

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Notes of the meeting of the Port Royal Scoping Study Reference Group
held at Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth,
on Thursday 21 September 2017

Present: Cllr. David Barratt, EDDC (acting as Chairman)
Cllr. Ian Barlow, STC
Louise Cole, Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan
Graham Cooper, Sidmouth Vision Group
Cllr John Dyson, EDDC
Richard Thurlow, Sid Vale Association
Cllr. Stuart Hughes, DCC Highways
Mel Gater, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce
Cllr. Paul Wright, STC

Also Present: Christopher Holland, Town Clerk, STC
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive, EDDC
Alison Hayward, Regeneration & Economic Development, EDDC
Ed Heynes, Jillings-Heynes Planning Ltd.
Apologies: Dave Bramley, Alan Darrant, Deidre Hounsom Cllr. Jeff Turner

The meeting started at 7.30 pm and finished at 9.12 pm

1 Welcome

Due to the absence of the Chairman, Councillor David Barratt took the Chair. He welcomed everyone to the meeting including Ed Heynes the appointed consultant for the Scoping Study.

2 Notes of the last meeting

The notes of the meeting of the Reference Group held on 29 June 2017 were acknowledged.

3 Scoping Study Project Update

Ed Heynes, Consultant reported that since the last meeting of the Reference Group he had been continuing to collate his report which was close to completion. He was awaiting the Reference Group's guidance and comments on the results of the Scoping Study public consultation and Neighbourhood Plan consultation information. The Reference Group also noted that a petition had been separately delivered to the Chairman of the Town Council relating to Port Royal development.

There was discussion on how Councillors might have been involved more widely in discussions with officers and consultants during the progress of the study. However, the group agreed that the independent consultants had been allowed to carry out their work unhindered and not influenced by either officers or Councillors.

4 **Consultation Responses**

The Reference Group discussed and considered the feedback from both the Port Royal Scoping Study consultation and Neighbourhood Plan consultation regarding Port Royal. The Group agreed that the information from the Scoping Study consultation together with the excellent response rate and feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan was very helpful and meaningful to both the Consultant's work and the future consideration by Members of both Councils.

During the discussion, it was established that a number of clear themes and a consensus of opinion had arisen from the two sets of information:

People disagreed with:

- A high building which did not relate well in the surroundings. Some said development should be a maximum of the same height as the surrounding buildings, others said a large building wouldn't be appropriate for Sidmouth.
- Any loss of car parking spaces. The main concern stated was that Sidmouth doesn't have enough car parking already.

People agreed with:

- The area having a special identity involving fishing / water activities / maritime heritage, which either needs to be kept or followed through by any development.
- Bars and restaurants being part of the development.
- The Lifeboat Station being part of the development. Although a few commented it should be located at the other end of the Esplanade for easier launching.
- Some pedestrianisation of the area.
- A new multi-function facility. The water activity clubs, for example the sailing club, are important to Sidmouth and should be retained in the area.

5 **Communications Update**

Reference Group Members agreed that a press release would be sent to acknowledge the excellent level of meaningful feedback regarding Port Royal from both the Scoping study consultation and Neighbourhood Plan and would highlight those themes and areas of consensus from the two sets of data. It was important to clearly get across to the public that the Councils had heard people's concerns as well as those things that were supported.

To help demonstrate and prove that the Councils were undecided and listening to concerns and nothing was yet decided, the press release would not use language relating to a single 'building' and use the term facility. The next press release would repeat and highlight the next steps in the project.

6 **Next steps**

The group noted that the next steps of the project would be:

- A draft of the Scoping Study would be discussed by the Reference Group at its next meeting.
- Sidmouth Town Council would consider the Scoping study, consultation information and accompanying report which would detail the possible options and further research which might be required.
- East Devon District Council would consider the Scoping Study, consultation information and accompanying report which would detail the options and further research which might be required.

7 **Next Meeting of the Reference Group**

The next meeting of the Reference Group would be held on 5 October 2017 at 6.30pm.