

Axe Valley Project Group Meeting

Wednesday 17th July 2024

Held online at 10.00 am

SEATON REGENERATION STRATEGY REVIEW

1	Attendance:	Alison Hayward (AH)	East Devon District Council
		Paul Hayward (PH)	East Devon District Council
		Keir Duffin (KD)	Devon County Council
		Jasmine Jones (JJ)	Devon County Council
		Julia Matlow (JM)	Seaton Town Council
		Marie Ainsworth (MA)	East Devon District Council
		Carl Northcott (CN)	Seaton Chamber

2 Purpose of the meeting:

Alison Hayward introduced the meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting is to report on progress and issues arising with the various projects that are identified in the Seaton Regeneration Strategy. This will enable signposting support to be offered where relevant, and for DCC to monitor progress for the Revitalising Devon's Towns Programme (formerly Devon Urban Renewal programme). The list of projects serves as an agenda to explore these project opportunities but there is no requirement for the Stakeholders to deliver on these.

3 Update on the Seaton Regeneration Strategy Projects (ref points taken from the Seaton Regeneration Strategy document):

Ref point	Task Description	Update	Action
6.1	Identify skills gaps in local area and support young people through training in these areas. Initial suggestions have been made for hospitality, care or tech training	KD extended an offer from Devon County Council (DCC) to provide services to support training needs for businesses. KS reported that Website and Social media training had worked well in Axminster via Cosmic. Free fully funded courses are available where a minimum number of participants is reached. The minimum number required varied between courses and shortfalls in numbers would require further funding to be identified. It would be	CN to liaise with KD

	for the elderly. Need to identify the level of local demand for this.	<p>possible to join forces with other towns to attain the correct numbers. This can be explored with Axminster as the Axminster Chamber has successfully delivered this in the past.</p> <p>Apprenticeships could be explored via KD and local colleges.</p> <p>CN will raise this at the Chamber meeting being held shortly with Independent businesses, this could reveal any local needs.</p>	
6.3	<p>Delivery of business premises and employment land, particularly smaller light industrial units and grow-on space which are high in demand in the area. EDDC owns vacant employment sites.</p> <p>STC is exploring potential for upper floors of Marshlands Centre for employment space.</p>	<p>AH reported that the newly formed Place Directorate would be taking a more strategic view of the employment sites (for Seaton this is Harepath Road and Colyford Road) and exploring how these could be delivered to enable start-ups. The Economic Development Team will take a lead on this. CN commented that this was a priority for them and that the issue had been ongoing for a long time. PH advised that this was at the top of his priority list as Portfolio Holder and he has already raised with the new Executive Leadership Team.</p> <p>JM reported that the Marshlands project was moving forward, refurbishments had commenced. Interest is already being shown from local businesses. KD offered help if required</p>	AH to report on progress
6.5	Identify a suitable site for a year round indoor market to support economic activity outside of peak summer months for example, for independent market stalls, food and boutique shops.	CN said that the Chamber are in discussion with retailers, they are also getting the necessary licenses in place. 7-8 businesses had expressed an interest in having a market stall at Windsor Gardens. CN to check re: liaison with EDDC Events Team, if required.	CN to ask organisers to contact EDDC event team if not done already.
6.6	Support small businesses to offer apprenticeships by raising awareness of providers, particularly of those offering digital training	CN reported that the Chamber is not prioritising this project at this time.	
6.7	Create a hub for business administration support. Potential to work in cooperation with the Business Information Point enterprise agency. Offer workshops in Seaton for local businesses, bringing together resources currently available	CN reported that Business liaison is in progress with surveys of local businesses underway to understand the demand. KD offered support if required.	

