



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE TOWN MEETING OF THE ELECTORS OF BOGNOR REGIS HELD ON MONDAY 14TH MARCH 2016

PRESENT (BRTC)

Cllr Mrs Warr - Town Mayor (in the chair)
Cllr K Batley
Cllr J Brooks
Cllr J Cosgrove
Cllr Mrs S Daniells
Cllr T Gardiner
Cllr M Lineham
Cllr D Maconachie
Cllr M Smith
Cllr P Woodall

(Note: Cllrs Brooks, Mrs Daniells and Maconachie are also Arun District Councillors)

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs G Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs H Knight (Minutes Secretary)
Mrs S Holmes (Minutes Secretary)
Chief Inspector J Burtenshaw (Sussex Police - District Commander for Arun and Chichester)
Mr T Rahman (Town Centre Manager)
One representative of the press
Approximately 37 members of the public of which 15 were Electors

COPIES OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC

Notice and Agenda for the Meeting
Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on 24th November 2015
Audited Accounts to 31st March 2015
Proposed Expenditure for the year 2016/2017
Bognor Pier Company Ltd Accounts to 31st December 2015
Schedule of Councillors' Attendance at Meetings

The Meeting opened at 7.00 pm

1. **WELCOME BY THE TOWN MAYOR AND INTRODUCTION OF COUNCILLORS PRESENT**

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and attention was drawn to the evacuation procedure in the event of fire. The Town Councillors in attendance introduced themselves.

2. **TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON MONDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2015 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on Monday 24th November 2015 were considered and agreed as a true record, and signed by the Town Mayor as presiding Chairman.

There were no matters arising.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL**

The Town Mayor gave her report (appended to Minutes as Appendix 1).

4. **TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2015 AND BUDGET FOR 2016-2017**

In the absence of the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, who was away, the Vice Chairman Cllr P Woodall, reported on the Accounts of the Town Council to year ending 31st March 2015, which had been circulated. The written Chairman of Committee's written report was read out and is recopied below: -

"Members, of the public and fellow councillors, first of all may I apologise that I am unable to be present tonight for the electors meeting, this is due to me being out of the country on business.

This evening you will have received the accounts for the Town Council for the year ending 31st March 2015. As you are possibly aware there has been a general reduction of spending by district and county authorities and this has of course, had a knock on effect to town and parish councils. However I am pleased to announce that due to good planning over the last few years the councils' finances are in good shape.

The council, received a total income of £928,196 made up of £689,397 from the precept, £146,109 from grants including the parish support grant, £7,976 from Rents, Interest and investment income, £48,119 from charges made for services and £36,595 from other income.

This is balanced up by a total outgoing of £874,608 giving the council a surplus of income over expenditure of £53,588 for the year.

This surplus is very important as it is going towards the annual cut in the parish support grant from Arun District council, and by 17/18 this will have reduced to zero. The council over this time needs to carefully weigh up the provision of services and the needs of the town, against this significant loss of income, and how we can be most efficient, so as to continue to provide the very best we can within our means for our residents.

The council was also pleased during this period that we were able to give out over £47k in grants to local groups and events, something the council is always pleased to support.

We are now up to a healthy level of reserves, something that was not the case some years ago.

2015 also saw elections for the council. Each year the council puts by money in preparation for that, and May 2015 elections had £13,704 earmarked for this purpose.

The council is always looking at ways we can be more lean and effective and is moving to a paperless environment. The council has thus been able to continue to fund in this current year: -

Two hour free parking - £19,200

CCTV - £2,000

Public conveniences - £30,000 ...just to name a few.

The council is also able to continue to give councillors their own ward allocation budgets to spend on agreed good causes in their particular area. This year we were able to support £2,000 of spending in this way.

Of course over the next year the council will have to take further hard decisions like the recent one not to continue to fund the Jet Ski ramp.

We also have to consider the impact auto enrolment pensions and the new living wage will have on the authority, however by the actions we have taken, we hope that we can balance the needs of the town and the important services we do with modest tax rises, to ensure the council can continue to provide for the residents in the best way possible without hitting their pockets hard.

The town council is looking though its corporate strategy to invest in assets for the town, and find ways to be less reliant on the precept, so as to be able to deliver better services for the town as a whole.

If you have any questions on the accounts please don't hesitate to ask and we will get back to you in writing as soon as possible."

There were no questions and the Accounts were duly noted and accepted.

5. **TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE BOGNOR PIER COMPANY LTD YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2015**

The Accounts were duly noted and accepted.

At this point, with the agreement of the meeting, it was decided to change the order of the meeting to allow Chief Inspector Burtenshaw to speak as he was on call and there was a possibility that he could be called away.

6. **REPORT FROM BOGNOR REGIS NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM**

Chief Inspector Burtenshaw had moved to the area from Brighton and he is now District Commander for Chichester and Arun. A pilot scheme has been running to better use the police resources and this allows for officers to be put where they are needed. There have been some very successful crackdowns on drug suppliers.

The Police are having to make savings and to achieve this, policing is being re-designed from the bottom up. When PCSOs were first introduced they were put everywhere. This will change. From July of this year, the number of PCSOs for the area will reduce from 35 to 27. However, they will be trained to a higher level than previously and so will be able to deal more fully with an incident.

In the past the police have been the last resort when dealing with mental health patients and a large number of calls were to deal with people with mental health/medical problems. This often resulted in people being arrested, as this was the only way to provide a place of safety. The police are now running a system where they buddy up with a mental health nurse, who attends the calls with the police, and this has reduced the need for custody.

The police are now using new technology which allows them to type statements straight into the police system. This, and the reduction in police stations across the county, will result in more police on the streets. There will be challenges due to the reduction in funding. However, the police will be doing things differently. Although the number of PCSOs will reduce, Chief Insp Burtenshaw will have access to the other PCSOs around the county and also can call on 42 PCs at any one time.

Questions were then taken:

Q: What was the situation with the travellers in the London Road coach park – why had they not been moved to the transit site in Chichester?

A: Unfortunately, this was closed for 2 weeks for maintenance. Usually, the police would go in within a matter of hours and direct the travellers to the transit site. As there are never enough spaces, the groups normally do not want to split up. However, once they have been offered a place on the transit site, if they don't take it they have to move on.

Q: The police seem to have gone from prevention to fire-fighting, if there

is only going to be a presence when there is an incident.

