

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 29 June 2017

Present: Cllr. Jeff Turner (Chairman)
Cllr. Ian Barlow, STC
Cllr. David Barratt, EDDC
Graham Cooper, Sidmouth Vision Group
Alan Darrant, Sid Vale Association
Deidre Hounsom, Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan
Cllr. Stuart Hughes, DCC Highways
David Wheaton, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce
Cllr. Paul Wright, STC

Also Present: Christopher Holland, Town Clerk, STC
Alison Hayward, Regeneration & Economic Development, EDDC
Ed Heynes, Jillings-Heynes Planning Ltd.

Apologies: Richard Cohen, Stuart Hughes, Karen Jenkins, Alison Stoneman

The meeting started at 7.30 am and finished at 9.06 pm.

1 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chairman of the Group, Councillor Jeff Turner, welcomed everyone to the meeting including Ed Heynes the appointed consultant for the Scoping Study. He commented that the consultants had been busy collecting information and researching the scoping area. He added that although only part way through the study, the ongoing public consultation exercise and the recent two public consultation events had been appreciated by those attending with some themes emerging from the views expressed to date.

2 **Notes of the last meeting**

The notes of the meeting of the Reference Group held on 15 February 2017 were acknowledged.

3 **Scoping Study Project Update and initial findings and consultation events**

Ed Heynes, Consultant briefed the group on the recent two consultation events which were part of the public consultation running until 31 July 2017. He commented that the two events and feedback received during the consultation would help to form his findings in his final report to the Councils. Commenting on his initial findings and on specific issues resulting from the two consultation events, it was noted that:

- Some key constraints and requirements have been identified on the site: the Ham recreation area, the swimming pool, and building over the whole site as it is in the flood zone designation 3A; whilst this will not prevent development from taking place it is a significant constraint to developing those areas.

- Consultants had met with and visited the lease holders for the site and discussed their requirements and desires for the future as part of research for the study.
- Issues had been identified regarding trying to develop a well-used car park (Ham west).
- Allocated site has been focussed on and tested it to see if it could come forward in the way as described and allocated in the local plan. The consultants had been able to focus on the allocated site with some ideas.

In terms of the event, the quality of the comments made by people who attended was welcomed. All had been very constructive and helpful. Some of the themes emerging were:

- People have been pleased that the Councils had not leapt ahead with detailed plans or designs and were not presenting the initial findings as a fait-a-compli
- Maintaining water sports and water activity users was very much supported.
- Was it necessary for the lifeboat to be in that location? – could this move to the west end of the esplanade?
- Importance of car parks, but equally that these could be seen as dead space
- The esplanade – some very positive comments about this being pedestrianised.
- The improvement to public realm via pedestrianisation and to tie in with the Ham received many comments
- Traffic arrangements generally in Sidmouth were questioned.
- Comments on the allocated site and the potential height of buildings in relation to neighbouring buildings was highlighted.
- Redevelopment of the old boating lake/macerator building site had been suggested.
- Improved access to the sea for the lifeboat, clubs and water users.

It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan consultation which finished on 30 June and had already received a large number of replies was gathering the Eastern town section response data ready for reporting to the consultants.

The Group discussed how the consultation was only part way through the study and how the final report would include all consultation information and the research and study material gathered to produce an independent final report by the consultants for the Councils to decide on how to progress the project.

5 **Communications Update**

Group Members agree that a press release would be sent to report on the two consultation events and to encourage participation by the public.

6 **Next steps**

The group noted that the consultation ended on 31 July 2017 and that after that time the consultants would produce a report on their findings. This report would be available to the Reference Group before it was included in reports to both Councils.

7 **Next Meeting of the Reference Group**

The next meeting of the Reference Group would be held once the final consultant's report was available.