	into one place and publicise to businesses. Potential for business support to be offered to Axminster and Seaton jointly.		
6.8	Provision of flexible workspace in a vacant retail unit. Need to understand local requirement and desire for this. More market research required.	JM advised that Seaton Town Council had developed workspace at Marshlands (as 6.3 above).	
6.9	Formation of a Business Improvement District (BID). Need to understand local demand for this. Crowdfunding may be preferable to increase business rates.	CN said that the Chamber had decided not to pursue this. KD said DCC had developed a process in Oakhampton who were currently at the ballot stage of a BID. KD offered assistance in the future if required.	
6.10	Potential for development of the Gateway Theatre. Proposal includes provision of studios and technical studios. The development of the theatre would require relocating the museum to a different location (suggestion for the Marshlands)	Previously there has been no progress with this project. CN advised that the Gateway Theatre is now exploring opportunities for youth groups and music/production.	
6.11	New business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) hub at Seaton Library. This will support local business owners and entrepreneurs to start or grow their business and boost the local economy.	This business support project which was based at the Library, was unable to continue beyond March 2023 due to the funding expiring. A remote service will still be provided online. JJ to send a link to CN	JJ to send link to CN
7.2	Deliver Seafront enhancements (either via LUF or alternative route). Proposals include: disposal/redevelopment of Seaton Moridunum; relocation of bus stops; redesign of roundabout area to create more public realm.	AH reported that the priority for EDDC currently is to secure the disposal of Seaton Moridunum. DCC will be progressing the bus stop relocation project later this year and EDDC will explore opportunities for the use of any newly created space that arises through the bus stop works.	
7.3	Shopfront Improvements scheme to improve public realm in the town centre. In the longer term there is an aim to	CN reported that the 'Ship Shape' initiative had worked well. This involved cleaning of public areas and shop fronts. CN was working with EDDC's Streetscene team. Signs had been put	CN to share outcomes and outputs with KD

	constantly refresh/upkeep shop fronts to maintain their attractiveness. Need to identify a suitable local property to begin this scheme.	up to encourage this work into low season. KD asked if CN could collect outputs and outcomes and share with him.	
7.4	Short term seafront enhancements, such as festoon lighting along the Esplanade and Flagpoles.	The festoon lighting and flagpoles project is not being progressed. The Chamber would like to propose an alternative to provide seating around the roundabout area (which comes under 7.2 above). AH advised that EDDC is working to its Service Plan where the delivery of Seaton Moridunum is the current priority for the seafront.	EDDC will respond to Chamber in due course.
7.5	Leisure and Culture offer for young people in Seaton – support the provision of more activities including sports clubs, water sports, indoor activities such as soft play facility, arts, theatre and music clubs.	CN reported that one of his Chamber members was running some youth provision. Cllr Heath had requested further provision. JM reported that the Town Council had lots of experience with investigating the need for youth provision and suggested that this had not been identified as being in need.	
8.1	Improve public transport options between nearby towns including Honiton, Sidmouth and Lyme Regis. Transport options should operate in the evenings to encourage day visitors to stay longer and allow visitors in nearby areas to travel to Seaton.	Options had been discussed to link up nearby towns. KD said that there was currently a lack of funding and resource to take this forward.	
8.2	Active travel options to improve access to and from Seaton e.g. E bikes, car sharing options – potential for this to be successful if car sharing encouraged by employers. E-bike stations should be located near or on the Stop Line Way cycle path.	CN said that the E-bike and similar initiatives were being explored by the Chamber. Many of these travel projects were interlinked and it was recognised that there are considerable challenges for these types of projects.	
8.3	Supporting the delivery of the Stop Line Way for improved links from Seaton to Axminster. DCC has committed funding to deliver the Seaton to Colyford element next year,	As previously discussed, the challenges (multiple ownership of land, funding etc) of exploring the Axminster to Colyford element of the SLW are such that it is not being progressed. Separately, the Chamber has raised the possibility of utilising a footpath to the west of the Underfleet overspill car park, as an alternative to the SLW that runs along the pavement at	KD to contact Cllr Hartnell. Remove Stop Line Way from the list of projects.

	<p>meaning that Kilmington to Axminster sections remain missing.</p> <p>There is potential for some of this to be delivered temporarily along quiet lanes.</p> <p>Note: the ultimate ambition is to deliver the entire length of the SLW along offroad cycle paths. This requires cross county cooperation between Devon and Somerset Councils.</p>	<p>this location. This has been raised with Cllr Hartnell and DCC officers KD will speak to Cllr Hartnell and CN will speak to his fellow committee member.</p>	
8.4	<p>Improved signage to raise awareness of walking and cycling routes and highlight points of interest in town.</p>	<p>This is linked to the E-bikes project. The Chamber is reviewing possible options for this.</p>	
8.5	<p>Capitalise on popularity of Lyme Regis and SW coast path to transform Seaton as a popular place to stay overnight. Support accommodation providers and encourage restaurants to stay open in the evening.</p>	<p>There is no identified Lead Stakeholder for this project and it is not a priority for progressing at this time.</p>	

4. **Devon Renewal Programme and Quick Wins.** **KD** gave an overview of the on-line programme monitoring portal that has been created to record information on each town. He highlighted that Minehead is a benchmark town. The portal is going live in August. **KD** will share a link with the District and Town Councils. **KD** agreed to resend the offer of Quick Win funding, projects must fit the criteria and be ready to go due to short timescales. **JJ to send out information.**

The meeting ended at approximately 11am. Detail of the next meeting will be circulated in due course.