A: Having police officers walking around does not prevent crime. The changes will be a new way of looking at the issues – eg the street community. They cause problems but are also vulnerable. The police need to be more mobile. When there is no particular threat they can be on patrol but will be dealing with issues as they arise. Currently if PCSOs are on break days, the public will not get a response to emails. Under the new system, the email will be monitored all of the time. Another change is the firearm capability, due to the terrorism issues. The police firearm capability will be increased by 50%.

Q: How were the police working with Neighbourhood Watch?

A: Neighbourhood Watch will be crucial in assisting the police. It was acknowledged that there have been issues that need addressing but it is hoped to grow the scheme to help the police in their changing role.

Q: There are a large number of young people in the area with the university and college – does this cause any issues? Would it be preferable to have student accommodation inside or outside of the town?

A: The police are already very active in the student community and this will grow. It doesn't matter to the police where the accommodation is.

The Mayor thanked Chief Inspector Burtenshaw for his time and he left the meeting.

With the agreement of the meeting, it was decided to allow the Town Centre Manager to make his presentation as the next item.

7. TOWN CENTRE MANAGER UPDATE

The Town Centre Manager, Mr Toyubur Rahman, gave an update on his work over the past year. This included: work to improve shopfronts and premises around the town; Clean for the Queen; Shopwatch; events, including markets and Aerial Birdman. The markets in London Road will be repeated this year, at Easter, in August and at Christmas. The Artisan Markets in the Old Quarter will also be run again. There have been requests to run the Aerial Birdman again, as shops in the town centre reported very good sales over that weekend, but no final decision has been made. The Southdowns Folk Festival will also be taking place in the town centre this year.

The town had been shortlisted in the Great British High Street – Best Improving Coastal Town category, which had gained a lot of national publicity.

Shop vacancy rates were now at about 8.8%, down from 14% in 2012. This needs to come down to about 5 or 6%. It was noted that many of the new businesses opening up are things like hairdressers, which you cannot get over the internet. Other items reported include the footfall counter, the Business Improvement District work being undertaken and the Coastal Community Funding obtained for the Old Quarter.

The Mayor thanked Mr Rahman for his time and he left the meeting

8. TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN BY FRIDAY 11th MARCH 2016

The following **Resolutions** had been received:

8.1

This Annual Meeting of Electors

Supports the full Sir Richard Hotham plan for consideration for the Regeneration of the Hothamton and Regis Centre sites

Proposed Jan Cosgrove **Seconded** Roger Nash

District/Town Cllrs Brooks and Maconachie left the meeting at this point as this is a live planning application and they are all members of Arun District Council Development Control. Additionally, District Cllr Mrs Maconachie, who was in the audience, also left the meeting for the same reason.

Cllr Cosgrove spoke to the Motion. He was not asking for the Town Council to support the planning application but rather that the application should be considered by Arun District Council. ADC had indicated that as the landlord they would not support the scheme. However, this was a fully costed scheme and it should be considered.

Discussion followed and comments included: it was outrageous that ADC had blocked this scheme; there was a danger that after 7 years and nearly £1m of public money being spent there would be nothing to show for regeneration; this should be a chance for the people of Bognor Regis to say what they do or don't want. Another view was that it was not for the Town Council to interfere with the planning process; that ADC will look at the proposal as a planning authority and also as a landlord; it is a valuable site and should not be given away; there were some concerns about the planning application and issues such as parking; previous responses to consultation had shown that local people were opposed to large numbers of flats on the site. It was pointed out that ADC had asked for ideas for the site and a number of local people had been involved in drawing up plans. All of the schemes should be considered. In reply it was pointed out that this Sir Richard Hotham project had already been ruled out as ADC had made a decision as landlords. That is why the motion is being put forward.

A vote was taken and the result was 12 for, 2 against and 1 abstention. Accordingly the resolution was **passed**.

Following the vote, Cllr Cosgrove called for a poll to ask residents if they supported the resolution. A vote was taken and 10 electors voted in favour. Accordingly the poll was **agreed**.

8.2

This Annual Meeting of Electors

Supports the creation of a single parish-level Bognor Regis Urban Town Council to replace the current 6 parish councils of Aldwick, Bersted, Bognor Regis Town, Felpham, Middleton and Pagham.

Proposed Jan Cosgrove **Seconded** Roger Nash

Cllr Cosgrove spoke to the Motion. He was not wishing to go back to the old Urban District Council but rather an Urban Town Council. There were currently 86 Councillors covering Bognor Regis and the surrounding parishes. 16 of these were Town Councillors, all of whom had been elected.

Cllrs Brooks and Maconachie returned to the meeting.

A vote was taken and the result was 13 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions. Accordingly the resolution was **passed**.

Following the vote Cllr Cosgrove called for a poll to ask residents if they supported the resolution. A vote was taken and 12 electors voted in favour. Accordingly, the poll was **agreed**.

8.3

This Annual Meeting of Electors

Calls for the abolition of all District-level Councils in West Sussex including Arun District Council and that their work be transferred to a Unitary West Sussex County Council working in conjunction with parish-level councils in the County area to deliver services.

Proposed Jan Cosgrove **Seconded** Roger Nash

A vote was taken and the result was 14 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions. Accordingly the resolution was **passed**.

Following the vote Cllr Cosgrove called for a poll to ask residents if they supported the resolution. A vote was taken and 12 electors voted in favour. Accordingly, the poll was **agreed**.

8.4 The Town Clerk confirmed with those present that the three questions for the poll would be as per the motions considered by the meeting.

8.5 The Mayor asked if there were any more questions.

Question: Now that Blakes Cottage in Felpham has been purchased, would it not be a good time for the Town Council to develop a tourist attraction in the town?

9. **BOGNOR REGIS POST OFFICE RELOCATION PROPOSALS – ANY UPDATE**

The Town Clerk reported on the response received from Arun District Council to her enquiry regarding registering the building as an Asset of Community Value, recopied below:-

“Further to your nomination in respect of the above mentioned property and to subsequent correspondence. The Council has now received evidence from the Post Office Solicitors that the property is classed as ‘operational land’ for the purposes of Section 263 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This has been checked with Planning and they have agreed that this is the case therefore, as such cannot be listed as an Asset of Community Value as per the exemptions contained within the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012.

I regret therefore that I have no alternative but to reject your application for nomination for these premises.”

10. **BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION PROPOSALS – ANY UPDATE**

Other than the handout paper available to all at the start of the meeting with other papers, there was nothing to report under this item (appended to Minutes as Appendix 2).

11. **UPDATE ON THE PICTUREDROME EXPANSION PROPOSALS**

The Town Clerk gave her report, recopied below:-

“At the meeting of Bognor Regis Town Council on 7th December 2015, Councillors agreed to enter into a contract with Cheesmur Building Contractors, Cobbe Barnes, Beddingham, Lewes, and East Sussex to construct a single storey extension to the rear of the Picturedrome cinema, Bognor Regis.

Cheesmur the Council’s main contractor have received confirmation from Arun District Council Building Control that their proposals relating to the Picturedrome cinema are satisfactory and demonstrate compliance under the Building Regulations and have all but completed other preparatory work required prior to commencing the building works.

The Town Council’s position is that the majority of snags and risks have now been addressed and the only outstanding issues relate to licences for the jib of the crane which may oversail neighbouring properties. Secondly party wall agreements are required where excavations for foundations are in close proximity to neighbouring building structures. These licences and agreements are nearing completion and it is planned that the start date for the cinema extension work will be early May 2016, just a couple of months later than originally planned.”

A question was asked as to whether railings could be considered along Canada Grove where the public queue for entry, as they are very near to the road.

12. TO DEAL WITH ANY OTHER QUESTIONS

There were no other questions but the electors who had voted for the poll were reminded that they needed to give their names to the Town Clerk before they left.

Names of electors present who had voted for the Parish Poll to include the three questions as stated above: -

Danny Dawes, Nigel Smith, Alison Sheppey, Bob Sheppey, Peter Birch, Sue Harris, Roger Nash, Mary Herting, William Lazell, Valerie Lazell, William Parkes, Linda Parkes, Denise Squires, Jan Cosgrove

The Town Mayor thanked all present for attending.

The Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Welcome to the Annual Electors Meeting of Bognor Regis Town Council

This Meeting has been arranged for you, the Electorate of the four wards of Bognor Regis, to give you the opportunity to speak on local matters, and for us to report to you our achievements this year and our financial records.

We will listen to you, our Electors and take forward any resolutions or any appropriate items to our forth coming Council Meetings.

This year in particular has been unusual, as after the Elections last May, we had three resignations and this caused by-elections, but fortunately three new candidates were elected and we are back to 16 Councillors.

We as a Council are happy to announce that we are continuing to support the two hour parking scheme, and events such as The Carnival, Seafront Lights, ROX, Bognorphenia and many others for the pleasure and enjoyment for our residents and visitors.

It has been my personal pleasure as Mayor to attend around a 100 events, which in all has been a very humbling experience meeting the very many volunteers that help our community. Without their devotion to the needs of all age groups, many organisations would fail to survive.

We are still waiting for regeneration to happen, but are thrilled to note the progression of the Pier Trust that certainly will help regenerate our Town.

We thank the continued work of Town Force who beautify our Town and Glenna our Clerk and the great team that support her.

AGENDA ITEM NO.

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**REPORT TO AND DECISION OF FULL COUNCIL
ON 11 NOVEMBER 2015**

PART A : REPORT

SUBJECT: THE REGENERATION OF THE REGIS CENTRE AND HOTHAMTON CAR PARK SITES

REPORT AUTHOR: Karl Roberts, Director of Planning & Economic Regeneration

DATE: October 2015 **EXTN:** 37760

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A follow up report following the Full Council meeting 15 July 2015 seeking further directions to enable the next stages of preparatory work to be undertaken following which Members will be able to determine the form of development to be delivered on these key sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- I. The Council (as landowner) supports the principle of redeveloping the Hothamton Car Park site for a suite of uses including the A1 retail, student accommodation, car parking and workshop/office space complemented by appropriate landscaping. The Council accepts that an alternative or complementary use to the student accommodation would be 'staff' accommodation.
- II. The Council seeks fee proposals for consultancy support to aid the development of a business case to demonstrate the degree of financial viability of the Council undertaking the delivery of development on the Hothamton Car Park. A report outlining the business case will then be presented to the Council for a final decision on whether to proceed and how any development could be funded.
- III. Subject to further financial, planning and technical assessments and package prioritisation, the Council, as landowner, open 'subject to contract' negotiations with the leaseholders in the area referred to as Package C regarding the following aspirations;
 - a) The redevelopment of the existing Alexandra Theatre site to provide an enhanced 'cultural offer' including improved theatre, gallery space, multi-functional space and other ancillary activities.
 - b) The redevelopment of the area referred to as Package B for a mix of uses including Public House, Hotel, Restaurant and Residential, and where appropriate small retail outlets and other uses associated with a holiday destination.
 - c) The redevelopment of the existing Public House in the area referred to as

Package C for a form of development which consists of a Landmark building accommodating at least a visitor attraction, residential development and restaurant(s).

d) The redevelopment of the existing Place St Maur area referred to as Package D as an area of public realm for events and activities in a manner complementary to the other redevelopment proposals set out in the report.

e) The retention of as much car parking within Package E as possible, in a manner complementary to the other redevelopment proposals set out in the report. In furtherance of this objective the Council also supports the principle of installing a lightweight deck to providing additional car parking and the possibility of some active frontage development facing onto Belmont Street and Clarence Road.

IV. Should the Council not be able to create a development opportunity for Package C in the form set out in III(c) above then the Council supports the principle of that development opportunity being on the western end of Package B and developing Package C for any uses displaced from the Package B proposals set out in III(b) above.

1. BACKGROUND:

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Councillors will recall that at the July Full Council meeting a report was tabled regarding the potential future re-development of both the Regis Centre and Hothamton Car Park sites. At that meeting the Council resolutions included the following¹:-

(1) The Council re-affirms its support for the guiding principles of the 2003 Masterplan;

(2) The Council re-affirms its support for the vision and development principles (as amended in the report) for the Regis Centre in the 2003 Masterplan;

(3) The Council re-affirms its support for the vision and development principles (as amended in the report) for the Hothamton Car Park in the 2003 Masterplan;

(4) That Council supports the continued evolution of regeneration schemes for the Regis Centre and Hothamton Car Park sites and the intention to bring back future reports in 2015 and 2016 on what the key constituent parts should be of any development schemes and the various procurement options available to deliver the preferred developments;

(5) Notwithstanding resolution (4) above, Council confirms that any future schemes for the redevelopment of either the Regis Centre or Hothamton site should not contain a Cinema;

¹ Only those resolutions which relate to the Hothamton & Regis Centre sites have been listed.

