

## **Questions , Answers and Actions- Arun County Local Forum – 8 November 2021**

### **In Attendance:**

#### **County Councillors**

Trevor Bence, David Britton, John Charles, Alison Cooper, Roger Elkins (Chairman), Keir Greenway, Dawn Hall, Gary Markwell, Francis Oppler, Ashvin Patel, Jacky Pendleton, Deborah Urquhart, James Walsh

#### **Residents:**

Carole Ward, Sylvia Verrinder, Graham Matthews, Leonie Frean, Peter Coe, Elizabeth Linton, Monika Davis, Elizabeth Walby, Catherine Gear, Jan Cosgrove, Steve Goodheart, Alison Wood, Ed Miller.

#### **Question 1 from Jan Cosgrove:**

Since 2010, the Bognor area (along with others in Arun) has lost most of its youth clubs to cuts, disproportionately so. Now the recent decisions have put what remains at risk - both provisions are run by the voluntary sector and are in centres which are being subject to a disposal process - 39 and Phoenix Centre. The latter was purpose built for open access using My Space funding yet has hardly ever been able to provide that, a matter for public concern given the purpose of the funding.

County as the Local Education Authority has a Statutory obligation under s508 and 507b of the 1996 Education Act re such provision. It is vital that these two centres remain primarily as youth centres, there are County/local based voluntary providers willing to run these centres. The Act provides for an LEA to give primary consideration to such bodies to make provision (s508-3), yet such bodies were the first to suffer cuts a decade back.

Will Councillors ensure that County provides these organisations with the means to run these centres, including considering community asset transfer, peppercorn leases, long-term grants and all other means? As we emerge from the pandemic, such provision is recognised by experts as of crucial value in ensuring the mental health and social wellbeing of our young people.

#### **Response to Question 1, provided by the local member Cllr Keir Greenway:**

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) owns the freehold of the Bognor Regis Find It Out Centre at Glamis Street Bognor and the Phoenix Centre, Bognor Regis. As noted, the decision on the future of the Early Help service has now been taken. The decision does approve that the Find It Out Centre in Bognor and the Phoenix Centre, will be surplus to the service requirements as part of the Service Re-design.

Colleagues in the Early Help team are managing the on-site practical withdrawal of the services and will be handing the properties back to the Property and Assets teams during November. Early Help have advised all users and partners of the closure and are overseeing all the local close down arrangements.

The Assets team have been working on the options for each of the centres affected by the decision. The options appraisals for the future use of Bognor Find It Out and Phoenix Centres are still under review as the matters are quite complicated. The priority of the appraisal has been firstly to deliver against any known County Council service requirements for properties, followed by the objective to rationalise the estate where feasible.

There has been a number of initial expressions of interest in these centres from organisations representing the local community and youth organisations. To understand these aspirations and clearly set out the County's expectations of any group wishing to take over a property, we plan to have further stakeholder engagement and move on to a more formal Expression of Interest process and Business Case shortly. Colleagues in our Partnerships and Communities team are helping us with this work.

Full Council in October did agree the following Notice of Motion:

This Council confirms that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property has put in place a clear process, such that any currently owned Council land is always first considered for possible social, community or environmental use, particularly where this could complement the Council's ambitions relating to climate change, prior to deeming it surplus to requirements, one of which options could be for development by the County Council's Joint Venture development company.

Cllr Greenway encouraged any groups with an interest in facilities to contact him.

Cllrs James Walsh and Francis Oppler stated they would also be happy to facilitate any interest parties.

**Question 2 from Nicola Nathan:**

I live in Findon village which I understand comes under Arun. Could food waste such as vegetable peelings be collected from households some of whom do not have a suitable place to compost such waste? I believe that other councils provide this service.

**Response to Question 2, provided by the local member Cllr Deborah Urquhart:**

Waste Collection is a District & Borough Council function, and it will be for Arun Borough Council to manage. West Sussex County Council is the waste disposal Authority and so do work in partnership.

Government will shortly, through new powers set out in the Environment Bill, make it a statutory duty for local authorities to collect a consistent range of recyclable materials from households (paper, card, glass, plastic and metal packaging and food waste). All these are already collected in West Sussex except food waste. The date from which local authorities must have this in place is not yet confirmed.

However, we are currently supporting a trial collection of food waste in the Arun district as part of a "1-2-3" system whereby food waste is collected weekly, recycled materials fortnightly and residual waste (of which there should be very little) on three weekly cycle. The scheme is proving popular with most users.

We will be evaluating and sharing the results of the trial with all West Sussex District and Borough partners in order to help inform future policy making.

