

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 4 September 2019
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release None



Subject: Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group

Purpose of report: The purpose of this report is to secure approval for a new Project Delivery Group that will replace the existing Exmouth Regeneration Board and Exmouth Regeneration Executive Group. A brief update is included on the work that has taken place over the last year in advance of a more detailed cabinet report that will come forward in October. This next report will provide information on the outcome of the work undertaken by the project's external professional advisors with recommendations for the next steps that will involve a new public engagement process before the end of this year.

This is a late report following discussion with Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder – Economy. A September Cabinet decision allows the creation of the new Delivery Group and an opportunity to meet soon in September to discuss external expert advice and the future programme of actions on delivery of Queen's Drive Phase 3 prior to a detailed report coming to October cabinet.

Recommendation: **That Cabinet;**

- 1. Approves that the Exmouth Regeneration Board and Exmouth Regeneration Project Executive are dissolved and that an Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group is established in its place (terms of reference detailed at Appendix 1).**
- 2. Approves the appointment of the Councillors to the Ward Member positions as detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the report and delegates authority to the Leader to appoint replacement members to these positions should the need arise.**

Reason for recommendation: To enable appropriate engagement between local Exmouth Ward members, the Town Council, Lead councillors and officers of this council within a group where the project can be discussed in detail and confidentially. This will enable the group's members to have informed discussions relating to this complex project and its delivery. Notes of meetings will be published regularly as part of cabinet papers.

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| Financial implications: | There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of the report. |
| Legal implications: | It is within the remit of Cabinet to abolish the previous Board and Executive Group and to create a new Delivery Group. Legal have had input into and are happy with the Terms of Reference. There are no other legal implications requiring comment. |
| Equalities impact: | Low Impact |
| Risk: | Medium Risk |
| | Risk is inherent in a complicated phased development project of this nature. Risks are being managed and reported to SMT on a regular basis. Project updates are considered within the Capital Strategy and Allocations Group. The new Delivery Group will provide a further means by which the Queen's Drive investment and development can be informed and advised by members and officers of the district and town councils. |
| Links to background information: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet 5th April 2017 (Item 15) |
| Link to Council Plan: | Developing an outstanding local economy, and an outstanding local environment. |

Report in full

1. Background

- 1.1 The delivery of regeneration projects in Exmouth has been a significant activity for this council for a number of years now and the sharing of information to councillors, and the members of Exmouth Town Council (including sometimes confidential or commercially sensitive information), has been through a number of different means. These included the Exmouth Regeneration Programme Board, the Exmouth Regeneration Executive Group, and All Exmouth councillor group meetings as well as email briefings. To date the Exmouth Regeneration Board has involved itself in a broad range of Exmouth issues but the priority for now is to focus on delivering the Queen's Drive project and in particular the progress of a Phase 3 mix of quality leisure and appropriate seafront uses to complete the development. Phase 1, the road and car park, is now complete and Phase 2, the water sports centre, is underway. Temporary attractions are in place pending the progress and completion of Phase 3.
- 1.2 Where decisions have been required, in the past these have been taken by cabinet with delegated approvals being given to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer in consultation with others including the Economy Portfolio Holder.
- 1.3 The new Leadership has been considering how best to take forward the involvement of councillors and other stakeholders in Exmouth's regeneration activities. Cllr Kevin Blakey, the Economy Portfolio Holder, and new chair of the Exmouth Regeneration Programme Board has taken forward a number of discussions within the council in relation to this. Through these discussions and the ongoing progress of Queen's Drive Redevelopment phases, there is an imperative to focus on the delivery of the outstanding elements of this project and complete a Phase 3 development.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 With this in mind it is considered that a Board with a broad remit has come to a natural end and that a focused and dedicated group be created to advise on the delivery of the next Queen's Drive redevelopment phase in particular. The council would like to thank those individual members from this and other councils, as well as those from the private sector that have given their time and energy towards its work and the projects that it has championed including the Premier Inn, the new Mamhead Slipway, the Strand redevelopment and the phases of Queen's Drive redevelopment.
- 2.2 The council is therefore proposing to replace the Regeneration Board with a Delivery Group that will help bring the Queen's Drive project to fruition. The group, made up of District and Town Councillors supported by officers, will be delivery focused and will have an overview of Phase 3 delivery in particular.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the membership of the Delivery Group will comprise the following councillors from the District and Town councils:

Council Leader (Chair) - Cllr B Ingham

Deputy Leader (Vice Chair) - Cllr S Bond

Portfolio Holder: Economy - Cllr K Blakey

Portfolio Holder: Sustainable Homes and Communities - Cllr M Armstrong

EDDC Ward Member, Exmouth Littleham - Cllr N Hookway

EDDC Ward Member, Exmouth Littleham - Cllr Bruce De Sarum

EDDC Ward Member, Exmouth Town - Cllr O Davey

ETC Mayor - Cllr S Gazzard

An additional ETC member to be nominated by the Town Council

Support officers: Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Manager - Regeneration & Economic Development, Senior Manager - Property & Estates, Principal Planning Officer for West Team, Principal Solicitor, Regeneration Officer, Clerk of Exmouth Town Council.

- 2.4 The Group will meet a minimum of 4 times in a year. The meeting will be private to ensure that confidential or commercially sensitive matters can be discussed. Meeting notes (covering non-sensitive items) will be published through the council's Cabinet papers. When appropriate, the Chair may invite other individuals with particular expertise to attend the meeting.
- 2.5 The purpose of the Group is to ensure that the members are kept apprised of the position regarding the Queen's Drive project: its progress and current issues. It will be the forum where members can discuss the opportunities and complexities relating to the project's delivery, arising sometimes as a result of commercially sensitive or confidential matters which cannot be more widely shared.