(8) The sum of up to £20,000 be vired from the reserve set aside for evolution of the Regis Centre and Hothampton projects, for the purpose of re-evaluating the feasibility and costs of closing the Esplanade to through traffic or alternatively a shared surface arrangement, and that appropriate consultants be procured to undertake this task on behalf of the Council; and

(12) The cost of investigating the regulatory, economic, environmental, technical and financial implications of large scale 'out of scope community ideas' should be considered as a potential cost item for the 2016/2017 Capital Programme and prioritised along with other Capital Programme works;

1.2 That same report advised that a further report would be forthcoming to seek Full Council agreement as to a way forward in order to deliver the required regeneration of these two key sites. This is that report. The content of the report has been informed in part by the public consultation responses and the various submissions the Council received in response to its invitation for ideas for the redevelopment of these two sites. None of the recommendations set out below follow one single idea, instead they contain elements of the ideas that came forward as part of a new overall vision for both sites which now need to be considered, prioritised and then assessed for deliverability on a technical, financial and commercial basis. They also seek to contribute to the vision being delivered through the town centre management initiative, namely – “To become a premier seaside town, building on its culture, heritage, and traditions whilst fully embracing modernity”.

1.3 Councillors may also recall that the following mix of uses was put forward in the July report as one possible scenario based on the content of the various submissions received and the results of the public consultation. The recommendations in the main body of the report have been formulated having regard to these possible scenarios, rather than following them exactly.

Regis Centre – A new multi-purpose community facility incorporating arts, performance, exhibition space, interactive children’s experience, visitor information to replace the existing Regis Centre building and the surrounding area supported by enhanced public realm, a hotel, restaurants, public house, undercroft car parking and residential development.

Hothampton Car Park – A multi-use development comprising of retailing, decked car parking, residential (possible student flats), small scale office space.

1.4 Before discussing both sites in detail it is worth making a number of other general observations which have informed the report. Firstly, in terms of the delivery the Council has focused in the past mainly on the approach of going to ‘the market’ to secure a commercial operator to deliver a scheme on a leasehold basis. This essentially provides a return to the Council in the form of a lease with the payment of a ground rent. The scope of the lease and negotiated ground rental is determined by many factors including the risk to the landlord and commercial operator investing in the project which will take into account general property market conditions, the likely returns on investment from sub leasing the completed development, and the length of the lease.

- 1.5 However, the current financial climate around local government funding is such that where possible and desirable the Council ought to consider the option of undertaking part, all or none of the development itself before arriving at any final decision on a delivery methodology. This not only potentially improves a public asset for the wider benefit of the public but also ensures the Council secures the best return from any leases, thereby helping to increase the Council's revenues which are required to support the delivery of essential public services. However, in order to pursue such an approach the Council must be prepared to assess against any alternative funding sources, including the option to borrow, in order to fund the cost of (i) marketing and disposal, or (ii) designing, managing, building, letting and operating the completed project(s).
- 1.6 There are a wide range of risks in attempting to deliver regeneration and they must be carefully considered, evaluated and a decision made as to how they can be mitigated to an acceptable level in order to have a prospect of obtaining an enhanced return for the Council as well as assisting the town's regeneration.
- 1.7 One of the earliest risks is Council Capacity to deliver. The Council is currently developing its Vision for 2020. Therefore, in determining what the Council aspires to deliver on these two town centre sites it is essential Members recognise that any work or work packages agreed will need to be carefully prioritised. This is to ensure the Council has the capacity and is capable of delivering any agreed work alongside the day to day operations of the Council and the prioritised work on the Vision required over the next 9-12 months. It will not be possible to carry out work to both these sites at the same time. The timescale for working up the prioritised element(s) will be reported back to the Bognor Regis Regeneration Sub-Committee in the future once Members have given a clear view on priorities.
- 1.8 Each of the sites is now discussed in detail below.

2.0 HOTHAMTON CAR PARK

- 2.1 The 2003 Masterplan set out a vision for the Hothamton Car Park area. This area also originally included the existing health centre. However, in the intervening years both the health authority and WSCC (who were seen as a potential occupier at the time) have advised that either their building is no longer available for possible redevelopment or they do not have an ongoing interest in occupying part of any new development. Therefore, any redevelopment would have to take place on a more restricted site and consider alternative uses. The Masterplan's vision for this site is set out below.

"This site is in the centre of the town and on one of the main vehicular approaches, thus is considered to be a gateway location. Its current use as Hothamton car park does not make optimal use of the value or location of the site.

Character:

The creation of a new urban community in the heart of Bognor Regis will enliven the town centre. The development of a cluster of taller buildings will enhance the

skyline. The new and existing community will have a stronger identity and will benefit from the creation of a new urban park that connects to the seafront. Parking will be accommodated within the curtilage of each building.

Development Principles:

- *Mixed use development;*
- *Establish physical connections with the town centre, the railway station and seafront;*
- *Opportunity for tall buildings (up to 10 storeys);*
- *Community uses on ground floor to provide active frontage onto Queensway and Steyne Street;*
- *Retail units on the ground floor fronting onto Queensway;*
- *Office accommodation;*
- *Residential development to optimise sea views;*
- *Provision of affordable housing; and*
- *Create green finger to seafront"*

2.2 At the meeting in July 2015 Councillors agreed to reaffirm its commitment to the Masterplan subject to changes to reflect current circumstances, namely the County Council's present position and that of the NHS on the health centre site.

2.3 Discussions with food retailers indicate that this site on the edge of the town centre remains of interest to them, although this is generally without residential development above because of concerns about the possibility of complaints regarding delivery hours and other disturbance. However, the proposals by the University to invest and expand their courses at the Bognor Regis campus by up to 1500 students does provide an opportunity within any development on this site to include student accommodation to house some of this projected growth in the student population of the town. The location of this site close to the town centre means that any student accommodation is also likely to have a positive impact on footfall (and thus spend) in the town centre and will help to strengthen the town's evening and night time economy and assist in easing pressure on the local housing market.

