

Project Briefing Note

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Project Title	Whitby Maritime Hub
Project Reference	SW023
Project Sponsor	Community Development

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Whitby Town Council	Stakeholder	For information

1. **Purpose of Note**

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing note is to respond to the motion proposed at the additional full Council meeting of Whitby Town Council to be held on the 28th January 2025

2. **Project activity and updates**

- 2.1 In recent months, renewed extensive activity has taken place by the Council to secure tenants for the Whitby Maritime Training Hub. This activity has proved effective, and meetings and discussions with a range of interested tenants in both training and enterprise for the building have taken place, and a number of Expressions of Interest have been received. Promotional activity and conversations with potential tenants will continue throughout the construction period.

- 2.2 The Council has agreed Head of Terms with an external tenant for the facility and several others are engaged in negotiations with the Council's Property service. The Harbourmaster will also take space within the building.
- 2.3 There is an acknowledgement that a subsidy will be required from the Council for the facility until it reaches the required occupancy level for it to be sustainable. Senior Management within the Council are fully apprised of the situation and associated risks. Considering the risks, the required level of subsidy and the benefits that the project will bring, the decision was formally taken by the Council's Executive on 21st January 2025 to proceed into the construction contract for the project.
- 2.4 In July 2024, a project adjustment request (PAR) was submitted to MHCLG for approval to reduce the project outputs due to the reduction in the footprint of the building. A requirement of the PAR is for the Economic Case to be revisited and an updated BCR provided. Aecom reevaluated the economic benefits in line with the reduced outputs and the project still provides a BCR of 2.98 (reduced from 3.88) which still demonstrates high Value for Money.
- 2.5 This reduced footprint was the scheme that Council officers and the consultant team engaged the community on in early 2024. This period of engagement saw the project team carry out four in person events, an online presentation and both online/paper questionnaire. 256 people responded to the questionnaire, with 69% of these responses in support of the Whitby Maritime Hub. As a part of that consultation North Yorkshire Council Officers presented the proposal to Whitby Town Council on the 18th January. The outcomes from this public consultation helped to inform the decision made on the 21st January by the Council's Executive.
- 2.6 Alternative options have been explored by the Council for the funding awarded to the Whitby Maritime Hub in the event the project did not proceed. These included the funding going to other active projects in the Whitby Town Deal programme, none of which would be able to utilise the full grant amount, and the possibility of new projects that would support the maritime industry in Whitby.
- 2.7 All of the considered options would be subject to further development work, require public consultation via the Town Deal Board, endorsement by the Board and NYC and be approved by MHCLG through the Project Adjustment Request procedure. Not only does this carry the risk of not gaining the required consents, but it would also take considerable time, therefore increasing the risk that the funding would not be spent during the Towns Fund programme. Therefore, the funding would have to be returned to Government and the investment in Whitby would be lost.