

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Confidential Report of a Meeting of the Seaton Regeneration Programme Board held at Seaton Town Hall, Seaton, on Wednesday 13 October 2010

Present:

Councillors: Ray Franklin (Chairman)
Jim Knight
Ian Thomas

Seaton Town Council: Councillor John Meakin
David Mears
Councillor Bob Palacio

Axmouth Parish Council Councillor Bernard Dunford

Other Members: Tim Robinson - Tesco
Councillor Graham Godbeer –
Marcus Hartnell

EDDC Officers: Donna Best – Principal Estates Surveyor
Nigel Harrison – Economic Development Manager
Karime Hassan – Corporate Director
Nick Stephen – Communications Officer
Chris Lane – Democratic Services Officer
Charlie Plowden – Countryside Manager

DCC Officer: Steve Turner – Economic Development Manager

Apologies: Councillor Stephanie Jones
Jenny Nunn – Seaton Tramway
Edward Willis Fleming – Axe Riverside Co.

The meeting started at 2.05pm and finished at 3.40pm.

82 **Report of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 12 May 2010**

The notes were confirmed as a true record.

*83 **Matters Arising**

Visitor Centre update (Minute *76 refers)

Members were reminded that the special meeting convened by EDDC with the Visitor Centre Trust Board to satisfy EDDC on various aspects of the Trust Board's role had been held on 9 July.

Town Centre Manager (Minute *73 refers)

Members noted that the funding streams for the Town Centre Manager were EDDC, Seaton Town Council and Section 106 Agreement funding from the Tesco land deal and not Devon County Council.

84 **Consideration of extending membership of the Board to the Chamber of Commerce**

Members considered extending membership of the Regeneration Board to the Chamber of Commerce.

RESOLVED that Marcus Hartnell, Chairman of Seaton Chamber of Commerce be invited to become a member of the Regeneration Board.

85 **Progress on the preparation for the raising levels on the Tesco site together with update from Tesco on wider regeneration programme**

Members received an update from Tim Robinson, Tesco on the preparation for raising levels together with an update on the wide regeneration programme. He was pleased to report that substantial progress had been made. On 21 September the fill application had been approved by EDDC Development Management Committee and consent had been issued on 6 October. Some members of the Regeneration Board had visited Bournemouth to see the fill pumping operation there. Although not exactly similar to the operation that was proposed in Seaton, it had helped allay some fears about the noise and disruption of the operation.

Now all the consents were in place, Tesco intended to order the pumping boat and prepare a time frame. It was anticipated that the pumping operation would take between 21 – 24 days. It was hoped to start work on site in January 2011. The boat was at present booked to arrive in Seaton in March 2011. Tim Robinson reported that the base of the site seemed sound. It was hoped to start construction 2 – 3 months after completion of the fill operation. Talks were taking place with several house builders on the terms of phase 2 which was building houses on part of the site.

Members noted that residents in Seaton and particularly around the Trevelyan Road area were concerned about noise from the pipeline and the possibility of fill material being pumped at night. Tim Robinson reported that the pipeline would be made much quieter at night, but there could be some pumping of fill material at night; but would be kept to a minimum. The visit to Bournemouth had confirmed the low level of noise created by such pumping operations.

During discussions, the following points and questions were noted:

- It was considered that Seaton would benefit from public interest in the fill operation and visitors would want to come to Seaton to view the development works;
- Would all the pipework come in via sea? Yes it would. All the pipe work that would be under the sea would come via the sea;
- Was the fill material from the sea coming from around Seaton? The material was coming from a licensed mining area in the sea around the Isle of Wight;
- Were you comfortable for all the information provided by Tesco at the meeting to be in the public domain? Yes provided members were aware that some of the timelines may slip owing to unforeseen events;
- Could the proposed hotel complex be changed to a Dobie's Garden Centre? This was considered to be a matter for planning;
- Could discussions be reopened about having the Field Study Centre for the Jurassic Coast relocated to Seaton?
- Concern expressed about the deterioration of the Seaton Heights site and the lack of progress in achieving its renovation.

86 Visitor Centre update

Members were advised that since the last meeting of the Board in May much had happened. The Exmouth and Seaton Interpretation Centres' Board had decided that it was no longer the accepted model for operating the Interpretation Centres and had chosen to dissolve the Board. A planning application had been submitted for the Visitors Centre and consent had been issued on 13 October. Much preparation work was needed to start construction and the District Council had negotiated some pre-development works to be undertaken by Tesco. Donna Best reported that work had commenced to find an operator for the Visitor Centre now that the ESIC Board was no longer in a position to take on the running of the building.

A suggestion was made at the meeting that the Countryside Service would be a good operator. Charlie Plowden, Countryside Manager confirmed that his service would have a stake in the Visitor Centre. He confirmed the importance of having a presence in the building and the Centre being financially self sustaining. The Seaton Wetlands would be an important part of the Visitor Centre offer.