2.4 Alternatively, or complementary to a student accommodation use would be to provide accommodation to companies who need staff accommodation such as Butlin's. Butlin's is the town's major holiday provider and employs a significant number of people, many of whom already live in the town. However, there is a significant temporary population of staff whom need to be housed. The type of accommodation needed is very similar to student accommodation. It should be noted, however, that this alternative is potentially a higher risk route and may not meet the criteria set by the Council for a more proactive involvement.

2.5 The site is currently used as a car park. It is particularly well used by shoppers and cinema goers given its close proximity to both. It is, therefore, desirable to retain car parking in the development (although there still remains significant capacity in the Fitzleet Car Park which is underutilised; however, usage is clearly linked to further investment in order to make the use of the car park more user friendly). To achieve the objective of retaining car parking on the Hothampton site, one solution

would be to convert the eastern half of the car park into a decked car park with 'wrap around' development in the form of mini workshop/retail at ground floor with student accommodation above.

- 2.6 It is possible that such a form of development could take the form of a single construction or two linked buildings. Whichever is the preferred solution, a quality design is essential, to be complemented by appropriate landscaping in order to fulfil the aims and intentions of the Masterplan (as amended in 2015).
- 2.7 As indicated above, the approach the Council would have taken in the past to deliver the above would have been to go to the market to sell the development opportunity. However, having regard to the current financial climate for public services and the Council's draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, there is a case for the Council to consider investigating other options and deliverability of progressing such a form of development itself either in full or in part, in order to optimise the regenerative effect and financial returns for the local Council tax payer. However, in the current market, and in such a scenario, the prospect of a cross subsidy for the Regis Centre development is considered less likely than if disposed of to a developer.
- 2.8 For the Council to be able to consider a different approach to regeneration as a viable option, it would need to be technically, financially and commercially sustainable.
- 2.9 Based on the above, it is **recommended** that for the Hothamton Car park site, the suite of uses to be delivered should be a combination of A1 retail, student accommodation, car parking and workshop/office space complemented by appropriate landscaping.
- 2.10 This suite of uses does not naturally follow on from either the public consultation responses or the submissions that were made to the Council. What they perhaps represent is a more pragmatic response to the opportunities that flow from an enhanced University offer in the town and the need for the Council to be able to develop better income streams to assist with the funding of essential public services that the residents and visitors to the town need, as well as optimising the value of assets for the benefit of local Council tax payers and supporting businesses by helping to regenerate this part of the town.
- 2.11 As indicated earlier this form of delivery, on this scale, is new to the Council. It is, therefore, **recommended** that the Council commission a financial viability assessment to demonstrate whether it is viable for the Council on technical, financial and commercial grounds. This will enable the Council to consider developing outline design and costs to aid the Council decision making on the future delivery of the development. The intention would be to present the resultant business case to the Council before any final decision was taken on whether and how to proceed.
- 2.12 To facilitate this it is also recommended that fee proposals for such support are obtained to allow the feasibility work etc to be prepared to support the development of the financial viability assessment/business case. The outcome of the tendering

process should be reported to Cabinet as soon as practically achievable and a funding source agreed to allow specialist support to be commissioned.

3.0 REGIS CENTRE

3.1 Like the Hothamton site the Masterplan sets out a vision for the Regis Centre site which extends from the Mountbatten Flats to Clarence Road. The vision is set out below along with a description of the character of the development being proposed and a number of development principles. It was agreed at the July 2015 meeting that the focus of the vision for this site would be a 'Family-led Leisure/Cultural Activity'.

"The Regis Centre site is the 'jewel in the crown' of the Masterplan. Development on this site could be pivotal to the long-term future of the town. There is a shared vision that development on this site should consist of activities that attract visitors to the town, and these must be housed within a first class building and public realm.

Character:

A mixed use development, with family-led leisure/cultural activity, centred around a quality destination of a suitable critical mass to make the seafront a vibrant location. The seafront will become a key part of the town centre, rather than feeling on the edge.

The proposed uses within the development are a mix of commercial and non-commercial, with active (A1/A3) uses on the ground and first floor, with residential on the upper storeys. A new theatre is provided, however the development of any new arts facility will have to be more flexible to make the theatre space more economically sustainable and in use all year. The Town Hall will remain in civic use. While parking related to the development would be provided within the block, undercroft spaces will also be provided with a landscape courtyard above.

Development Principles:

- *Reinforce physical connections from the station through town centre and arcade to seafront;*
- *A mixed use landmark development;*
- *Protect and enhance views to seafront;*
- *Provide protection from the microclimate;*
- *Development should have frontage on all sides;*
- *Ground floor uses should provide active frontage and generate activity;*
- *Quality residential development on upper floors;*
- *Town Hall should be retained and enhanced;*
- *Parking within a courtyard setting; and*
- *5 storeys is an appropriate height for development".*

- 3.2 There have been many reasons why the Council has not been able to secure the delivery of development on this site. Part of the difficulty has been around trying to accommodate an extensive list of requirements, whilst at the same time ensuring the development remains viable and, therefore, deliverable. To try and address this the revised approach being proposed seeks to deliver the required outcomes in a series of more discrete developments rather than a single entity. Therefore, the site has been split into a number of separate packages which it is felt should be capable of being delivered either with or separately from each other. The Plan below shows the respective locations of the packages A-E.

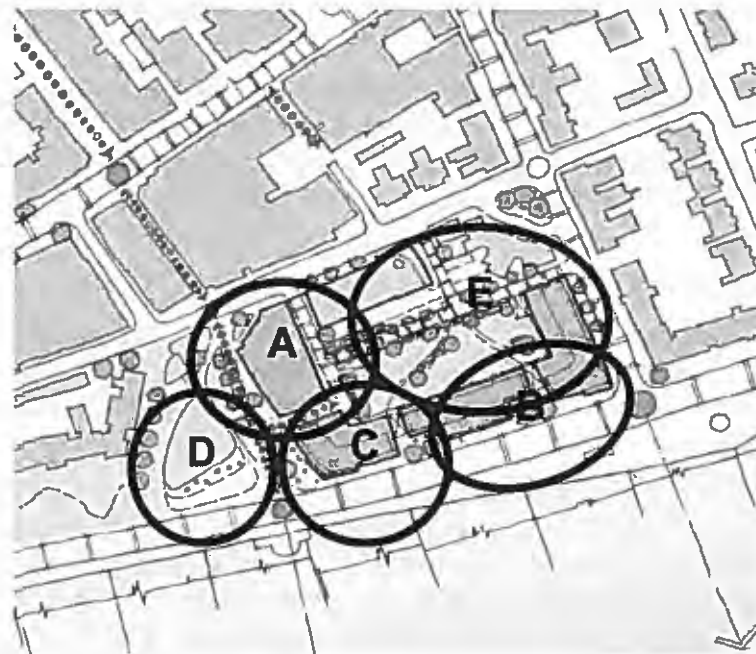


Fig.1 Plan of Regis Centre site taken from 2003 Masterplan

- 3.3 However, most importantly the proposals for each package are intended to deliver cumulatively the agreed vision for the overall site. The proposals for each site are set out below.

