

Axe Valley bid for the Levelling Up Fund

As you may know the constituency MP has to give their support for a bid and I attended a meeting with the new MP, Richard Foord, on 28 June to brief him on the Axe Valley bid and seek his support to meet the deadline for submission.

Mid Devon District Council will also be re-submitting a bid for a relief road in Cullompton and both district councils fall within his constituency. He can support both as 2 councils involved, but the process requires him to show support for one as a priority. As a result he will also be briefed by Mid Devon District Council, but we have arranged a further meeting with Richard Foord for 5 July as the deadline for submitting bids is 6 July. However, we learnt last Thursday, 30 June, that the Government have postponed the deadline date to an unknown future date as apparently there are IT issues with the online portal application process.

The subject of the Axe Valley bid was also on the agenda for the EDDC Cabinet meeting on Wednesday 29 June and I moved acceptance of the bid and all Cabinet members present voted in support. The Axe Valley bid now includes the following:

- Seaton seafront scheme including the Moridunum site
- Seaton employment sites at Colyford Road and Harepath Road.
- Axminster employment site at Cloakham Lawns.

Moridunum site

As mentioned in the previous subject this site is now included in the LUF bid. In addition a marketing pack is now being prepared that will include the same images included in the LUF bid of how the site could look after redevelopment with a retail unit and public realm above.

Hook & Parrot site

On Thursday 30 June I was made aware that the site is being marketed for sale on Rightmove and Zoopla for £1.4m.

I have exchanged messages with the owners who have stated “this is not to say we won’t build it ourselves” .

Part of the planning agreement conditions involved submitting a detailed demolition plan for approval by EDDC which has yet to be submitted and before the news came out on 30 June I had spoken to the owners of the 2 adjoining businesses who were concerned that demolition may be taking place in the peak summer period and the potential impact on their businesses. I explained to them that a detailed demolition plan had not been submitted yet.

Jurassic Centre

I cannot go into details due to commercial sensitivity at this stage, but interest has been shown in becoming lessees of the building and a report is due to be presented to the EDDC Cabinet in September regarding the proposals and the remedial costs required. Just as a reminder 40% of the original build costs were provided by external funders eg Devon County Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Coastal Community Fund. The funding agreements stipulated how the building could be used otherwise EDDC is liable to repay those building costs if the building is used for other purposes within a stipulated time frame. Those funds amount to £1.68m.

The marketing material sets out what the building must provide to comply with the funding agreements.

Seaton Heights site (21/1782/MFUL)

I contacted the site owners last month as there were concerns again about site security as the front gate was open and unlocked. This has now been secured again as apparently a consultant employed by the owner had not locked the gate after a visit.

I took the opportunity to also ask for an update on any progress and was informed that they are waiting for a report from the consultant and also apply for a protected species (bat) licence before any demolition work can take place.

EDDC public toilet sites in Seaton

Seaton Hole - negotiations are continuing with the lessees of Jurassic Bites regarding the adjoining toilet block and including in their lease.

Thury Harcourt - following the vandalism earlier in June the toilets were re-opened on 17 June. In view of concerns raised by myself and Cllr Ledger with the Leader, Cllr Arnott a press release was issued and the Leader stated "Access to good quality public toilets is essential for our towns and sustainable tourism. This administration took the difficult but necessary decision to review what EDDC could provide directly, but we still want to ensure toilets are available where they are most needed. I've been listening to concerns relayed to me by fellow Councillors Jack Rowland and Dan Ledger and this us why I will ensure this site has a public toilet facility available in some form".

Marsh Road - part of the marketing exercise that will conclude with a report from officers later this year.

West Walk - earmarked for investment improvements.

Council Tax (Energy) Rebate

This is the Government scheme involving payments of £150 to residents in council tax bands A to D inclusive (plus band E if in receipt of a disabled band reduction).

To date EDDC has paid out £6.2m to nearly 42000 households (89%) The remaining 5000 households are where the council tax is not paid via direct debit and the resident has not applied yet via either the online form or calling and reminder letters are being sent out now.

Regards