

## Bridlington Town Centre Area Action Plan

### Public Enquiry

#### Barry Guildford - Summary

ERYC have spent considerable time and have outlaid a very large sum of council tax payers money in preparing the Town Centre AAP. They have engaged the services of many specialist consultants to advise them on various aspects of the plans. I am sure that what they have arrived at is well thought out and represents what they believe to be the best solution to the ills of Bridlington.

However they fail to grasp that it is only one solution and that given the exact same basic evidence, another set of equally eminent specialist advisers could well arrive at a diametrically opposed solution.

The council repeatedly use the term evidence to support their assertions when in fact they mean their, or their specialist opinions or predictions. Though I accept that these may be well grounded, they are never-the-less just opinions and those of others may be equally valid. I place particular reliance on the opinion of the Lords Feoffees for instance, as they put their money where their mouth is, not someone else's money.

I strongly opposed to the proposal to build unjustifiable retail units, leisure facilities and housing, on the harbour top. This development is out of all proportion to the scale of the present townscape, will dominate that area and directly contribute to the dereliction of the existing town centre shopping area just a short walk away. It will of course devastate the panoramic views of the harbour and bay that are the jewel in the crown of Bridlington.

I remain opposed to the proposals for the vast area of filled land associated with the proposed new Tidal Basin and the development thereon. This is not to say that I object in principal to the idea of a marina for Bridlington along the lines proposed, rather I base my objection on the lack of public consultation that the council afforded the residents of Bridlington. The consultation display panels are reproduced in CD19 – Appendix 18 - Harbour and Marina, and show a harbour layout that is not the current preferred option and gives no details of the type, size or height of the buildings planned for the 'development area' west of the Basin. The level of detail provided for the public to comment on was dramatically less than that afforded any other area of the AAP. True, there were other plans and documents available elsewhere but why were these details not presented so that the public could make a reasoned judgement on the proposal? There were plenty of artists impressions of those parts of the AAP that could be made to look attractive, but nothing about the 'development area'. Furthermore, the layout of the Tidal Basin in the preferred option carries forward aspects of design that were roundly criticised by the Listed Buildings Assessor in the previous Marina Enquiry. Placing fill material against the south pier and entirely burying the slipway at the root of the south pier were clearly shown to be unacceptable then and it still is. The newer proposal to punch a hole completely through the Grade 2 Listed South Pier is beyond comprehension. At earlier meetings with Council Officers and at this inquiry I have been ensured that these proposals have received English Heritage approval. It is clear from the letter from English Heritage dated 21<sup>st</sup> December 2010 (R15 in CD17) that this is not the case. That being so, why have the Council continued to promote what is an unacceptable option.

The Listed Buildings Assessor from the previous Marina Inquiry was very concerned about the setting of the listed piers, particularly when viewed from the south beach and south cliff road. It is manifestly obvious that the Harbour Top development will completely obliterate any panoramic view of the listed piers, the harbour and the bay from South Cliff Gardens area. It is still not clear what effect the buildings on the Tidal basin fill will have on this view as the council cannot provide any indication of the layout, size or height of the buildings they envisage for this area, though some at least will need to be at least three storeys high to lift any housing development above the flood levels. The listed buildings assessor was less concerned regarding the view of the listed piers from the south beach. She accepted that the overall panorama would still be of a harbour wall (albeit a new one) with an elevated townscape as a back drop. As far as I can reasonably ascertain, from the south beach promenade near the children's play area and the restaurant, the view north will comprise the new harbour wall jutting out to sea, with the buildings on the fill area

completely obliterating the townscape beyond. Can the council name any seaside harbour town which is, or is actively considering, encasing its best asset, the sea and harbour views with new shops and new houses for the wealthy?

I have little confidence in the Council after learning here that:

1. The coach park will not be relocated in or near the town centre as they stated in their response to my comments, in fact they have no planned location despite the length of time they have had to consider this point.
2. English Heritage have not given any approval of the astonishing treatment proposed for the listed piers or the devastation of their unique setting.
3. When questioned on where the market may be sited or what happens to southbound traffic in the Promenade, or details of buildings to be erected on the tidal basin fill, the response is that the AAP is only a guide to the principals to be applied and that these items will be considered in detail at a latter stage, the AAP will be provide flexibility. This claim has fallen at the first hurdle when the Lords Feoffees proposed a MSP which did not precisely comply with the narrow outlook of the AAP proposers.
4. While they claim to have consulted widely with many groups throughout Bridlington, they labour under the misconception that these people, by listening to their presentation, approved of it. I attended the exhibition here at the Spa where I spoke to Council Officers and expressed my objections to various aspects of the scheme. My attendance was probably recorded in the number present, but the fact that I objected was not. Mr Lister kindly gave a presentation on the AAP to West Street and Surrounding Area Regeneration Group. this was recorded under the organisations consulted, but no record was made of the objections he encountered at this meeting. I expect this was the same for all the other 'Consultative meetings' undertaken.

I do not want the AAP to be refused and the whole process be started from scratch again, the rate payers of East Riding do not deserve that. Rather, I would like to see some of the more detrimental elements of the proposals, particularly around the Harbour, removed from the scheme. I would also appreciate some assurance that the Council's assertion that this is a flexible, adaptable, outline proposal be enshrined within the documentation.

Lastly I believe that the council should approach other supermarket chains to ascertain whether they would be interested in developing the coach park site. In this way they will be able to clearly demonstrated that the best possible financial arrangement has been achieved for the rate payers of the East Riding. The present process is shrouded in a cloak of 'market sensitive' negotiations that are not publically testable and cannot be shown to be in the public interest.

I thank you Madam for your relaxed but effective organisation of these proceedings. I feel that it's a pity that this inquiry has been scheduled at this time of the year and that you may go away with a jaundiced opinion of our lovely town. I'm sure the word bracing will take on a whole new meaning for you. Maybe you could back and holiday here one summer.

I would of course be happy to provide any additional documentation that you may require or clarification of anything I have already provided.

I look forward to receiving your report in due course.