

# ILFRACOMBE REGENERATION BOARD

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 14.00 – 15.30

## Notes

### 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Present: Councillor Paul Crabb (chair), Councillor Malcolm Prowse, Geoff Fowler, Steve Seatherton, Laura Donovan, Charmain Lovett, Kara Stevens, Dominie Dunbrook, Naomi Laurenson (notes) Keir Duffin (online) Neil Ingram

Apologies: Alison Mills, George Carlo-Paat, Councillor June Williams, SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland, Matt Brown, Councillor Sara Wilson, Rod Donovan, Councillor Malcolm Wilkinson

### 2. Agree notes and actions from last meeting

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record. There were some matters arising that aren't on this agenda:

### 3. Next actions on Whitbread site

No further contact with Louise Woodruff had been made/received since the previous Board meeting.

The Board discussed some potential developments on the site, including a revised residential development, with flats and town houses being considered. Some ballpark figures had been produced for that option, and these could be used to have initial conversations with potential investment partners such as Homes England. It was agreed that some public funding would need to be secured to make a development viable. We are still waiting to see what price Whitbread will put it on the market for.

The Board considered the merit in allowing the market to decide if there was a viable proposition by leaving it to go forward to the open market. If after a period there was little or no interest, that might be the opportune time to discuss options with Whitbread.

The Board also considered commercial and residential uses but agreed that the viability gap would be even more significant for these schemes without private sector investment.

It was agreed that we would keep a watching brief on the site and open communications with Whitbread.

*Action: PC will send the figures to MW and SJMS for review.*

## **4. Updates from the Town, District and County Council's**

### **Golden Coast Site concerns**

The Board were informed that concerns about rats at the Golden Coast site had been raised by the care home opposite and the untidy nature of the site, in particular the fencing. These issues have been reported by Councillor Wilson to North Devon Council who are now responding directly to the site owner.

*Action: DD to investigate how the PMO can support 'team around the problem' enquiries such as these.*

### **Museum Relocation and Seafront Master Planning**

The group discussed progress on the museum's relocation to the High Street building, with consultants working on layout and space planning. They explored potential use of the basement space for the museum's archive and other purposes, though final decisions depend on completing the museum planning first.

Given the real potential of the Museum relocation, vacating their current site, some discussion was held around the seafront. Councillor Williams had asked it to be raised at the Board for consideration. Particularly the current Seafront Masterplan and whether that needed review/refresh/redoing. A reasonable number of projects from the current Masterplan had been completed, so it was a good time to review.

*Action: DD to send a copy of the Seafront Masterplan to the Board.*

### **Investment Proposal for Clapping Circle**

The group discussed a proposal from David Roland to invest half a million pounds in upgrading the area in front of capstone, including pirate scenes and modern improvements, in exchange for a long lease. They noted that the tender process had already been awarded for another two years, but expressed interest in potentially having David present his plans at some point during that period. The discussion also touched on how this proposal could influence the master plan, particularly regarding the seafront area and potential adventure play features for older age groups. This could also be useful linked to the above item around the potential Seafront Masterplan refresh.

### **Culture Club Updates**

The Board were updated on the Town of Culture bid for Ilfracombe – which had now been successfully submitted. The Expression of Interest had strong input from the Culture Club, which now had around 70 organisations represented on it from a diverse range of interest groups and individuals. The BBC did a profile of all the Town of Culture bids, including a piece in Ilfracombe which was positive. There are only a handful of towns bidding in Devon, with Barnstaple being the closet bid. EOI outcomes are expected in the summer.

### **Any other Business**

LD requested that stalled sites are put back on the agenda showing progress status for each site. Neil confirmed that he has a list that he keeps updated and this can be used as a progress report for IRB purposes.

KS will continue pushing positive news stories through various channels beyond Facebook (newsletters, annual reports, etc.) and will arrange a follow-up with TV crew in 6 months for more positive coverage of Ilfracombe.

### **Date of next meeting**

29<sup>th</sup> April 2026