

Town Hall
St Nicholas Street
Scarborough
YO11 2HG
Tel: 01723 232323



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SCARBOROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Peter Lee
By email to: peter680lee@btinternet.com

Your Ref: Save our west
Pier
Our Ref: SBC/STDB8622

10 June 2022

Dear Mr Peter Lee

Scarborough Harbour West Pier Project – Scarborough Town Deal

I write in response to your recent 'open letter' entitled "Save Our West Pier" received via email on 31 May 2022 and addressed to the Scarborough Town Deal Board and Scarborough Borough Council among others.

Whilst our organisations welcome engagement with all sectors of the community, and we are always willing to engage in constructive dialogue and consultation, there are significant issues with the accuracy of your letter and the misleading messaging it conveys.

1. In respect of your comments regarding the meeting of South Bay Traders Association (SBTA) 20/05/22, where Officers of the Council presented the Scarborough harbour West Pier project proposals.

You state that - **not one Councillor chose to attend the meeting.**

The invitation to attend the meeting of the SBTA was addressed to Council Officers. To our knowledge elected members were not invited to attend. However, we note that one Scarborough Borough Councillor was actually in attendance in their role as a local business operator.

You state that - **officers had refused to answer questions and the information was in the format of a presentation rather than a consultation.**

The format of the meeting was suggested by the SBTA's acting chair who had specifically requested a presentation covering:

- How the project fitted in with the wider town regeneration
- Background to the Town Deal
- Scarborough Harbour West Pier Regeneration
- Work so far



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- Details of proposals
- Consultation and communications to date
- Next steps

The meeting chair had also suggested that the SBTA compile questions in a separate discussion of its members following the presentation and to then submit these to the Council for a response. However, at the beginning of the meeting a request was made that Officers answer questions during the presentation. This was considered reasonable and Officers did their best to respond to questions from the floor.

You then go on to state - **It soon became apparent from the presentation that the rumours were actually true and that Government funding was already agreed.**

and;

The project was supported by the Town Deal Fund Board and was to continue regardless of detriment to existing businesses and the mass of community objections.

and;

The total project was in fact complete apart from small detail.

We are delighted to confirm that Towns Deal Funding for Scarborough West Pier has been approved. A news release was issued immediately after the approval. We see this as a great opportunity for the town and so do many of the community and stakeholders we have engaged in developing the Town Deal proposals.

In particular, the regeneration of the harbour is considered essential to ensure that the fishing, maritime industries and visitor economy continue to thrive and make a contribution to local economic growth and bring direct benefits to our communities. This is outlined clearly in the Town Investment Plan (which was derived from extensive community consultation) and supported by the Town Deal Board.

As explained at the SBTA meeting, the project has been taken to concept design stage. Further work will take place later this year to produce detailed and technical designs. The Council will be consulting with tenants, harbour users and other stakeholders during this time to create a quality, functional and attractive scheme.

You then say - **the meeting was told many attempts had been made to consult but had been ignored. This was fiercely rejected by the meeting as being untrue.**

The Town Deal process in both Whitby and Scarborough has had be the subject of extensive public consultation. During 2020, and despite the challenges of Covid19 restrictions, over 30,000 people, organisations and businesses were reached in the consultation process and in preparing the Town Investment Plan (which includes the West Pier proposals). The Town Investment Plan is the key strategic document for Scarborough Town Deal. The consultation took place via the full range of face to face meetings, traditional and social media and online.

Furthermore, there have been 12 news articles relating to the Town Deal since March 2021 and during the same period the Town Deal has featured in the Council's Residents' News publications in March, June, July, September and November 2021 and January, February and May 2022 with each separate publication reaching more than 40,000 residents.

Regarding the West Pier specifically, there have been 29 consultations and information events which have taken place since June 2021. This included an initial stakeholder meeting to which the SBTAs were invited and at least one representative attended this session (the Council retain electronic evidence supporting this fact).

Consultations and individual meetings have taken place with West Pier tenants directly affected by the scheme. In addition, members of the project team have attended Scarborough Harbour User Group (SHUG) meetings to give project updates. SHUG is established to represent all sectors that operate in the harbour and its members are charged with communicating information shared in these meetings with their colleagues and respective organisations.

Information sheets on the project have been sent to all West Pier tenants and harbour users via the Harbour office. A project web page also provides basic information about the scheme.

You state that- individual Fisherman had been called in one by one separately and at different times. They were told differing stories as to what would happen to them on what they understood to be a divide and rule basis.

