



Briefing Report No: **71/2007**

Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

Title: **Paignton Harbour Regeneration Potential**

Wards Affected: **Roundham with Hyde Ward**

To: **Harbour Committee**

On: **19 March 2007**

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1. Key points and Summary

- 1.1 To advise the Harbour Committee of the results of an investigation by the Torbay Development Agency into the regeneration potential of Paignton Harbour.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 On the 13 September 2006 the Harbour Committee was updated on the work undertaken by the Paignton Harbour Working Party. At that time the Harbour Committee was also presented with the Working Party's recommendations and it was subsequently resolved that the Chief Executive of the Torbay Development Agency be requested to investigate the regeneration potential of Paignton Harbour, but to include the retention of the character of Paignton Harbour. It was further resolved that as part of the investigation the views of harbour users and local residents be obtained and that the results be reported to the meeting of the Harbour Committee on 19 March 2007.
- 2.2 The character of Paignton Harbour is currently defined by an amalgamation of features – not all of which can necessarily be regarded as positive. Nevertheless it is considered that essential components of the overall character include the working nature of many of the facilities including fish processing activity; the facilities in support of leisure marine activity such as a sailing club, rowing club, chandleries, the Harbour office, etc; and mixed use characteristics such as retail outlets, stores, youth organisations, and cafeterias etc. Somewhat more negative features might include the congestion of access particularly for larger vehicles, the dilapidated nature and use of the Roundham Road car park, and the more general separation of the harbour from the remainder of Paignton's facilities and tourism centres.

3. Development Options

- 3.1 The four basic options available in respect of Paignton Harbour, which realistically only relate to the South and East Quay areas, are:-
- (i) The redevelopment of all or most of the existing built environment around the harbourside.

- (ii) The smaller-scale redevelopment of selected facilities around the harbourside.
 - (iii) Reclamation of land from the sea to create additional developable space.
 - (iv) A combination of some or all of the above.
- 3.2 Wholesale redevelopment of all or most of the existing buildings would, as a preference, require the agreement of **all** of the property owners and tenants of the buildings concerned. If this could not be reached then litigation and/or Compulsory Purchase Orders would be needed. This would be a costly process, taking at least to two years, will no doubt be unpopular with some, with no guarantee of success.
- 3.3 Redevelopment of all or most of the working facilities alone would clearly have a significant impact on the character of the harbour. Whilst comprehensive consultation on this aspect has not yet been conducted, there is an anecdotal groundswell of opinion against such a major impact (see also section 6). Also, there would be an impact on the employment prospects of the immediate area, the requirement for the construction and provision of alternative facilities, and very considerable interim disruption to one of the key sectors of the area.
- 3.4 Recent experience at Torquay and Brixham harbours has shown that land reclamation is an expensive option for delivering development land.
- 3.5 If reclamation proposals are included or if the scale of re-development were such as to affect significant public realm aspects, then any redevelopment would have to produce a high capital value for the land used. In today's market, and in an area such as Paignton Harbour, this would almost certainly mean residential development. A decision would have to be taken as to whether this would add to or detract from the character and operational needs of the harbour (see section 5).
- 3.6 Roundham Road car park is sited on the harbour estate and is recognised as and under-used asset. Several leased properties exist within the car park structure and these have often suffered with water ingress problems. Demolition of the car park is an option that would therefore clearly unlock development potential.
- 3.7 The more likely redevelopment proposal that would both preserve the character of the harbour area and with more positive prospects for local acceptance would be the selective redevelopment and/or upgrade of specific facilities including the Roundham Road car park.
- 3.8 To instigate a full in-depth evaluation of the above options, including appropriate levels of community consultation and selective analysis of individual facility redevelopment, would require a greater time frame together with the approval of quite considerable additional funding.
- 3.9 The Torbay Development Agency has not requested additional funding at this time in view of the planned impact of the Mayoral Vision programme (see section 7), which plans to address precisely the priority and viability of projects such as this. In particular this programme is intended to address the context of Paignton harbour regeneration within the overall context of Paignton town centre facilities and tourism areas. In the case of the harbour its connectivity with other

Paignton facilities remains a priority issue that should precede individual redevelopment proposals and analyses.

4. Funding

- 4.1 Public funding is normally invested in schemes that will generate a broad range of positive benefits for the local economy. Only in exceptional cases is funding made available for a single private sector end user.
- 4.2 Typically it is the type of project that determines what funding schemes can be considered so without a clearly identified project it is difficult to be prescriptive. In the case of Paignton harbour, possible developments may be in support of leisure and tourism, commercial uses, harbour and marine or residential. Residential developments are not typically supported by schemes that we would be able to access, although the New Growth Points designation for Torbay might be able to attract limited sums (i.e. less than £250K) towards housing enabling.
- 4.3 It is increasingly difficult to attract funding for leisure and tourism developments or investments in the public realm. The new European programmes covering the South West will not support tourist attractions at all and other public funders, such as Regional Development Agencies, have been put off investing in tourism attractions by repeated follow up funding requests. There are National Lottery sources that can support sporting and community facilities but further investigation would be needed to confirm the precise amounts and activities that can be supported.
- 4.4 The European Investment Bank can make loans for local authority infrastructure projects but the issue would then be of raising the finance for repayments.
- 4.5 It might be possible to attract funding for commercial/industrial premises however the Torbay Development Agency is already in the process of bidding for grants to build premises in all three towns in the Bay. These facilities are aimed at small and new start-up businesses and there would be question marks over demand for many additional sites in addition to those proposed.
- 4.6 In summary while there are a small number of, increasingly competitive, public sector funding opportunities for developments it is not possible without a clearer identification of a preferred scheme to be more detailed in the assessment.

