

Statement – Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group – 6th December 2017

Members of the steering group received an update from officers on the two projects looking to bid to the next round of Coastal Community Funding to be launched in the New Year; Creative Incubator Space and East Beach.

Creative Incubator Space: The project looks to develop the creative infrastructure in Bexhill to support local creatives and those now finding their way to Bexhill from adjoining towns, in order to create local employment and stimulate footfall into the town centre. Officers have commissioned an economic impact study to look at the impact of developing this work space in Bexhill to fully understand the impact any investment could have on the town.

East Beach: the project includes the area at the bottom of Galley Hill including the parking area by Bexhill Sea Angling Club, which is being considered as an access point to East Parade/Bexhill. Following an unsuccessful bid to Heritage Lottery Fund Council officers are now breaking the project down into four distinct projects. A concept design statement has been jointly commissioned by RDC and the Sea Angling Club.

Each of the four project teams updated on activity and progress against the actions within the Bexhill Town Centre Strategy:

Branding and Vitality:

- The retail focused modern vintage postcard is now being distributed within the South East and local areas. 30,000 copies were printed with 20,000 being made available for local distribution.
- Cabinet members approved the request for s106 funds to support a 2018 Summer of Events poster campaign along with a PR campaign that will start in the Spring.
- The Jobs and Apprenticeship Fair is being held on the 2nd March 2018.

Built Environment, Traffic Management and Public Realm:

- Members received an update from the Council's Planning Enforcement Team who had conducted a further survey of the condition of properties along London Road, some action has been taken by landlords but further work is required in some areas.
- ESCC are due to finalise the brief for London Road shortly which will look at traffic management, alongside place setting, public realm and appearance. This work will be included in the 2018/2019 capital programme.

Investment and Development:

- Western Road Covered Market – the property went back to auction as the first sale did not complete. Officers will make contact with the new owners to find out their plans for the site

- DLW Heights – is being renovated and the downstairs units will be painted.

Housing

- The Housing needs and stock condition surveys have been completed and a presentation of the results was circulated to members of the Steering Group. The report highlighted that the town centre has a significant amount of private sector letting stock which is of a poor standard, with the single biggest issue is that of excess cold. Cabinet members have approved a task and finish group to look at taking forward specific work arising from the report.

S106 Funds

- Cabinet approved the request from the Steering Group to allocate £7,500 to the Branding and Vitality Summer of Events poster campaign and PR campaign and the ring fencing of £20,000 for public realm works within the town centre.
- The remaining s106 funds total £25,054

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