

# Senior Group

4 Sandside Scarborough

YO111PE

Sir Robert Goodwill MP

Scarborough Borough Council

North Yorkshire County Council

The Town Deal Board

15th August 2022

Dear Sir Robert and Members

## **REF: FISH (WEST) PIER TOWN DEAL FUNDING / LOCAL BUSINESS STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT** (Revised)

I am writing this open letter to all members of Scarborough Borough Council (SBC), North Yorkshire County Council and also the Town Deal Board in order to highlight a mistruth that continues to be peddled and requires immediate correction. It appears that the current Fish / West Pier Town Team funding bid which has recently been approved by government, was submitted by the council under the premise that the proposed scheme has the full support of both the stakeholders, ie those who operate on the Fish Pier and also the local business community, ie those operating on Sandside and Foreshore.

As a former Chairman and founding member of the South Bay Traders Association I find myself in the invidious position of having to write to inform you, that this premise of support is completely false and anybody who informs you differently has either been misled themselves, or is not being entirely truthful to the fact. Before going any further we all understand that this is a highly contentious subject and the arguments surrounding the Fish Pier and whether it should stay mainly in the hands of the fishing and maritime industry or swing towards retail and 'touristification' are complex and emotive. SBC have made it clear that they believe that the only objectors to this scheme are a couple of angry outspoken local businessmen, however this assumption could not be further from the truth.

In order to satisfy my own curiosity I have now managed to speak to almost every single operator along Foreshore Road and Sandside and in almost every case, each and every operator, large or small, local or national, have confirmed to me that they do not support this scheme and want the process halted immediately. I have also spoken to leading figures from the maritime and fishing industries and again in almost every single case they believe this misplaced scheme will mortally damage their industry. Many of them have explained to me that as they are only leaseholders, they are too nervous to make a fuss, however, one thing they all agree on, is that this vitally important maritime asset requires urgent and major structural refurbishment, including, re-piling and urgent flood protection work and this essential maintenance work should take place before any further tinkering to the Fish Pier is done.

In fact on closer inspection it appears that the entire harbour at Scarborough has suffered from decades of under investment and neglect, with the lighthouse pier now unable to accept passenger craft, the lighthouse itself is crumbling and failing, the harbour access ladders, slips and inspection grids are all condemnable and fail basic Health and Safety Executive requirements. Frankly, to many, this might all appear as the willful neglect of our town's most important asset and what is particularly worrying about all this are the reports that funding which **should** have been ring-fenced for the harbour has in fact been diverted away to other more fashionable uses. Remarkably, all of this is happening just at a time when due to the development of Dogger Bank, the need for modern maritime services on the East Coast, such as boat lifts and repair services are actually in growing demand.

Finally, before I am shot down and accused of protectionism, my own property consultants tell me that the scheme as proposed will in the short term at least, help the values of our properties, so I should be urging you to support this development and not asking you to respect the wishes of the fishing and maritime business community. I hope you will accept this letter in the spirit in which it was written and I strongly recommend that the contents are taken seriously.

Yours faithfully



John W Senior MBE TD DR(Hc)  
Former Chairman SBTA