Package A – The Theatre

- 3.4 In 2012 the Council commissioned a team lead by Arup to advise on options for the improvement and redevelopment of the Alexandra Theatre. The report produced looked first at the business aspects of a future successful Alexandra Theatre, including potential audiences. The conclusions from this part of the study were then used to inform preliminary architectural concepts (see Appendix A), which were then presented, based upon three construction costs scenarios (£1M, £3M and £5M) requested by the Council.
- 3.5 The Arup report forms a very good basis for developing an option for an 'improved cultural offer' aimed at all sectors of society. There is probably an opportunity to develop the potential offer even further to facilitate a gallery and/or multi-use function space and if possible create a sight line between the Arcade and the

seafront. These uses were certainly supported in both the public consultation and the submitted 'ideas'. However, any improved cultural offer requires not only capital funding but also an improved and sustainable revenue funding streams to ensure that any new operation is financially viable without subsidy from the Council. The development of Package A by itself offers limited commercial opportunities and, therefore, any Capital funding will either be in the form of public funding and/or financial contributions from elsewhere. Based on the recommendations set out in the previous section for the Hothampton site there is unlikely to be any cross subsidy from the development of that site. It is, therefore, anticipated that to deliver this Package the Council will need to facilitate the scoping out in more detail of the required outcomes. These will be informed by the Council's emerging 'Cultural Strategy' (possibly with the aid of key stakeholders), the development of a detailed business case (including future management arrangements), the required assistance necessary for securing the relevant statutory permissions and then supporting applications for external funding to address any identified shortfall in capital and/or revenue funding.

- 3.6 The cost of undertaking this enabling work (which is additional to the financial support agreed in July to help the theatre improve its marketing) needs to be identified and agreed. Therefore, if the principle of the above is supported then the intention would be to bring a further report back (probably via the Bognor Regis Regeneration Sub Committee) in 2016 setting out the likely costs.

Package B – The grass strip fronting the Esplanade

- 3.7 This area of land is the grass area between the Car Park and the Esplanade road but also includes some of the southern part of the car park. Its roadside location with views across to the promenade makes it ideal as a location for pubs and restaurants on the lower floors with either hotel accommodation or residential accommodation above. At present Whitbread's have a 30 year lease remaining on the existing pub (site of Package C) and the theatre (Package A). Any redevelopment of this leasehold site will, of course, be subject to negotiation and agreement being reached with the leaseholders.
- 3.8 A variation on the above would be to raise any pubs/restaurants up to a first floor level (with balconies) to maximise the views of the sea. The ground floor could then be used as small retail outlets and possibly new public toilets. Such a form of development would also allow it to be built above the car park at the rear thereby potentially enabling more of the existing car parking spaces to be retained.
- 3.9 In broad terms this suite of uses was supported in the public consultation, the exception being residential development. However, a number of the submissions received did include significant residential development.
- 3.10 It is, therefore, recommended that the Council as landowner supports the principle of redeveloping the area referred to as Package B for a mix of uses including Public House, Hotel, Restaurant and Residential, and where appropriate, small scale retail and other uses associated with Bognor Regis as a visitor destination.

Package C – Existing Pub site

- 3.11 The proposals for this part of the site could eventually involve the creation of some form of visitor attraction which is intended to provide an additional reason for people to visit Bognor Regis and just as importantly want to return. Exactly what form the attraction should take needs to be determined and the Council would benefit from specialist assistance in helping to scope out the form of the attraction and develop a robust business case to demonstrate its viability. However, one idea that might be worth exploring is an attraction based around the Climate/Earth given Bognor Regis' affinity with the sea (and tides) and its reputation as the sunniest place in England. One of the submissions received by the Council in response to its invitation for ideas promoted something along similar lines. Another idea would be an attraction similar to the National Marine Aquarium at Sutton Harbour, Plymouth. A further alternative would be to develop an attraction based on William Blake, which was again part of one of the submissions. However, this idea probably has a greater synergy with the enhanced cultural offer proposed for the theatre. It is also important that any attraction concept complements rather than competes with the emerging proposals of the Pier Trust. The ideal outcome would be that Bognor Regis could, if they can be demonstrated to be economically viable and financially sustainable, potentially then have three new 'attractions' as a reason to visit the town – the Pier, the Regis site 'attraction' and the 'enhanced cultural offer'.
- 3.12 An attraction like this on what is not a particularly large site would probably need to be spread over a number of floors with café/shop (possibly incorporating a Visitor Information Service) on the ground floor. To assist funding for the capital cost of creating such an attraction it would be necessary for additional floors to be added for a use that can fund such an attraction. The only feasible use in cost terms is residential use. Exactly how many units would be needed will have to be determined by viability considerations, but overall the building could be significantly higher than 5 stories. Such a scale of development would represent a departure from the Masterplan, but would almost certainly be necessary if the attraction was to be delivered commercially. Given the prominence that such a building would have on the Bognor Regis skyline and seafront it would need to be of a high quality design to achieve the necessary landmark status. The location selected is sufficiently isolated to be able to accommodate such a scale of building. However, it would be advisable to update the adopted planning guidelines to test in planning terms what scale of development might be acceptable. The height of the building also opens up the opportunity to make the provision for a 'quality' restaurant on the top, offering extensive views over this part of the South Coast and English Channel.
- 3.13 In order to assess the concept described for potential delivery it is, therefore, **recommended** that the actual form of 'the attraction' as a concept be developed further with the aid of specialist consultancy assistance, a business plan be developed to demonstrate the viability of the development, the adopted planning guidelines be updated and finally some soft market testing be undertaken to test the willingness of the market to fund and undertake the delivery (and potentially the operation) of such a development. The costs of undertaking this work are not yet known. Therefore, if the principle of the above is supported then the intention would be to bring a further report back in 2016 setting out the estimated costs (probably via the Bognor Regis Regeneration Sub Committee). The results of this additional work would then be reported back to Council (again via BRRSC) before any

decision was taken on exactly what form of procurement the Council should pursue, assuming the Council wishes to agree any form of development on the site.

