

Secretary of State to review Sainsbury's plans for Bognor Regis

A huge package of town centre and wider regeneration improvements amounting to nearly £1m will be delivered in Bognor Regis as a result of Sainsbury's opening in the town.

Arun District Council's Development Control Committee resolved to give the superstore planning permission to build on the former LEC refrigeration site in Shripney Road yesterday afternoon (Wednesday, October 7).

But the Council now has to await the decision of the Secretary of State who wishes to review the application before deciding whether it needs to be the subject of a public inquiry to determine whether that resolution can be put into effect.

Officers from the Planning and Bognor Regis Regeneration Task Force departments had managed to secure one of the authority's biggest ever cash agreements, called a Section 106, with Sainsbury's. Section 106 agreements are funds negotiated by councils from developers to off-set the impact of a new development on the community, and in this case on Bognor Regis town centre.

If the development was to go ahead, more than £900,000 would be spent on projects and initiatives in and around the town including:

- £500,000 for town centre management and improvement initiatives
- £125,000 for business enterprise provision, helping start-up businesses
- Provision of a shuttle bus from the town centre to the store
- £200,000 to improve bus services locally
- £100,00 to improve bus shelters and cycle lanes
- Support and development of skills, training and enterprise initiatives for staff for a period of five years from the opening of the development

Councillor Norman Dingemans, Arun's Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, said: "We are on the brink of a significantly better retail future for Bognor Regis, and the associated improvements this development would bring are significant.

"Whilst it is frustrating that we now have to wait before moving forward, especially after all the hard work to get us to this position, we have to accept

and understand the Secretary of State's right and role in reviewing the application."

Sainsbury's had already signed the Bognor Regis Developer and Partner Charter, a formal agreement between developers, education, skills and training providers as well as local businesses and community groups to explore and support opportunities arising from the extensive regeneration programme currently underway in the town.

Richard McMann, Arun's Head of the Bognor Regis Regeneration Task Force, added: "The Task Force has worked very hard and closely over the last two - and-a-half-years with the site owners Sime Darby and more lately with Sainsbury's too, to see this currently derelict site developed. Not only would the site be brought back into use by one of the country's most recognisable names, creating some 400 jobs in the process, the Section 106 agreement ensures that the site is developed bringing new training and skills development, town centre improvements and business opportunities too."

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