5. Relationship with the Local Plan and the Tor Bay Harbour and Maritime Strategy

- 5.1 The Tor Bay Harbour and Maritime Strategy highlights the need to improve surrounding infrastructure. One particular type of development where there has been a rapid increase in demand in the last 20 years has been in marinas and other facilities for boat mooring, parking and launching; this demand is likely to continue for the foreseeable future and there must be adequate support infrastructure to allow this growth.
- 5.2 The harbours of Tor Bay can and are being used as catalysts for regeneration, and there are clear examples of best practice, which highlight and evidence this. However, when considering such opportunities an understanding must be had of the type of land adjacent to harbours and the land based facilities required for

boating. ***‘Local boat yards repair and maintain boats and provide winter storage ashore. Many clubs also have self-run facilities where members can work on their boats. All these facilities need to be at the water’s edge. Many have been lost to development that does not need a waterside site and this trend needs to be reversed. Development of coastal sites in particular for housing is increasing and is an attractive option to the developer. This short-term economic gain is a long-term loss to those activities that require a coastal site and hence to the quality of life and economy of the area. Government planning guidance states that coastal sites should be safeguarded for activities that require a coastal location’.***
(Planning Guide for Boating Facilities – British Marine Federation and Royal Yachting Association)

- 5.3 Planning policy as set out in the Adopted Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework covers strategic spatial planning issues. The new Tor Bay Harbour and Maritime Strategy together with the introduction of the concept of marine spatial planning will assist in the further development of planning policy documents.
- 5.4 Paignton harbour does lend itself to a mixed offering for visitors and harbour users, the Council’s Maritime Strategy aims to focus the development of such an area and harness the potential as a leisure, recreational and maritime destination. As Paignton is a drying harbour, the surrounding infrastructure has greater potential for further leisure offering than the waterspace.
- 5.5 The British Marine Federation state that development plans should be positive in identifying sites which are suitable for water-based activities related to sport, recreation and tourism, bearing in mind the unique requirements of such activities in relation to access to water. In this respect the Tor Bay Harbour and Maritime Strategy has identified Paignton harbour as a key development area.
- 5.6 Any improvement to the surrounding infrastructure at Paignton harbour will have planning policy implications. It is important to ensure that the harbour and surrounding infrastructure is relevant to the needs of users, visitors and the community in general. Also, its development should be compatible with the planning policy framework.
- 5.7 Many of the Local Plan policies are consistent with the approach to Tor Bay Harbour contained within the Harbour and Maritime Strategy. The Plan is generally supportive of the development of water-based tourist facilities and the regeneration of the enclosed harbours, provided that this does not undermine the working role of the harbour or adversely impact on other factors such as environmental quality, highway safety, visual appearance or marine wildlife. The Local Plan acknowledges that Tor Bay Harbour has ***“great potential to satisfy the increasing demand for water-based leisure activity in all its varied forms. The natural maritime amphitheatre of the Bay provides an unrivalled setting for competitors, spectators and the media”***. Policy TU4 permits the development of water-based tourist facilities in Torbay’s harbours where it meets the criteria mentioned and listed in the policy.

6. The views of harbour users and local residents

- 6.1 Feedback has been gathered from the Paignton Harbour Users Group, local residents and the Paignton Town Ward Partnership. In general everybody who was asked would welcome improvements but did not want to see fundamental change to the nature of the harbour. They considered the harbour and its culture to be unique and felt that the character of the area should be retained within any regeneration proposals. There was general opposition to any kind of residential style development. The Ward Partnership expressed a desire to be fully consulted on future proposals for the harbour area. In summary the vast majority of people wanted improvement but were not necessarily in favour of major change, especially if such change would influence the character and nature of the harbour. Those consulted felt that any development should be complimentary to existing maritime activity and sympathetic to the operational needs of the harbour. It is important to note that these comments reflect the views gathered through informal consultation undertaken by staff from Marine Services. The Torbay Development Agency has not undertaken any formal consultation.

7. The Mayor's Vision

- 7.1 The Mayor's Vision presents a significant opportunity to address the overall context of Paignton and the relationship of the harbour to the town centre and the various tourism facilities of the town. It is therefore important that this programme proceeds and that the connectivity findings of the programme are used to guide the overall regeneration concepts for the harbour area. This overall review should be allowed to precede any individual redevelopment proposals that might otherwise be out of context with proposals for the overall advancement of Paignton.

Richard Morgan
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Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

- **Tor Bay Harbour and Maritime Strategy**
- **Local Plan**
- **Planning Guide for Boating Facilities – British Marine Federation and Royal Yachting Association**