- 3.14 There are many factors that will influence the deliverability of the above. One of which is the existing leases. Therefore, consideration has been given to whether an alternative location for 'the attraction building' would be possible. It is considered that it would be possible to undertake the same development on the western end of Package B which lies adjacent to this site. In such a scenario Package C would be considered as a site (if available through negotiation) to undertake the displaced uses from Package B.
- 3.15 In terms of the public consultation and the submissions, there was significant support for an attraction of some form but clear opposition in the public consultation to residential development. However, if an attraction is to be provided it needs to be funded and residential development represents the only realistic option for cross subsidy. Bids for public funding could be submitted as the opportunities arise but there is no certainty that such bids will be successful and such an approach may also have a negative effect upon any bids for public funding to help deliver the enhanced 'cultural offer' at the theatre.
- 3.16 It is therefore, **recommended**, that the Council open 'subject to contract' negotiations with the leaseholders in the area referred to as Package C and if the invitation to negotiate is not turned down, officers explore the merits for a form of development which consists of a Landmark building accommodating at least a visitor attraction, residential development and restaurant(s). Should the Council not be able to develop Package C in the form set out above, then the Council supports the principle of undertaking that development on the western end of Package B and eventually developing Package C (if available through negotiation) for any uses displaced from the Package B proposals set out above.

Package D – Place St Maur

- 3.17 Package D is the area known as Place St Maur, an area of open space. In its current condition it does not contribute significantly to the townscape. Therefore, it is **recommended** that a detailed public realm scheme, with the objective of providing space for events and activities be developed once there is clarity on the land take required to deliver the development of Packages A, B and C. This approach would broadly accord with the view of the public and those who made submissions. If this is agreed in principle then, as with the other proposals, the estimated costings will be sought and reported back in 2016. Again, the actual delivery of any improvement to the public realm would in all probability have to be funded in the main from public sources with possible contributions from any commercial development(s). At this stage, neither the costs to develop a scheme for this site or the funding source(s) to deliver any proposals coming forward here have been identified.

Package E – Car Park

- 3.18 Package E is the existing car park. The objective here is to retain as much car

parking as possible. However, it needs to be recognised that the developments in Packages A, B and C may encroach upon the car park. Therefore, there is merit in commissioning some work to establish the feasibility and cost to erect a single storey light weight deck upon parts of the car park to increase the capacity. This may offer up the opportunity to deliver some small scale development fronting Clarence Road and Belmont Street to help mask the deck and also contribute to the additional cost. Again this work would only be commissioned when there was a clear picture of what is proposed for Packages A to C inclusive and at this stage no costs have been sought or funding source identified.

4.0 THE SIR RICHARD HOTHAM PROJECT

4.1 Councillors will be aware that a planning application has been lodged by 'The Sir Richard Hotham Project Ltd'. The details of the application BR/26/15/PL are available via the Council's website. That application is currently being evaluated by an external planning agency on behalf of the Council because of staff shortages. In due course the application will be placed before the Planning (Development Control) Committee for determination. The material considerations considered relevant to the determination of a planning application (and the weight afforded to them) by the Council as the Local Planning Authority can be different to those considered relevant by the Council as landowner. This can ultimately lead to the same or different decisions by the Council in pursuant of its formal functions. Consideration of the Council's response as Landowner is the subject of a separate Exempt Report to Council on 11 November 2015

4.2 This report is only intended to inform the Council's position as landowner and what it wishes to consider at this stage to enable it to move forward so that at a later date it will be able to;

- 4.2.1 decide what it wants to achieve from its land,
- 4.2.2 decide what its chosen method of delivery will be, (Lease, Development Agreement, or other legal process)
- 4.2.3 decide a procurement process to choose a partner.

Full Council needs to determine the extent of the principles set out in the body of this report, and whether it wishes to accept them or not.

4.3 The developer's actions in submitting an application without taking account of the Council's publically stated process for seeking ideas is regrettable because the applicant has obviously spent a lot of time and effort preparing and submitting a planning application even though the Council requested that they did not submit an application until the Council's formal position was known. The fact that the applicant sees merit in investing in Bognor Regis is, of course, to be welcomed. The Council has no desire to turn away investment if it supports the Council's decisions on regeneration. However, the Council also has a duty to ensure that when the Council owned sites are redeveloped, it is done in a way which complements its overall vision for the town and follows required procurement/disposal processes. Whilst the proposals contain positive elements, the overall and very extensive package is very reliant upon significant levels of residential development on the Regis Centre site to make the development commercially viable and doesn't, in the view of Officers, offer in return an

attraction(s) of sufficient merit to warrant the Council supporting the proposal as a landowner. In contrast the proposals in the report are overall, potentially more modest in scale, notwithstanding the proposed tower and therefore the scale of residential development is more likely to be in keeping with public sentiment on the issue. By the Council possibly taking a more direct involvement in the delivery of some of the packages on the Regis Centre and Hothamton sites, the Council increases the potential of a greater return for any investment/resources it puts in. In doing this, it also increases the reputational and financial risks the Council will potentially carry, rather than share or transfer development risk to a developer(s) such as the Sir Richard Hotham Project or other organisation. In determining its landowner aspirations, Members need to balance those upside and downside risks.

- 4.4 Should the Council agree to the principles being proposed in this report, it is entirely possible for a third party to decide that they would wish to prepare a proposal for consideration by the Council both as landowner and as local Planning Authority that accords with those principles. Should this occur, there would not be any requirement for the Council as landowner to accept it or treat with only one organisation without a procurement process to demonstrate it can achieve best consideration for Council tax payers.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

To seek clear directions from Full Council to enable the next stages of preparatory works to be undertaken to allow the Council to determine the form of any future development on both sites.

