

REGENERATION PROPOSALS FOR BOGNOR REGIS

**Community Discussion Group
30 January 2008**

Community Discussion Group background

The Discussion Group, made up of a cross-section of 20 representatives from the local community, was formed to act as a forum for ideas generation, qualitative feedback and in-depth discussions about St Modwen's regeneration proposals for Bognor Regis.

Qualitative feedback from the Discussion Group will be considered along with that received at the public exhibitions, which were designed to attract wider participation and more quantitative research.

Issues raised

The following issues were raised and discussed and will need to be further considered by the St Modwen design team:

1. Seafront

Quality of beach – that is why people visit the seaside. Bognor Regis is a grey, dowdy seafront and the beach is often quite muddy

Not much to look at out at sea currently – sterile. However, it was suggested that the current shore line (particularly Mulberry Rocks) provides some one of the best dive sites on the south coast and in the whole of the UK

A Marina would help Bognor Regis to bring more activity to a relatively unused sea. Suggested that more activities in the water would create a more interesting outlook of interest to watch from the Building on the Beach or from seating etc

Preference for sand – example of Ramsgate was given. Suggested that perhaps the groin could be shaped to re-direct shore drift

Materials of buildings – all buildings across both sites would have to use appropriate, high quality materials to prevent corrosion from salt and wind

Long term management of the seafront and its activities is key – desirable to hear how activities will be sustained and managed along with the quality of the new seafront

Disabled access – strong desire for the new seafront (unlike the current one) to be disabled friendly in terms of access and facilities provision

2. Traffic/transport/parking

Concerns over increased numbers of tourists blocking up the roads. Agreed that the town is struggling to cope with the current traffic levels and road structure

Current parking is full all the time – desire for sufficient parking to cater for new scheme e.g. residential accommodation, leisure and foodstore users, in addition to the parking spaces already provided in the town

Construction – during building works, car parks will disappear – concerns over how this may restrict use for current facilities' and businesses. Need for carefully considered parking and access strategy/phasing during construction stages

The Esplanade closure – desire to see the new landscaping and all the new activities/vibrancy of the scheme that will be achieved through the closure. Acceptance that currently, The Esplanade is often closed during community events and it doesn't disrupt the town.

The Esplanade closure – need to be satisfied of appropriate alternative routes through the town to prevent congestion

Suggested that Park and Ride should be considered

3. Residential provision

Initial queries over the need for more residential. The inclusion of residential in the Development Brief was explained along with the desire to create a fully mixed-use scheme with an increased population creating increased spend.

Concern over mix of residents in the new residential buildings: "It is like God's waiting room at the moment". It would be important to get the mix right and the idea of mixed tenures and affordable housing was welcomed.

Concern of proximity of new residential build to leisure facilities – which may make them unpopular to buy or rent or which may place restrictions on outdoor entertainment

4. Hothamton Tower

There were no major objections to the tower as a landmark and to provide necessary residential accommodation to pay for the scheme as a whole – however design will be key

Iconic and landmark – any tower would need to be architecturally spectacular for it to be accepted. Desire to see more of the design

Materials and shape of the tower will be key – durable and iconic

Questions were raised over effects of the tower on the immediate surrounding area. Queensway is currently a wind tunnel and concerns that this is due to

the presence of Fitzleet Tower. The Group will need to be satisfied by wind studies as well as sunlight/shade studies as to any possible impacts.

5. Leisure

Desire to see leisure facilities for all ages – there is a problem with young people in the area with nothing to do plus an excess of 100 nursing homes in and around the area; need to provide facilities for all ages

Variety of indoor and particularly outdoor uses is essential to appeal to a cross section of people – Brighton was considered to be a good example

Restaurants and bars welcomed as currently the offer is poor – however, desire to get more figures about the numbers of these. The area needs to not be over-populated with unsustainable restaurants

Currently there is a problem with anti-social behaviour and noise. Desire for St Modwen to provide “up-market” quality pubs and bars and demonstrate how design and management strategy will prevent further problems and help to ease current issues

Maintenance is key – the leisure facilities should not end up “tatty”. St Modwen will need to demonstrate an ongoing maintenance regime to prevent this

6. Retail- food store

Support for the idea of a new high quality food store as long as this was not too large and the design was right

There are currently access problems with the Tesco store. Group would like to understand how access/servicing will be addressed for the new store to avoid similar issues.

Suggestion as to whether there might be the opportunity for local produce to be sold on the site i.e. Farmers’ Market (as there is already a French Market)

7. General

The Group would like to see the Regis Centre site delivered first but understood the reasons for the Hothampton site being brought forward first – i.e. due to possible delays of a Public Inquiry re the closure of the Esplanade

Concerns were expressed that objections over the closure of the Esplanade will hold up the regeneration proposals. Question of what would happen if the Esplanade does not close

Strong desire expressed that St Modwen should use local contractors wherever possible for construction and other work

8. Additional questions raised and answered:

Demographically who is this aimed at?

Are there going to be investors willing to invest? Do food retailers want to come to Bognor Regis?

What sort of timeframe is St Modwen looking towards for delivery?

How much is the scheme going to cost ADC?

-Ends-