**Question 3 from Steve Goodheart:**

1. Regarding the traffic flow & other highways issues in & around Bognor Regis. The pedestrian area in the town centre has never worked & is a blot of misunderstanding by all users. It needs to be brought up to a speed with 21st century thinking & answers. This has support from traders & businesses to turn it into a one-way system. Support by members is needed for this to be explored. Can a working group be set up with a mix of players councillors & residents developing ideas to bring it back to the table?
2. Which brings the other highways issue into my questions, the town is a coastal resort which means it has many activities all throughout the year. By introducing a new traffic flow system around & through the town, this would create areas where road closures could take place. In such areas events & other activities could take place, bringing much needed interest into the BR area. This could & should include other roads into the town.
3. Tree planting alongside of roads to create avenues to celebrate the Queens platinum jubilee next year. Permissions need to be given for this to happen. If support is fore coming from members, some partnership needs to be created between community groups & local authorities, together WITH A STRONG GROUP it could push this project into towns, villages & community groups around West Sussex, it could also find funding & support to make this achievable.

**Response to Question 3 provided by the Chairman, Cllr Roger Elkins:**

1. WSCC have worked in partnership with Arun to deliver public realm improvements from Bognor Regis Station to Town Centre main shopping area, the next priority identified within the Growth Deal is the Regis Centre and Seafront Regeneration. Arun Alexander theatre redevelopment proposals which have successfully attracted multi-million pounds of Levelling Up funding, will look at connectivity of the Regis Centre regeneration and complementary improvements to surrounding public realm, highways, sustainable travel and pedestrianised routes, between seafront, town centre and station areas.
2. Arun Growth Deal recognises Bognor Regis town centre economy and seafront regeneration as a priority, including public realm improvements, supported by LEP and recently LUF funding announcement. Partnership officers are liaising on Arun led public realm enhancements at Place St Maur, linked to Alexander Theatre, and exploring options to improve the

Esplanade, connectivity, safety, sustainable travel, carbon savings, incorporating potential future road closures where appropriate, to support future events and activities. Road closures can be applied for via a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order on our website.

3. Town and Parish Councils will shortly be able to apply to plant trees on the public highway under licence. It is anticipated that this will be in place by the end of November and accessed via the WSCC website.

Cllr Francis Oppler stated he would be happy to meet with Mr Goodheart to discuss this further as it would be a large piece of work.

Emily King, Director of Communities, added that she would speak to her colleague Matt Davy, Director Highways at WSCC about how all local authorities could work together on such a scheme.

**Question 4 from Alison Wood:**

As Yapton continues to expand and West Sussex Council strives to be more eco-friendly, are there any plans to build a good footpath along either of the roads from the village of Yapton to the main A259, thus allowing people to walk/run/cycle in safety to Littlehampton or Bognor?

**Response to Question 4 provided by the local member Cllr Jacky Pendleton:**

The B2132 Yapton Road/Bilsham Road Footway scheme is currently sitting on our Local Transport Improvements Programme (LTIP) and will enter the LTIP process later this year, we have been in discussions with the Walking & Cycling steering group and this scheme is part of the West Sussex W&C strategy (Scheme ID 192). We have secured part funding for the scheme from Section 106 funding, agreement Reference Y/5/17.

Progress on this scheme initially stalled due to Covid-19 and the planning application associated with Tangmere SDL. WSP will be commissioned to undertake a study looking at how the Oving Road and Westhampnett Road STIP schemes would link to the wider cycle network. As part of this commission WSP will be asked to identify a preferred route between Barnham and Chichester and also prioritise any feasible alternative options.

Feasibility work on this project would most likely commence in 2023/24.

As part of the Yapton Strategic site (located between Yapton Road & Bilsham Road for 550 dwellings) contributions have been secured to improve and upgrade the status of parts of the old canal route PROW, which could also include Drove Lane. The specific alignment and improvements are yet to be agreed but this could potentially form part of an off-road walking route between Yapton and Flansham.

In the other direction towards Littlehampton the Ford strategic site at Ford Airfield is currently being assessed but is to provide routes within the site and a means of access onto Horsemere Green Lane and pedestrian improvements on Horsemere Green Lane. A route from Horsemere Green Lane would then be

provided through the Climping site (located south of Horsemere Green Lane north of A259). This then provides a connection onto the A259 cycle route towards Littlehampton.

**Question 5 from Ed Miller:**

Why is there such slow progress on the roadworks on the A259 between Angmering and Rustington? Why is it that when we drive past there in working hours, we rarely see anyone working? What is the target date for completion?

**Response to Question 5 provided by the local member Cllr Roger Elkins:**

We understand your concerns regarding apparent extended periods of reduced activity on the site at Littlehampton and Angmering. However, the lull in activity in some aspects of construction activity is necessary

and planned for in the programme. The A259 is a main corridor for fibre optic cables which are being moved and replaced outside of the road footprint. We cannot work around these cables without causing damage to them, and OFCOM rules stipulate that telecoms companies give customers 90 days' notice before any interruption to internet services, commencing only once the new cables are laid, tested and ready for switchover. This is peculiar to fibreoptic cables which cannot be cut and reconnected without an interruption to service like copper cables can. There is therefore an unavoidable lull in construction activity whilst this notice period is concluded.

