

RETAIN REFURBISH REUSE

INFORMATION SHEET 1

What challenges do East Devon District Council face in redeveloping Port Royal?

EDDC have an ambition to make a cash gain from their land at Port Royal by selling it for redevelopment. The site is allocated for a 'mixed-use development with 30 homes' in the Local Plan (LP) which carries considerable weight in planning terms should a developer purchase the site. A developer's planning application might or might not meet other planning requirements or address current users.

BUT selling the site and developing it according to the Local Plan is challenging for the following reasons:

- Increased flood risk (river and sea) limits residential development to above ground level
- Residents are strongly opposed to a high building and luxury flats (shown by feedback to the Neighbourhood Plan and the scoping study consultation as well as support for 3Rs petition)
- Sidmouth Town Councillors and community groups have expressed opposition to a high building on the site (which would be needed to fit everything in)
- Current users should be accommodated
 - Life boat and sailing/gig/sea fishing clubs have been promised facilities (no guarantees)
 - Potential loss of the toilet block
 - Impact on the fish shop and storage is uncertain. Although this area is outside the site allocated in the Local Plan (and owned by Sidmouth Town Council), it adjoins the site
- The timetable for delivering the Beach Management Plan cannot be confirmed until funding is secured
- Development on the eastern part of the site (toilet block) is limited by the Ham conveyance
 - EDDC did overcome a similar issue in Exmouth for Elizabeth Hall (now a Premier Inn) but it's likely to be more difficult to do this in Sidmouth due to public awareness and Sidmouth Town Council involvement as Trustees
- The South West Water sewage pumping station and equipment under the eastern end of Port Royal may restrict what can be built on top. The stench pipe may also be a limiting factor.
- Demolition of the Drill Hall is not as simple as bringing in the bulldozers. It would require planning consent and objections could relate to the impact on the conservation area and come from bodies such as Historic England. Redevelopment of the site could necessitate an archaeological survey
- The site is in the conservation area

Given all the above, how attractive is this site to a developer? Would such a development be financially viable?

EDDC do have other options, including:

- Propose a smaller development of flats that is accepted by the Town Council
- Leave everything as it is, until some of the above challenges are resolved. This could wear-down opposition as things deteriorate further
- Try to sell the site in chunks, such as the Drill Hall and toilet block
- Accept Community Value in return for an asset rather than cash (or in part)
- Sell or lease the Drill Hall to be refurbished and reused
 - ***This would be an opportunity for a community group, ideally in conjunction with Sidmouth Town Council, to kick-start refurbishment for the benefit of the whole town***