

27 March 2019

Mr Kerry Blair  
Director of Operations  
Waveney District Council *Sent by email with cc to STC and S&R Society*

Dear Mr Blair

### **Southwold Harbour Lands: Consultation Response**

Overall, I agree largely with the points raised by the Southwold and Reydon Society (of which I am a member) in their letter to you about the proposals for the Southwold Harbour Lands. I write as someone who helped campaign in 1986 to save the Harbour for the community, so my interest dates back over 30 years.

On a personal level I find it extremely hard to comment through your survey of opinion on your specific proposals for the Harbour Lands.

At the Public Meeting in Southwold on 6 February, the most commonly occurring answer to questions or requests for further details was along the lines of "that needs a further conversation". I am concerned that discussion with the WDC representatives after the meeting indicated there was no plan for any further feedback to "ordinary" individuals with a local interest should any such discussion take place and decisions be made. The importance of local involvement cannot be underestimated.

The imposed date of 6 March for a decision to be made is rushing the issue and seems solely to suit the merger of WDC and Suffolk Coastal. One of my concerns is that this merger will dilute Southwold's influence in local issues.

#### Question 1:

The Consultation assumes that the establishment of a Harbour Management Committee is a given. The PGG guidelines indicate that Harbour Management Committee is merely one way of incorporating good governance principles, not necessarily the best. At the meeting alternatives were not discussed. Furthermore, the ownership of the Harbour (a basic proposition) is not uncontested, despite the documentation at the Public Meeting.

The discussion at the meeting assumed the HMC should be 50% Local Authority with the Chair an elected representative. I am unhappy with this because there is a question about independence. Furthermore, at the meeting Southwold Town Councillors expressed concern about the additional responsibility this would impose on them.

It is critically important that the effective stakeholders, those with businesses that directly depend on the good maintenance of the Harbour and the Harbour Lands, should have a seat on and input to any governance body or committee.

#### Question 2:

Don't work to an artificial calendar. Take more time over this and get it right. There is little local trust at the moment and, as Mark Bee pointed out at the meeting, trust is of the essence.

My answers to the other questions are more than adequately covered by the Southwold and Reydon Society's responses but I would like to stress that local control of SHL needs to be real and secure in the long term, that the Caravan site should not be sold or leased to a third party and that any revenues/income from the Harbour Lands are ring-fenced for the Harbour Lands and the estuary.

Yours sincerely