

Southwold Caravan Owners Association (SCOA)

Press release – 9 April 2024

A consultation on the redevelopment of Southwold Harbour and Caravan Site started on Monday 8th April 2024.

One of the main stakeholders in the Harbour Lands, Southwold Caravan Owners Association (SCOA), have been given little or no detail on what the plans are, other than 4 broad-brush options, and yet caravan owners are being asked to select a preferred option, none of which reflect the many discussions SCOA has had with East Suffolk Council over the years.

The consultation that East Suffolk Council (ESC) proposes entails an extensive redevelopment of Southwold Harbour and the caravan site which threatens to change the entire character of this popular and beautiful seaside town.

The proposed plans put forward by East Suffolk Council:

- Will turn the caravan site into a commercial development which will not reflect the uniqueness of the harbour or Southwold. It will reflect a Premier holiday park environment such as Parkdean or Hoseasons.
- Will involve investment of large sums of public money to develop a commercial activity on a high-risk Zone 3 flood plain, which all evidence shows will regularly flood by 2040.
- Will involve ESC owning 30% of the static caravans for holiday lets under one of the options. This equates to 44 static caravans purchased by ESC, which is a considerable use of public money.
- Will drive long term loyal caravan owners away, many of whom have been part of the Southwold caravan community generation after generation, through:
 - Giving caravan owners no choice but to enter into long-term leases (20 years proposed by ESC) without the Council providing any detail or costs of what this entails.
 - Giving caravan owners no choice but to buy new caravans through ESCs own supplier, without any details of what this will cost. It could be argued that ESC has created their own market through years of neglect.
- Will, under Option 4, require all caravan owners to leave the site and ESC owning 140 static caravans for short-term holiday let to the public.
- Will result in an out-dated commercial model, rather than a future-friendly model that is sympathetic to the environment and character of the town.
- Will threaten the sensitive ecology and biodiversity of the area.

The premise on which the future plans are based is borne out by the lack of investment by East Suffolk Council and its predecessor Waveney District Council over the last 50 years. Since its inception, the caravan site has generated a significant income which was not invested back into the harbour and caravan site as it should have been. The new plans which entail millions of pounds of investment will not and cannot stop the area flooding through rising seas levels.

To penalise the Town, by altering the very nature of the harbour, and the long term, loyal caravan owners through systematic neglect, is irrational and perverse. Figures readily available show the

significant surpluses made by the caravan park which year on year should have been reinvested in the Harbour Lands.

For further information, contact info@southwoldcaravanowners.co.uk or visit http://www.southwoldcaravanowners.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33

8 April 2024