3. OPTIONS:

1. To support the recommendations (i) – (iv) in the report.
2. To support none of the recommendations in the report.
3. To support the recommendations in the report for only one of the two sites.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors (via July 2015 Council report)	✓	
Other groups/persons (please specify) Public consultation	✓	
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial	✓	
Legal	✓	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓

Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land	✓	
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		

6. IMPLICATIONS:

The Council will, by its decision(s), set in train works requiring financial commitments to be entered into, and legal agreements and advice to be obtained. As freehold owner of the sites, the Council has an asset interest.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To seek Members' views on how to contribute towards the further regeneration of the town centre.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

15 July 2015 Council meeting: <http://www.arun.gov.uk/full-council>

The Submissions: <http://www.arun.gov.uk/bognorregisregeneration>

The matrix of submission proposals: <http://www.arun.gov.uk/bognorregisregeneration>

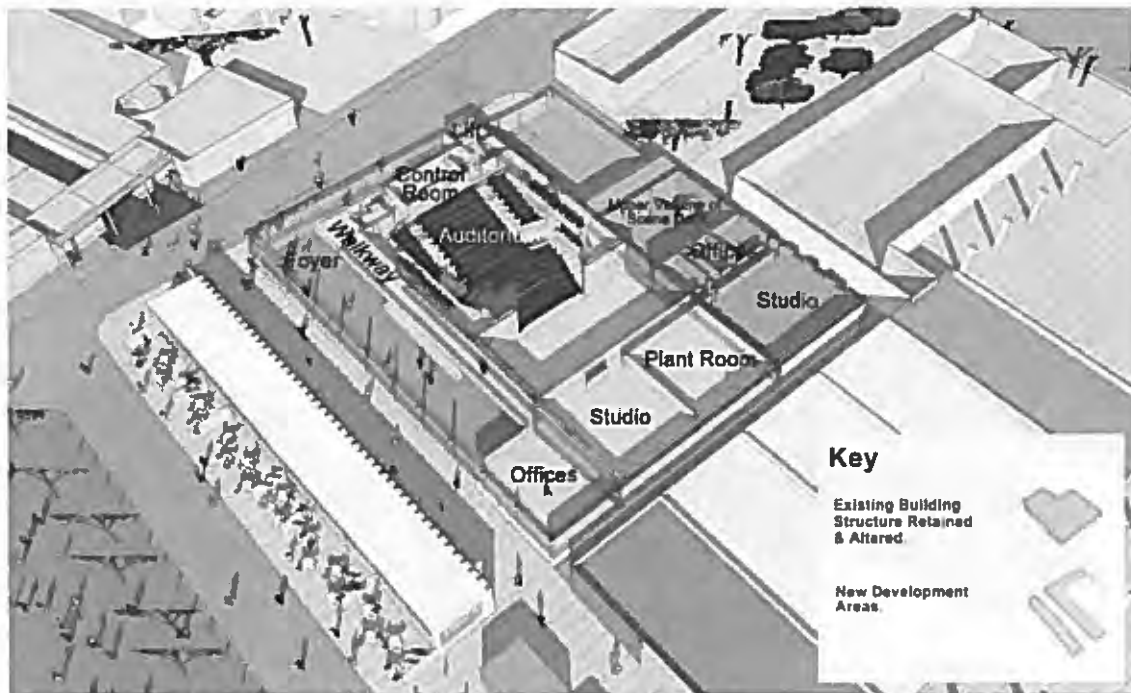
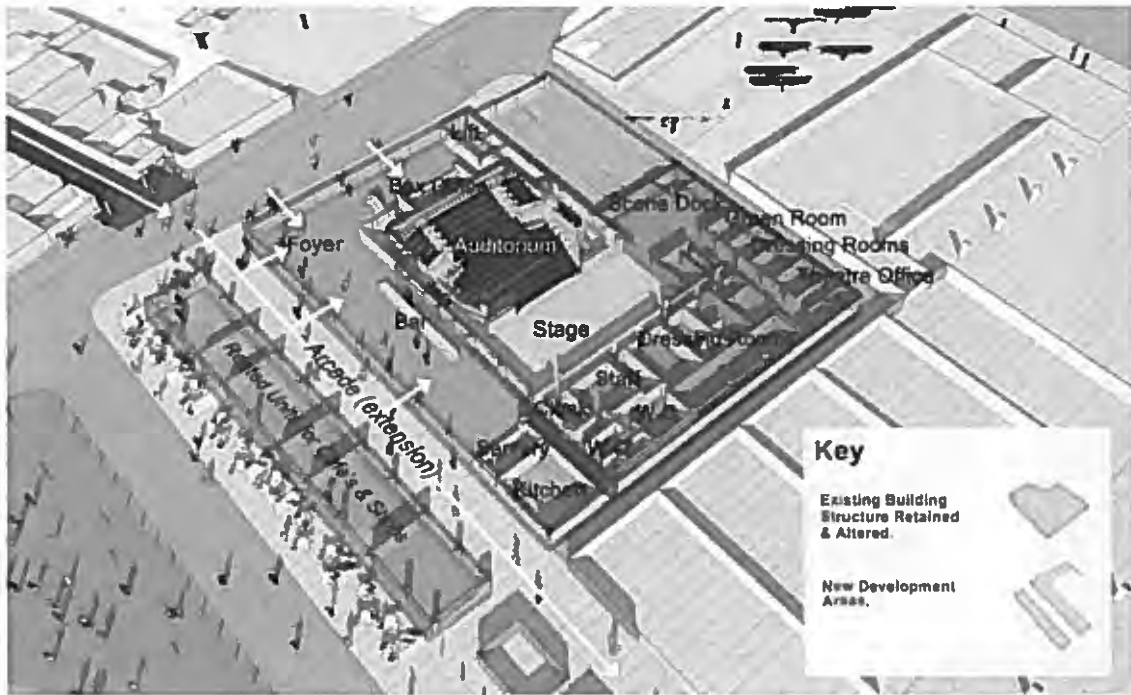
2003 Masterplan: <http://www.arun.gov.uk/bognorregisregeneration>

111115 Full Council Report re Regis Centre & Hothamton Car Park Sites
Appendix A

Appendix A – Images taken from the report on the Alexandra Theatre by Arup et al.



111115 Full Council Report re Regis Centre & Hothamton Car Park Sites
 Appendix A



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