- 2.6 The Group will support further public and stakeholder engagement activities (more information below) and through their membership of the Group, will promote the optimal outcomes for Exmouth in delivering the redevelopment programme. It will also contribute to the work underway by external advisers, Hemingway Design and Lambert Smith Hampton, currently engaged by the council to advise on future uses on the Phase 3 site in terms of vision and commercial viability.
- 2.7 The Group is an Advisory Group and it will remain the case that key decisions in relation to the redevelopment of Queen's Drive will be debated and decided by East Devon District Council's Cabinet and Council.
- 2.8 It is recommended that in 2 years' time, there will be a review of the project to assess its continued need.
- 2.9 The full Terms of Reference of the Project Delivery Group are contained at Appendix 1.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 The council has engaged Hemingway Design to refresh the Phase 3 vision including public and stakeholder engagement. In addition Lambert Smith Hampton have been appointed to work with Hemingway Design and the council to provide specialist leisure market advice on the development.
- 3.2 The engagement process began with an introductory visioning event and workshop hosted in June 2018 where attendees from a broad range of local interests including business owners, particularly from the local tourism, hospitality, leisure and creative sectors, Exmouth community and non-statutory organisations, and other groups with a particular interest in the seafront such as the Rowing Club, National Coastwatch Institution and Save Exmouth Seafront. At that initial event, the Hemingway Design team presented possible ideas for the space and asked attendees to put forward their own ideas and evaluate which they thought would be most relevant for the site.
- 3.3 This then informed the content of an online engagement survey for the wider public to share their thoughts and ideas; the results of which were published on the council's website earlier this year.
- 3.4 The aim of the online survey was to get to the heart of what the mixed use leisure area (Phase 3) of the Queen's Drive development could become. The survey ran from July to September 2018 and at the time the survey closed, 1289 responses were received.
- 3.5 A presentation to Exmouth Elected Members followed by a stakeholder visioning workshop took place in Exmouth Town Hall in December 2018 hosted by Hemingway Design and East Devon District Council. Lambert Smith Hampton were also in attendance to contribute with their commercial property expertise where the need arose.
- 3.6 Discussion centred on the quality of Exmouth's current built environment and leisure facilities and what might be missing from these. There was concern with regards to how the Queen's Drive site would interact with and complement the Ocean and the new Watersports Centre. Attendees were in agreement that the Queen's Drive Phase 3 redevelopment has the potential to offer new leisure, tourism and economic opportunities for Exmouth.

- 3.7 Commercial Property advisors, Lambert Smith Hampton are providing advice on the commercial deliverability of any future proposals, ensuring that the council is clear on the financial implications (income/liabilities) of any decision taken regarding the future uses of the site. Lambert Smith Hampton have been undertaking an exercise to 'soft market test' the current development market against the existing planning consent and emerging ideas in real market conditions. This is industry standard practice and will provide an indication of the appetite of investors and operators to be part of the mix of uses appropriate to and commercially possible for Phase 3 of the seafront's future.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Project Delivery Group will hold its first meeting during September and receive the latest information on the work of the external professional advisors, HemingwayDesign Ltd and Lambert Smith Hampton preparatory to a Cabinet report in October.
- 4.2 A report is planned to come forward to Cabinet in October with more details on the outcome of the work of Hemingway Design and Lambert Smith Hampton and advising on a timetable of next steps.

APPENDIX 1

Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group

- Membership: From East Devon District Council;
The Leader (Chair), Deputy Leader (Vice Chair), Portfolio Holders for Economy and Sustainable Homes & Communities, two Ward Members from Exmouth Littleham Ward and one Ward Member from Exmouth Town Ward
From Exmouth Town Council;
The Mayor and one further Councillor
- Support officers: Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Manager - Regeneration & Economic Development, Senior Manager - Property & Estates (to advise on the potential use of the Commercial Investment Fund), Principal Planning Officer for West Team, Principal Solicitor, Regeneration Officer, Clerk of Exmouth Town Council
- Meetings: A minimum of four times per year
- Quorum: Four District Councillors

Terms of Reference

- To provide a reference group of district and town councillors with officer support to inform progress and to make recommendations to East Devon District Council's Cabinet to enable it to take forward the successful delivery of *Exmouth Queen's Drive Redevelopment – phase 3*;
- To receive briefings and reports from officers and to act as a point of reference for the successful delivery of *Exmouth Queen's Drive Redevelopment – phase 3*;
- To monitor progress on achieving the delivery of the *Exmouth Queen's Drive Redevelopment – phase 3*;
- To advise on and input to external expert and professional consultancy;
- To support further engagement of public and stakeholders;
- To promote best practice, help overcome barriers and promote optimal outcomes for the benefit of Exmouth in delivering the redevelopment programme;
- To promote the objectives and successes of *Exmouth Queen's Drive Redevelopment*;
- To liaise with and share information with Exmouth Town Council

To assist the Delivery Group they may, through the Chair, invite individuals with relevant expertise to attend on a 'one-off' basis to discuss a particular issue.

The District Council will provide the secretariat service for the Delivery Group.

The Delivery Group will not be open to the general public and attendance will be by invitation only, reflecting the confidential and sensitive nature of matters discussed at meetings.

To ensure that there is public awareness of the Delivery Group's activities, discussions and project progress, notes of meetings will be publicly available and published as part of the District Council's Cabinet agendas.

The Delivery Group will be subject to review in two years' time to assess need for continuation and/or whether any changes are appropriate.