

## **Devastating Blow for Seafront Regeneration**

Plans for the redevelopment of Weymouth Seafront received a devastating blow this morning (8 June) with the announcement that the South West Regional Development Agency has withdrawn the £6.6 million grant which it had previously approved for the scheme.

The decision comes following a reduction in the various sources of income that SWRDA receive, including government funding, which has led to a savage cut back in their investment programme.

Work has been underway on the project for two years and following the formal approval by SWRDA's full Board of the £6.6 million bid last September, their officers and Borough and County Council staff have been working together to prioritise the programme plan and were at an advanced stage of appointing specialists in order to make a start on the project.

Chair of the Management Committee, Councillor Michael Goodman said "We are bitterly disappointed at the decision of the Regional Development Agency to renege on the agreement to part fund our vital seafront regeneration project. A great deal of work by our own staff and that of potential partners has been wasted as result of the late and total withdrawal of SWRDA funding. I suppose that we should not be surprised that, with the Nation in such deep financial trouble, what little money remaining is being diverted to the traditional heartlands of the Midlands and the North. I am just grateful that we were able to gain the SWRDA support necessary to regenerate Osprey Quay, before the funding tap was turned off. As a Council we will now have to draw breath and see what can be salvaged from the proposals included in the scheme.

The Borough Council is committed to continuing to work with Dorset County Council, SWRDA and other public agencies as well as private sector businesses in the town to use what funding can be made available to see which parts of the improvement programme we may be able to take forward and implement in time for 2012."

## **Ends**

### Note to Editors:

A bid to SWRDA for funding to assist with the seafront regeneration was submitted by the Borough Council in December 2007, following extensive prior negotiations with SWRDA. In September 2008, the SWRDA Board approved a £6.6m grant. The focus for the planned improvements was to provide a rejuvenated seafront which would raise the profile of Weymouth as a resort, with high quality development to provide a new George III Square, Tourist Information Centre, a Beach Rescue Centre and new sand sculpture structure, as well enhancement to the promenade landscaping, and an innovative artist led, lighting scheme.

For further information please contact Cllr Michael Goodman Chair of Management  
Committee  
T 01305 815935 E [michaelgoodman@weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:michaelgoodman@weymouth.gov.uk)

Press release issued by Peter Gilmour Corporate Communications Manager  
T 01305 838288 M 07974 369029 E [petergilmour@weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:petergilmour@weymouth.gov.uk)

[www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk)