

Seaton Project Group
Meeting: 12 July 2023, 2pm
Venue: Seaton Marshlands

MEETING NOTES

Attendees:

CLlr P Hayward Portfolio Holder Economy and Assets, EDDC (Chair)
CLlr D Ledger, East Devon District Council, Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
CLlr Amrik Singh, Seaton Town Council
CLlr Cheryl Wood, Seaton Town Council
Sophia Moseley – Seaton Gateway Theatre
Richard Betts – Seaton Chamber of Commerce
Eleanor Carr – Seaton Chamber of Commerce, Unique Boutique Events
Carl Northcott – Seaton Chamber, Northcott Building Contractors Ltd
Keir Duffin, Devon County Council
Tim Child, East Devon District Council
Alison Hayward, East Devon District Council
Julia Mutlow – Seaton Town Council - Clerk

Apologies received:

CLlr Matt Hall, East Devon District Council, Economy Portfolio Holder
CLlr Marcus Hartnell, Seaton Ward Member EDDC, Devon County Councillor
CLlr Nick Hookway, East Devon District Council, Portfolio Holder, Sport, Leisure, Culture Tourism
CLlr Del Haggerty, East Devon District Council, Seaton Ward Member
Jenny Nunn, Seaton Tramway
James Tribble, Pebbles Café

1. Seaton Quick Win Project: Refurbishment cost contribution, Marshlands

Julia Mutlow updated on this project. Good progress has been made on the refurbishment of the Marshlands Centre. This includes rooms on the first floor which will be available to let, creating employment space for businesses in Seaton. The Quick win funding from DCC contributed to the repair of the lift mechanism. This means that the building and use of the first floor is now fully accessible and compliant with legislation relating to accessibility.

2. Business Case: E-bikes.

AH updated the meeting on the outcome of the Business Case for E-bikes. (See attached document). In order to deliver this project funding of around £60,000 will need to be secured (based on figures for Axminster TC's e-bike project) and a site(s) identified for the location of the E-bike hub. Whilst EDDC/STC are identified as Project Leads for this, the involvement of Chamber members would be welcomed to consider this project.

Concerns were raised by the Chamber that the Stop Line Way extension (between Colyford and Axminster) was not being pursued at this time. Keir Duffin commented that as had

been explained at the previous meeting in February, DCC Highways does not have the resources to take this forward at this time. This is a complex project that will require considerable technical planning by DCC engineers concerning a suitable route, along with input from Legal and Property teams regarding acquisition of land, along with necessary planning consents. Tim Child commented that land acquisition for Stop Line Way that he had previously been involved in for another authority some years ago had cost many millions and taken many years to deliver.

Cllr Ledger asked if it is possible to look at the section between Colyford and Colyton – the bridle way.

As a consequence of not pursuing the Stop Line Way route to Axminster, it had been agreed earlier this year, that the E-Bike scheme would therefore be selected for the Business Case.

Regarding the E-bike scheme, concerns were raised by the Chamber regarding the safety of the road between Seaton and Axminster for use by cyclists. (Note – the report highlights that a route using quieter roads would be promoted between the 2 towns).

AH offered to meet with the Chamber to discuss and consider suitable locations for an E-bike hub.

NOTE: Since this meeting we are now aware that Co-Cars (and Co-Bikes) has ceased trading from 14 July. EDDC will follow up with colleagues regarding other operators and report back at a future meeting.

3. Feedback on Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid.

AH reported on the feedback received from DHLUC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities). The bid was relatively strong with clear strengths within the strategic fit and economic case with the link between Seaton and Axminster. However more data could have been provided in some areas and more information on procurement.

The Project Team that prepared the bid documents welcome the feedback, although for some information, it was not possible to provide more detail due to word limits or the inability to provide attachments. That said, the feedback is detailed and helpful to the council for future funding bids.

A copy of the feedback is provided.

As a reminder on the way forward now, EDDC is reviewing the feasibility of the employment sites – Harepath and Colyford Road both in Seaton and Cloakham Lawns in Axminster and will propose a way forward and recommendations to Cabinet e.g. EDDC invest in development of the site, or take to open market. The Moridunum site in Seaton is being marketed.

4. Update on Regeneration Strategy List of Projects

Project 6.2 – Seaton Jurassic. This is being progressed by EDDC and Seaton Tramway.

Project 6.3 – Business premises and employment land.

As set out above, STC has progressed with delivery of workspace with Marshlands. EDDC is reviewing the employment sites at Colyford Road and Harepath Road in Seaton with a report to cabinet later this year on a way forward.

Project 6.4 - Tourism forum. Seaton Town Council has been working with other towns in East Devon to establish the Coast meets Country initiative to promote tourism across the region. This was funded by a grant from the post-Covid Innovation & Resilience Fund and it is hoped that costs will be through business membership for the project. A presentation was recently given to businesses in the town, at a Seaton Chamber meeting, by the marketing consultants' engaged as part of the initiative.

Project 6.5 – Year round Indoor market. A business case has been prepared for the Chamber but needs further work and is being considered by Richard Betts, Chamber Secretary, currently.

Project 7.2 - Seaton Moridunum is now being marketed.

Project 7.3 – Shop Front Improvements.

Seaton Chamber is currently in the throws of organising 'Ship Shape 2024' which will incorporate more of a focus on the 'look of the town' rather than the quick win spring clean of 2023. Expect more detail to come as we progress through the remainder of 2023.

(Post meeting note: - Discussions will need to take place with EDDC Streetscene Service and others in order to plan for such events in the future).

Project 7.5 - Leisure and Culture offer for Young People. The Chamber is aware that a new offer for young people is now being delivered in Seaton.

Ilse Cook from Item Drop is organising more and more activities for the local youth; Mondays, 4-6pm term time is kids dungeons and dragons, this is a paid for session that's currently fully booked.

Friday 5.30-8pm is Bring Your Geek, which is an open drop in session for all things gaming (board & card games, video games, VR) and also just a social group as well. The session runs longer for teens and adults.

Saturdays from 1pm is miniature painting, this is free, and we provide some materials or people can bring their own. Target age group for this is about 11+, most of the kids who come are between 12 and 15.

Project 8.2 - Active Travel Options. Work has commenced on the remaining section of the Stop Line Way between Seaton and Colyton. E-bike project as discussed above. Chamber is linked in with DCC's LCWIP (local cycling and walking strategy).

Project 8.4 - Improved signage to Walking and cycling routes. The Chamber is looking at whether there can be improvements to signage around the town.

5. Terms of Reference and Future Meetings

AH advised that she is discussing Terms of Reference with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the opportunity for support from Democratic Services for future meetings to ensure the meetings are following best practice and appropriate governance – e.g. declarations of interest. Also to review membership.

6. A.O.B.

Eleanor Carr asked what East Devon District Council is doing now. AH advised as explained under 4 above, within the List of Projects, EDDC (PAC Service) is taking forward the employment sites and marketing the Moridunum site in addition to the continued asset management work for Seaton assets, the disposal agreement for Seaton Jurassic and the other toilet blocks in the town centre.

Date of next meeting will be moved from 6 September. Sarah Rogers in PAC Service will be in touch.