

Regeneration Plans update by Malcolm Thorpe 1.6.16

As the Harbour gets busier for the summer, I am asked almost on a daily basis about the progress of our regeneration planning application and when construction work will begin; hence I believe a short update may be useful.

Eighteen months of extensive consultation with all the necessary agencies resulted in gaining the approval of Natural England, the Environment Agency, Island Roads (Highways), Isle of Wight Council (IOWC) and others, which subsequently culminated in gaining a resolution to grant consent on 01/12/2015.

This resolution was granted despite the actions of a local group, the Bembridge Harbour Trust (BHT), who actively lobbied the agencies against supporting our proposals, and following December's planning decision submitted to IOWC a potential judicial review challenge against their resolution to grant consent. Such a challenge is not against the planning approval decision itself, but against the lawfulness of the process and technical procedures adopted by IOWC. Should BHT continue with this challenge, both the financial cost and allied management hours will be significant to the Harbour.

We have now submitted to the IOWC further detailed reports and information, together with progressing a Section 106 Planning Agreement whereby all beneficial enabling works to the Harbour will be constructed before the new houses.

As regards timing, we originally planned for the new facilities and admin complex, car parking and associated investment into the Harbour to be completed and in use by Easter 2015, with construction of the new houses following; the earliest that we now foresee achieving this goal is Easter 2018.

In summary, having gained approval from all the major agencies, with support to demonstrate that our regeneration plans are in compliance with planning policies, and having gained the support of the IOWC with a resolution to grant consent, we are hugely frustrated and disappointed by BHT's continuation to pursue their technical legal arguments against IOWC that prevent us moving forwards with our further improvements and investment within the Harbour.

Malcolm Thorpe
1st June 2016