The utility companies have now started switching off their old fibreoptic networks which has opened up parts of the site for construction that have not previously been available to us. The rate of work on site will now pick up and we expect to have half the new road surface complete and ready to drive on by the end of the year. This will give us the space we need to reinstate multiple lane entries to the roundabouts, and to install signalised crossings for pedestrians.

These measures will restore much of the traffic capacity, and so reduce unwanted side effects such as rat running on surrounding roads. We are therefore asking customers to bear with us whilst this disruptive phase of the works is completed. In the longer term the pre-existing problems of congestion and rat-running traffic should greatly reduce once the scheme is complete. The works are scheduled to complete in Nov/Dec 2022.

Additionally, from the end of this week 01/11 we will be issuing monthly updates to County and District Members, Parishes and other interested parties.

**Question 6 from Rod Hague:**

Have all of the parishes who will be impacted by the proposed incinerator at Ford been made aware of its visual impact on their areas?

**Response to Question 6 provided by the local member Cllr Jacky Pendleton:**

Here is a list of the parish councils that have been consulted on the Ford EFW application ([WSCC/011/21](#)):

- Walberton
- Arundel Town

- Ford
- Clymping
- Yapton
- Littlehampton Town
- Lyminster and Crossbush
- Felpham Parish

All have made comments on the application, which can be seen under the 'consultation response' on our web pages.

Other parishes who have made comments (not directly consulted) are:

- Aldingbourne
- Barnham and Eastergate
- Bersted
- Oving
- Middleton
- Rustington

These are also available under the 'public comments' tab.

The application is currently targeted for 30<sup>th</sup> November committee.

There are many members of this Forum who are also on the WSCC Planning Committee that will decide this application and therefore it is not advised that any discussion takes place at the Forum.

People can ask to speak at the Planning and Rights of Way Committee. The public participation procedure allows up to six people (three in support, including applicant, agent or other supporters, and three against), to address the Committee on each planning or rights of way application. Each speaker will be given five minutes. We take requests to speak on a strictly first-come, first-served basis. This can be applied for once the agenda for the meeting has been published (5 clear working days prior to the meeting)

Cllr James Walsh added that he felt the impact on roads would be felt locally and an alternative location should be sought.

**Question 7 from Kath Hunter:**

After watching the local news and seeing the shocking footage of raw sewage being pumped out to sea, I ask what local actions can be taken to safeguard our coast and estuaries from raw sewage being pumped into them? I realise that fining is not acting as a deterrent to this practice, and the situation has not been helped by the lack of support or clarity by central Government.

Surely there is more we can do?

**Officer response provided to Question 7:**

Regrettably, this is not an aspect that the Lead Local Flood Authority can comment on; Water Quality of Estuaries and Seas is managed by the Environment Agency (EA) through their Environmental Permitting regime.

However, we will copy this question to colleagues at the EA, in the hope that they may be able to provide a response to the question.

Cllrs James Walsh and Deborah Urquhart agreed that something needs to be done and would continue to lobby the EA and Government.

**Question 8 from Maureen Booth**

I would like to know who at Arun is responsible for dealing with the recent floods on South Terrace.

All the basement flats from 56 to 68 have been severely damaged – again. This is the third time in 9 years. We (who jointly own the freehold) were unable to get flood insurance and so now have to pay for renovations. Are these properties becoming uninhabitable?

**Officer response provided to Question 8:**

Flooding during periods of extreme heavy rainfall, like we saw on the 20 October 2021, is a recurring issue in Littlehampton and something that West Sussex County Council, Arun District Council and Southern Water are aware of. Much of the issue is the capacity within the Southern Water network which serves much of Littlehampton. Once the Southern Water network is full to capacity, we start to see flooding onto the road and then into the adjacent housing.

I understand from West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Arun District Council that all of the Southern Water pumps and infrastructure was working on the night of the flood (20 October 2021). So, it would appear that the system was overwhelmed by the volume of rain that night.

Southern Water have reported that the rainwater pipes for the properties in South Terrace discharge into the sewer system at basement level. Southern Water are investigating whether the rainwater pipes could be rerouted to discharge at road level. Clearly this will require a lot of investigation and understanding of the existing drainage systems around the properties at South Terrace, but it is something that Southern Water will be investigating.

The rain gauges at Bognor and Angmering show in the order of 70mm of rainfall on 20 October 2021. Long term average rainfall in West Sussex for October is 79.9mm. So almost one month's rainfall in a day.