

## **FULL COUNCIL**

**11<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

### **South Hams District Council Regeneration Plans**

SHDC held a public information session at The Bridge Café on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.

Representatives of the Town Council were present throughout the event to try to ascertain the views of those present. There were representatives from SHDC, Kier (the building contractor) and the architects. There was meant to be a representative from Aldi, but they did not attend in the end.

The overwhelming response at the event was negative to the proposals along the lines of the concerns that this Council raised with SHDC in January 2021, namely there was:

- No detailed long term, town wide, parking and travel strategy – and now the additional concerns of the short term parking strategy during construction phase
- No finalised proposals for the replacement of the Skate Park facility
- Concerns over the quality of the design, particularly in relation to the river frontage
- Very limited wider regeneration included, and nothing to tackle things such as the bridge problems & public realm improvements such as a town square type public space.

Although there was no scientific surveying being carried out by SHDC, the Town Clerk and Mayor were there throughout, along with other Councillors, asking for informal feedback from the attendees.

The consensus at the event of those that made their feelings known was around 95%+ against the proposals on the basis of the unacceptable disruption during the construction phase and/or they felt the overall scheme was not appropriate or badly thought through in terms of the other matters and so the proposal was wrong fundamentally.

At the time of writing the full planning application is not available to view. The delay to this means that the public consultation period will probably extend to the very end of May or early June 2022.

The Chamber and town centre businesses are arranging meetings with both the SHDC team and our MP as they do not feel the matter of disruption is being taken seriously enough. There are also concerns that the project is based on pre-Covid research and does not take into account how thriving businesses are in the town now compared to before the pandemic.

The Annual Town meeting is planned for the 16<sup>th</sup> May and so the Mayor and Town Clerk are proposing the theme could be 'Thriving Ivybridge', looking at the post

Covid successes of the Town Centre, looking at the detailed Aldi plans in a workshop format, and comparing them to the various studies and ideas formulated over the years to see if this proposal meets any of the current desires for the town centre, or what could be proposed as alternative plans to SHDC if the proposals by SHDC don't meet the town's needs.

There is a meeting planned by the Chamber for the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> April at 5.30pm at The Bridge Café, and a further meeting planned for 6<sup>th</sup> May at 6.30pm, it is believed the chamber would welcome any Councillors that wished to attend either or both meetings.

A special Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting may be required, or the date of the planned ones on 16<sup>th</sup> May or 6<sup>th</sup> June may be moved as appropriate when the final dates are known.

In the meantime, a statement based on the discussion at this meeting can be issued to the public, setting out how they can get involved and comment most effectively on the proposals.

Jonathan Parsons  
Town Clerk