

Sept 15 2016

EDDC's Cabinet approves Scoping Study for renewal of Sidmouth's Port Royal

Sidmouth Town and East Devon Councils to commission experts to scope out way forward

In partnership with Sidmouth Town Council, EDDC is starting a process to renew Port Royal.

The area, which is at the eastern end of Sidmouth seafront, falls way below the quality of what Sidmouth should expect and for many years there has been a local desire to see it transformed.

At the same time, this is a complex area with a number of technical challenges. However, the two councils, between them, are the major landowners in Port Royal and can therefore make good things happen together.

Sidmouth Town Council has already recently approved the detail of a Scoping Study for Port Royal and last night (Wednesday Sept 14), East Devon District Council's Cabinet followed suit. A Scoping Study could otherwise be described as an options appraisal. Its purpose is simply to set out the options which are potentially viable for an area such as Port Royal. Consultation, communication and engagement with the local community will be a primary feature for every stage of this project.

Shortly, the two councils will be commissioning the Scoping Study so that experts can set out the key issues and way forward towards a detailed plan for the future potential for Port Royal as a true asset for Sidmouth.

The Scoping Study will include a Reference Group made up of local organisations and councillors representing both councils. The Cabinet agreed that two Sidmouth councillors - Cllr John Dyson and Cllr David Barratt – will represent East Devon District Council on the group.

Councillor Paul Diviani, Leader of East Devon District Council, said: "This initial exercise is very much the beginning of a process that will have Sidmouth people and businesses at its heart.

"We expect that it will take several months with a report on key issues and next steps to come before the councils in the New Year."

Councillor Jeff Turner, Chairman of Sidmouth Town Council, said: "I am pleased that Sidmouth Town Council will be leading this study with the District Council. It is an early process designed to look at the art of the possible using information from a great many sources.

This area has long been talked about but nothing has ever happened and I am very pleased that the two landowners are finally taking action to start the process."

Ends

Notes for Editors

- Port Royal is the area to the east of the town of Sidmouth, extending from the seafront backwards, bordered on the east by the River Sid. It has long been recognised locally as an area that does not meet the high visual and amenity quality of other parts of Sidmouth and is an opportunity for investment, development and renewal.
- There is a shared desire to see a mix of high quality uses, architecture and public realm. The challenge will be to deliver a combination of uses that encompass economic, social and cultural facilities that are also viable in commercial and environmental terms. It is likely that this will require a mix of market investment and public funding.
- The location has the advantage that both the town and district councils are also the main landowners.