new houses on Site 6 which are currently being built in the parishes of North Bersted and Felpham under part of the developers' Section 106 planning obligations.

The proposed generation of 4,800 jobs in EBR will require investment in the local road infrastructure which cannot be solely delivered from the proposed developments. The importance of the BRNRR cannot be over stated in enabling access to the EBR employment land. This will be further enhanced with the proposed link road from the BRNRR to the LEC Airfield site, which will open up this additional employment land and provide benefits for access to/from the town centre. The Rolls-Royce Motor Cars investment decision was heavily influenced by the improved access into the Oldlands Farm Business Park from the A259.

The Local Plan highlights the importance of the A29 realignment between Bognor Regis and the A27 Fontwell junction. The primary purpose of the new road alignment would be to alleviate problems of traffic congestion along the existing A29, notably at the Woodgate level crossing which sees the barriers down to traffic for a significant amount of time. It would allow housing and employment development opportunities to be realised, encouraging a

growth environment for existing companies and providing conditions to encourage new investment.

The importance of this scheme has been recognized by Coast to Capital LEP who have allocated £13m from the government's Local Growth Fund towards the estimated £36m cost. Further funding will be available from the strategic housing requirement for 2,300 homes in Barnham, Westergate and Eastergate . The homes within close proximity of EBR employment land will realise developers' Section 106 funding obligations providing similar benefits that have been generated from the previous Site 6 development. These funds will make a significant contribution to the costs associated with the A29 realignment facilitating improved local infrastructure for the new homes and businesses.

The road infrastructure plans are fundamental in bringing together ADC's strategic vision for employment, housing, leisure and retail in Bognor Regis. The main road initiatives: BRNRR link road into the Lec Airfield site, A29 realignment, and A27 improvements need to be aggressively pursued to ensure that future economic growth is not adversely impacted.

5.0 Housing Delivery (Policy H SP1/SP2)

The Local Plan's strategic housing allocation supports ADC's vision of encouraging more working households to move in and be retained in the area. This will be achieved by providing quality affordable accommodation, thus complementing economic growth with transport infrastructure funding. The need for new housing to support local jobs and the growth of the local economy, reducing out commuting is at the heart of the Board's Charter. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment concluded that the total requirement for new homes in the Local Plan is 20,000 units from 2011-2031, an average of 1,000 per annum. It is estimated that 3,050 homes have been built between 2011-15, an average of 610 per annum.

There are seven strategic site allocations which are within 5 miles of the Enterprise Bognor Regis allocated employment land.

Strategic Site	Units
Pagham North	800
Pagham South	400
West of Bersted	2,500
Barnham/Eastergate/Westergate (BEW)	2,300
Fontwell	400
Yapton	400
Ford	1,500
Climping	<u>300</u>
	8600

The impact of the increased housing allocations will bring additional pressure to public services and infrastructure. Developers will make significant CIL and Section 106 contributions towards the necessary transport infrastructure in addition to community healthcare, education, social and leisure provision.

The two largest sites West Bersted and BEW have important implications for employment and infrastructure. The West Bersted development will generate 10 hectares of employment land with access onto the A259 whilst BEW development is said to deliver the necessary infrastructure to support the needs of the new community plus the A29 realignment to

provide improved access to the A27, major access through the strategic site and an additional east-west route linking Westergate and Barnham.

The new housing developments are needed to support the planned growth in employment identified through EBR. It is estimated that 23% of the working population out commute from Bognor Regis, impacting negatively on the transport infrastructure. The harmonisation of new housing and employment opportunities is a key requirement of the Local Plan, reducing out commuting and improving skill and wage levels.

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www.bognorregisregenerationboard.com