

**WTC FULL COUNCIL 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025:**

**MARITIME HUB: INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SUPPORT OF MOTION BY**

**THE PROPOSERS \***

Lack of commercial interest and a viable business plan for this project is evidenced by the following:

Originally it was stated the Fishing School and Lobster Hatchery would be based in the Hub, however both of these enterprises have withdrawn their interest. In October 2024 NYC admitted, following a Freedom of Information Request ([https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/freedom\\_of\\_information\\_request\\_p\\_721/response/2804362/attach/html/4/202402683.pdf.html](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/freedom_of_information_request_p_721/response/2804362/attach/html/4/202402683.pdf.html))

) that "Currently one party is interested in occupying the hub." That 'one party' is thought to be the Whitby Harbour Master's office – which currently has a perfectly good office adjacent to the proposed site of the Hub.

The business case referred to in the FOI above refers to the original 2022 scheme involving Dalby Offshore. It is out of date and wildly optimistic claiming, for example, to be able to provide training for 800 'new learners' per year – with no service providers identified, no suggestion where these 800 people will come from, how they will get to and from here (bearing in mind the pitiful state of public transport to and from Whitby), nor where they will stay!

A report (<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/documents/s45802/250121%20-%20Report%20-%20Whitby%20Maritime%20Training%20Hub.pdf>)

) submitted to the North Yorkshire Council Executive by Nick Harne, NYC Corporate Director (Community Development) in January 2025, states that at current rental levels an occupancy rate of over 80% is required just to cover the building's operating costs. It conveniently ignores the fact that in addition to the £109,000 it will cost to run the building, there will be around £120,000 p.a. loss of income from the parking spaces the Hub will take up. The actual annual cost to the ratepayers therefore will be £109,000 + £120,000 = £229,000 per year, while the most they could expect to make with 100% occupancy at current rental levels is just £136,000. Even at their best-case scenario, the ratepayer will be out of pocket by £93,000 every year.

Late last year, in an attempt to drum up support, NYC retained a firm of Chartered Surveyors and Commercial Property Experts, Align Surveyors (<https://www.alignsurveyors.co.uk/news/>)

) to find businesses willing to move into the Hub. There has been no communication for NYC to say this campaign has been successful, so it is probably safe to assume there has been no further commercial interest as yet.

Public opposition to the proposal can be evidenced by the fact that of the 59 comments submitted to the NYC Planning Portal just 6 were in support of it. If one is to actually view the details, of those 6, one was a town councillor, two were North Yorks' councillors, one was Whitby Civic Society (which was dominated by Cllr Swannick) and just 2 by 'citizens', neither of whom were residents. Of these, one is believed to be from Redcar who had a grump about the lack of work in Whitby and the other from a gentleman in Sleights whose comments were neutral rather than supportive. If the comments for and against support for the hub are analysed, 93% of the residents of Whitby who commented were against it compared to just 5% in favour.

Furthermore a petition was raised containing 99 signatures, 58 of whom are residents, 41 concerned visitors, requesting the Maritime hub was not built on Endeavour Wharf. Mindful of the requirements of the GDPR this petition is not included here, it has however been submitted to the Clerk and is available for viewing and verification if required.

Ongoing opposition to the Hub is evidenced by numerous press articles and threads on social media platforms e.g.

<https://www.facebook.com/whitbycommunitynetwork>

<https://nyenquirer.uk/category/towns-parishes/whitby-town/>

\*Please note that the information here is what has been provided by the Cllrs proposing this motion and it is not a Whitby Town Council document.