All existing tenants can be accommodated after completion of the scheme and will be offered similar or improved accommodation.

Small group and individual meetings have necessarily been held to better understand individual needs and to protect confidentiality. Where tenants have not wanted to attend the meetings or were unable to attend, members of the project team have been available to meet with them at their convenience.

In order to ensure all tenants and harbour users had the same and consistent information, an FAQ fact sheet regarding the proposals was provided to all existing tenants and distributed to harbour users including the fishing sector.

2. In respect of your assertions relating to Council borrowing to finance the scheme - the Council are comfortable this time to access extra borrowing of £6 million. Yet another burden for the ratepayers.

Subject to the approval of Cabinet, the majority of the scheme will be funded from the Towns Deal Fund and the Council's approved capital funding.

Some additional borrowing will be required to fund the West Pier Scheme. This borrowing will be funded from the Council's Local Investment Fund which is specifically established to support projects that can repay the initial capital outlay and borrowing costs. This results in no additional liability on the taxpayer.

3. In respect of your claim that the Town Deal Board and - the Council have totally failed to apply any of the requirements of government and failed to act properly with best practice, have deceived stakeholders and funders and that town deal funding is specifically reserved for the purpose of supporting the revival of struggling town centres.

You have misrepresented the criteria of the Towns Deal scheme. We have complied with all of the requirements of government in respect of this fund including all governance, consultation and reporting criteria and have operated in a transparent manner.

The area over which the Towns Deal funds can be spent was shared with the SBTA at its recent meeting of the 20/05/2022 where you were present. For the avoidance of doubt it includes the entire urban area of Scarborough from Burniston in the north to Eastfield and Cayton in the south. This rightly extends beyond the town centre and enables towns to create comprehensive plans for their whole geographic area. The images presented within your letter bear no relation to the eligible area of the Towns Deal and are in fact misleading.

We can attest that there have been no attempts by the Town Deal Board nor the borough council to deceive stakeholders, the community or the funders. In fact representatives from the funding body (the Department for Levelling-Up Housing and Communities - DLUHC,) attend the Town Deal Board meetings and are fully aware of the geographic context of the town and the eligible investment area.

4. In respect of your comment whereby you state that - car parking is the single biggest requirement for our businesses to be successful and for our residents' quality of life. It is in crisis throughout the whole of Scarborough. The removal of any more car parking spaces will be seriously detrimental to our visitor numbers and increase frustrations and confrontations on our streets.

We can confirm that a substantial element of public car parking will be retained on the West Pier. In addition, a comprehensive review of on street car parking is being undertaken by North Yorkshire County Council. We are also exploring opportunities to better manage off street parking including improved signage and public transport links, increased parking elsewhere in the town and the provision of alternative transport options. This forms part of the wider regeneration strategy for the town.

5. You then go on to claim that - seafront traders are not struggling, that this investment will be in direct competition with existing businesses and is completely outside of the scope of the Town Deal funding.

We are encouraged by your optimistic assessment of the current seafront economy.

The Town Deal will support further economic growth of the area and the West Pier project is entirely within the scope of the Town Deal programme. The Town Investment Plan seeks to invest from the station to the shore and is formulated to encourage integration and movement between the areas.

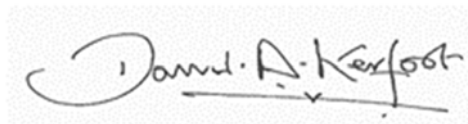
The built environment of the harbour requires investment and regeneration and the Towns Fund provides the opportunity to renovate this unique heritage asset and protect Scarborough's position as one of the most successful harbours of its type in the country.

6. **Conclusion**

Finally, you go on to draw a number of conclusions, further accusations and demands of the Town Deal Board and the borough council which for brevity we will not attempt to replicate here. However, we can categorically state that we do not recognise any of those accusations and on the basis that we consider the content of your letter to be substantially flawed and misleading, we cannot agree with any of the conclusions you have reached either.






The money secured for Scarborough from the Government's Towns Deal initiative was the result of considerable effort from all involved and the success of our application against tough national competition reflects our desire to ensure Scarborough continues to grow and develop for the benefit of the whole community. We will continue to work with our residents to drive forward the positive regeneration of Scarborough and to shape our regeneration plans over the coming months.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Steve Siddons
Leader - Scarborough Borough Council

Mr David Kerfoot CBE DL
Chair – Scarborough Town Deal Board

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