



LOOE TOWN COUNCIL KONSEL TRE LOGH

Looe Library and Community Hub,
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LOOE BUSINESS AND LEARNING INITIATIVES

Report to Full Council 30 April 2024

Purposes of report

1. To note the validation of the planning application for a building at the Millpool.
2. To update Full Council on the progress of the current Community and Stakeholder Engagement.
3. To report proposed next steps.

1. The application has been validated and the following notice posted on the Council's website and Facebook page:

Members of the public may have seen that a planning application by Looe Town Council has recently been 'validated' by Cornwall Council. This means that the application is being actively considered by Cornwall Council Officers and public comments are invited. Below is the link to the planning portal.

We thought it would be helpful to give the background to this application which may seem to have come out of the blue. In fact it is one part of an ongoing process.

Prompted by a proposal from the late Cllr Edwina Hannaford in 2020, your Town Council has been researching how best we could help support economic development in the town through training, nurturing new businesses, broadening the economic base beyond our core of marine, retail, hospitality and tourism and getting more opportunities for young people to lead rewarding working lives here.

Funding was secured from the Town Vitality Fund, through Cornwall Council, and in 2022 extensive consultation and research was undertaken by Horscroft Research Solutions and PFA Research Ltd. Further community engagement has been undertaken by the Real Ideas Organisation, again with government grants.

Running through this wider thinking has been the idea of a possible bespoke building to house growing and start-up businesses, training rooms, meeting and exhibition space, a café and more. Again with government funding a potential design was prepared by Space Design Architecture and this is the planning application now submitted.

However, your Town Council has not yet decided that such a building is proven to be needed for the ideas we have been researching. Councillors will consider that when the research is complete, when we have done some small scale trials and when we have a body of business and public support for the initiative.

Why then submit a planning application now? Three main reasons:

- *As above, plans were commissioned with government funding and essential surveys (flooding, land stability, bats, trees etc) undertaken. The surveys are time limited so, to avoid the future cost of repeating them, we needed to submit the application in early 2024.*
- *The planning application process, although focussed on a specific building proposal, will give us more opportunities to engage with residents and businesses and test the viability of the overall ideas.*

- *Public funding tends to be offered at such short notice that many worthwhile projects cannot get their ideas together in time. If your Town Council and the community agree in due course that such a building would be good for the town then we will be able to move fast and apply for available funding. We will have banked the opportunity and have a 'shovel ready' project available.*

We hope that you will find the planning application, as well as the wider ideas behind it, interesting and that you will let us know your views. If you have any questions or comments for the Town Council please get in touch by email at enquiries@looetowncouncil.gov.uk or by post at Looe Town Council, The Millpool, West Looe, Cornwall PL13 2AF

The planning application can be viewed and comments made on Cornwall Council's planning portal:

<https://planning.cornwall.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=S9GZ6BFGMV600&activeTab=summary>

The reference is: PA24/01569 – Proposed Business and Learning Hub – Looe Library And One Stop Shop The Millpool West Looe Looe Cornwall PL13 2AF

2. The draft report on Stage One of the Community and Stakeholder Engagement was circulated to all Councillors for the last Full Council meeting on 25 March. All feedback received is now being assessed by the Real Ideas Organisation and the final report will be available shortly.

3. At the meeting of the Business & Learning Working Group on 17 April it was agreed that the Group should research some small scale, low cost pilot projects and that initially four themes should be developed:

- Volunteer mentors for Looe businesses – matching volunteers having appropriate experience with people seeking to develop their business skills and learning.
- Training for young people focussed on technology.
- Arts and creative work – working with external partners.
- Hospitality and the visitor economy.

Once these themes are further developed the Group will put a formal proposal to Full Council, along with potential sources of funding.

Stephen Remington
Chair, Business & Learning Working Group