
Bridlington Town Centre Area Action Plan

Address for correspondence:

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FAO John Lister
Head of Bridlington Renaissance
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Bridlington Town Hall
Quay Road
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YO16 4LP
(by email)

Dear Mr. Lister

Bridlington Town Centre AAP

Inspector's post-hearings note

The Inspector has asked me to send you the attached note that sets out her position with regard to the AAP. She would be grateful to receive your response to it **by Friday 20th January**. If this does not give you sufficient time, however, please let me know so that we may agree a later date.

Yours sincerely



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Programme Officer

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Bridlington Town Centre AAP

Inspector's post-hearings note

Thank you for your help throughout the hearing sessions as well as in the run up to them. I am aware that you are still preparing a response to a late submission but thought it timely to let you know how things stand following the hearings. I am pleased that good progress was made during the hearings with the result that I have a better understanding of the overall strategy set out in the AAP.

There remain, however, matters that cause significant concern, foremost amongst which is the proposed development of the harbour top as part of the Burlington Parade project. At the moment I consider that this threatens the soundness of the plan for the following reasons:

Development of the harbour top

1. *Effective*

Notwithstanding their general support for a marina and agreement of a footprint the Harbour Commissioners continue to object to the Burlington Parade proposal on the grounds that the development of the essential operational land at the harbour top would adversely affect the operation and management of the harbour. Appropriate alternative land has not yet been agreed and the position is worsened by the proposed development of the Burlington Parade prior to the marina.

2. There are provisos in the plan and on the proposals map to the effect that development at the harbour top will only go ahead subject to replacing harbour operational land. Whilst these may protect the position of the Harbour Commissioners they do not assure delivery. They are also somewhat undermined by the Council's assertion (ED02 para. 1.5.2) that it would, if necessary, consider the use of compulsory powers as a last resort.

3. The bottom line on this matter is that partners essential to the delivery of the plan are not signed up to it and its delivery cannot be assured. In this respect, therefore, the AAP is not effective.

4. *Justified*

The retail studies, including the update, provide a clear indication of how the decline of the town centre might be addressed and are a robust basis for the provision of a significant new shopping area in the town. Development at the harbour top would be intended to provide an anchor drawing shoppers and visitors through, particularly along the renewed Gypsy Race. However, there is little evidence, as opposed to assessment, that this improved functional connection would be a catalyst, essential to the success of the wider Burlington Parade. Existing interests in the town centre wish to make further investment but there was no evidence of businesses/retailers who would only come to Burlington Parade if the harbour top were part of the scheme.

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5. Paragraph 2.19 of the AAP lists a number of sensible and valid reasons for aiming to increase the population living in the AAP area and the plan makes provision for up to 800 dwellings. The 'Planning for Growth' ministerial statement and emerging national policy generally support housing development as a factor of growth and, in practical terms, the number of dwellings provided in the AAP area could be taken into account through the upcoming allocations DPD.
6. PPS12 *Local Spatial Planning* does not require that the Core Strategy be prepared in advance of other DPDs. Without its clear spatial choices and strong direction, however, there is little justification for the location of dwellings at the harbour top. In addition the justification for a hotel, mainly set out in Appendix 1 of the AAP, is expressed in tentative and uncertain terms. It does not amount to robust and credible evidence that such development is either necessary or deliverable at the harbour top.
7. The development projects have evolved over a number of years. The main features of the current Burlington Parade proposal were set out as the Council's preferred option at the Issues and Options stage (2006), as was impounding the harbour as part of a larger marina to include development and redevelopment. Throughout the AAP's preparation consultation has been carried out in line with the statutory requirements but have genuine alternatives been evaluated? Has it been adequately demonstrated that a Burlington Parade scheme that includes the development of the harbour top is the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives?
8. Overall the evidence relating to the need to develop the harbour top as proposed is not robust and the justification for its inclusion within the Burlington Parade scheme is not clear.
9. *Consistent with national policy*
PPS12 defines where AAPs should be used (paragraphs 5.4-5.6). In delivering planned growth areas and stimulating regeneration the Town Centre AAP clearly meets the criteria. With regard to the harbour top, an area subject to development pressures, it does not resolve conflicting objectives. Neither is there a consensus with the Harbour Commissioners as to the right strategy and how it may be implemented.
10. The Council is proposing minor amendments, several of which are intended to address English Heritage's concerns regarding the effects of proposed development on listed buildings and the conservation area. The Council continues to work closely with English Heritage on matters related to the AAP and I have noted Mr Elvin's comment that, paraphrased, if English Heritage was concerned that the Burlington Parade development might have harmful implications it would have said so.
11. Notwithstanding the existing appearance of and uses at the harbour top, there remains significant concern that its development could not be designed or carried out in such a way as to meet the scheme's requirements and also to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. If

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the development of the harbour top is not adequately justified it follows that any harm would not be outweighed by the delivery of substantial public benefits. In this respect the AAP is not consistent with PPS5 *Planning for the Historic Environment*.

12. There are similar qualms regarding flood risk. As explained above the justification for housing and a hotel at the harbour top is unclear and it is not therefore apparent that the sequential test has been applied. Both uses are classed as 'more vulnerable' and thus not compatible with flood zone 3a unless the exception test has been passed. In the absence of robust evidence as to the need for the development of the harbour top there is not sufficient demonstration that the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, contrary to PPS25 *Development and Flood Risk*.

Other concerns

13. With regard to the marina concerns are primarily with regard to the area of filled land: its effect on the listed pier, the loss of part of the beach, the justification for developing it with housing and possibly a hotel, and flood risk. There also seems to be uncertainty as to whether the marina can be delivered.

Ways forward

I realise that you consider the development of the harbour top to be essential to the success of the Burlington Parade project and thus the regeneration strategy encapsulated within the AAP. I am also aware that work proceeds, that negotiations are ongoing and that, in time, the matters causing most concern may be resolved. As things stand however, and for the reasons touched on above, the soundness of the plan is seriously at risk.

I am writing to you, therefore, to solicit your opinion as to how we might address the problems. An alternative approach may be to consider a contingency or fallback position whereby, should the issues not be resolved, the harbour top would not be developed to the extent currently envisaged or even at all. I would be happy to hold an additional hearing session at which to discuss these matters if you consider that would be the most effective, efficient way in which to progress.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Siân Worden