87 Summary on latest developments at LSE2 (Harepath Road)

Nigel Harrison, Economy Development Manager, advised that he had held a number of discussions during the summer with the company that had option agreements on LSE2. The motivation behind these discussions was to provide new employment for Seaton and add value to the town's employment. Members noted that LSE2 did not "stack up" on its own financially and needed subsidy to be provided from elsewhere. The company were looking at ways of delivering LSE2 by cross subsidy from other forms of development that provided a higher rate of return. The Board needed to give serious consideration to the issue of cross subsidy if it wished to see LSE2 proceed and provide a mixed use development for recreation and employment on the east side of Harepath Road.

Members noted that there were other sites in the town that had not yet been considered that could also be suitable for development for employment purposes. The District Council's Development Management Committee had made it clear that they did not consider that land to the west of Harepath Road was suitable for development. There was the need for employment, open space and recreation land in Seaton. The possibility of getting sufficient housing development on land between Harepath Road and Colyford Road was considered.

RECOMMENDED that a mixed use development be permitted on land to the east of Harepath Road, Seaton which would assist in the development of LSE2 and was a more viable option than for land to the west of Harepath Road.

88 Update on Town Manager Post

Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager, reported that it was very likely that funding for the Section 106 agreement for the Town Manager post would be made available in the foreseeable future. EDDC and Tesco would therefore be in a position to fund the Town Manager post. It was hoped that Seaton Chamber of Commerce would become a serious partner in Seaton Town Management. There had been a presentation at the meeting of the District Council's Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 7 October 2010, regarding the Business Improvement District (BID) which had been established in Dorchester.

A BID was an arrangement whereby businesses could get together, decide what improvements they wanted to make, how they were going to manage it, and what it would cost. Could this BID mechanism work in Seaton, which was a smaller town than Dorchester? Members noted that Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager and David Mears, Seaton Town Clerk, had been invited to discuss the Town Manager post at the next meeting of Seaton Chamber of Commerce. The job description and draft management

***88 Update on Town Manager Post (Cont)**

arrangements were in place and it was hoped to advertise and shortlist candidates for appointment shortly.

David Mears, Seaton Town Clerk, reported that he needed to go back to his Personnel Committee to agree arrangements for the Town Manager and joint working with EDDC. Marcus Hartnell, Chairman of Seaton Chamber of Commerce confirmed that his Chamber was very pleased to see this appointment progressing and looked forward to joint working and pursue a number of projects that the Chamber had earmarked. Karime Hassan, Corporate Director, expressed concern that the project could slip; it was important to ensure that it proceeded promptly. Part of the role of the Town Manager was to help manage the change process in Seaton.

David Mears confirmed that it was up to Seaton Town Council to decide whether they wished to proceed with the funding for the Town Manager post. He hoped that his members would confirm funding and support for the Town Manager post at the meeting of the Town Council on 25 October.

RESOLVED that Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager be requested to attend the meeting of Seaton Town Council on 25 October 2010, to explain the funding situation for the Town Managers post.

***89 Elizabeth Road Playing Fields**

Members noted that the preschool had been asked to leave its current premises in the remaining building on the Tesco site in February 2011. Sure Start money had been secured for Devon County Council to procure a new building for a nursery on the site. Tesco had been requested to extend the agreement with the preschool until March. Tim Robinson, on behalf of Tesco's confirmed that he would try to keep the preschool on site as long as possible and were in regular contact with them to update the situation. It would not be possible to have them on site when building works started.

The Board asked whether any progress had been made on the provision of youth facilities and which was the purpose of the land being transferred to Seaton Town Council: It was confirmed that work was still on going for the provision of youth facilities.

90 Communication messages

Members heard that there was a positive story to tell; much progress had been made since the last meeting in May. Planning permission had been granted for the fill application and Visitor Centre. It was hoped to commence building work on site in the New Year. The Axe Wetlands car park now had planning permission. Currently there were sightings of a rare wading bird (solitary Sandpiper) that had brought many 'twitchers' to the Wetlands.

Seaton Tramway would be developing another tram stop at the Blackstock Bird Hide and was developing Wildlife themed tram trips in the New Year. Some disappointment was expressed that the Axe Wetlands project had not been entered into the Green Flag awards. The Board was advised that the nature of the project was not suitable for such awards which were more dependent on infrastructure, such as toilets, which were not appropriate for a nature based project such as the Axe Wetlands. However, now that the car parking was to be improved, it was hoped that the Axe Wetlands project would be entered into other environmental/tourism awards to achieve national recognition in the future.

91 Any other businessAxe Riverside

Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor, in response to a question, reported that there were many issues to resolve, including covenants relating to the land, before further progress could be made in respect of the Axe Riverside development.

Stop Line Way

Charlie Plowden, reported that an officer from South Somerset District Council Countryside Service would be helping to progress the Stop Line Way and it would be included within a longer Chard to Seaton route. He agreed to report back to future meetings on further developments.

Axe Wetlands

Members noted a concern that the Axe Wetlands did not seem very well signed and was not easy to find. Charlie Plowden reported that this was due to the lack of car parking. It was hoped with planning permission being granted for a car park that brown signs would be in place in the next six months.

92 Dates of future meetings

Meetings of the Seaton Regeneration Programme Board –

Wednesday 26 January 2011 at 9.30am

Thursday 24 March 2011 at 9.30am