

## Agenda for Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group

**Monday, 25th January, 2021, 10.00 am**

### Members of Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group

Councillors P Arnott (Chair), P Hayward (Vice-Chair),  
M Armstrong, O Davey, N Hookway,  
A Colman, D Ledger, B Taylor, J Whibley,  
C Wright, S Gazzard and A Bailey

**Venue:** Online via the Zoom app.

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(or group number 01395 517546)  
15 January 2021

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmNHQruge3LVI4hcgRnbwBw>

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- 1 Welcome from the Chair
- 2 Public speaking
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 November 2020 (Pages 3 - 8)
- 4 Apologies
- 5 Declarations of interest
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- 8 Queen's Drive temporary uses (Pages 14 - 21)
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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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**EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL****Minutes of the meeting of Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group held Online via the Zoom App. on 17 November 2020****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 5.04 pm

**7 Welcome from the Chair**

The Chair welcomed those participating and those watching via the live streaming.

**8 Public speaking**

There were four members of the public registered to speak and one letter submitted to be read out at the meeting.

Geoff Skinner, for the Exmouth Community Association [ECA], advised that the ECA had long supported the regeneration of Exmouth. The Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan summed up what the town was trying to achieve, with its aspiration to be forward thinking. Mr Skinner was of the view that all of the options should be explored. There needed to be a wider return for the whole town, not just for the businesses on the seafront.

Roy Pryke, a member of the Residents Association for 20 years and Chair of the Exmouth Community Association for 14 years, advised that the Neighbourhood Plan had been approved overwhelmingly and carried equal weight to the Local Plan. Mr Pryke drew the Delivery Group's attention to page 68 of the Neighbourhood Plan and policy statement EE6 relating to Queens Drive Development, phase 3 of the regeneration scheme. Mr Pryke was of the view that the proposed hotel should go out to be tested and should be carefully designed so as to be appropriate to the setting.

Daphne Currier welcomed the current co-operation between Councillors and members of the public and advised that there was a strong case to return the temporary car park to public leisure use. It had been noted previously that signage to car parks was very poor. The Maer and Foxholes car parks could be renamed as the beach car park and swimmers car park respectively. In summary, car parks should be renamed, visitor traffic rerouted and the temporary car park recovered for its original use.

Sally Galsworthy congratulated the new administration on their handling of the issues. Speaking as a business owner and from personal research, it was clear that seaside attractions could not be provided all year round. However, there was a real need for outdoor attractions for children over 10 years old. Ms Galsworthy had tried to obtain financial accounts for Ocean, which had not been possible as the figures were included with the accounts for The Pavilion. There should be clear accounting for each offering in Ocean.

Tim Todd had submitted a letter by email which was read out by a Democratic Services Officer. Mr Todd was pleased to see that further information on the development of the seafront had been provided, however there were missing elements and inaccuracies and he cautioned against accepting the reported history as a sound basis for proceeding. The Delivery Group was urged to retain all existing waterfront related records as primary documents. Mr Todd was of the view that the Exmouth Masterplan was a biased

exercise selling a misleading concept. Any development must respect the unique natural capital and be appropriate and the Delivery Group should take whatever time was needed to get development right.

## 9 **Notes of the previous meeting**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 15 October 2020 were agreed as a true record.

## 10 **Declarations of interest**

Minute 11. Review of Terms of Reference.  
Councillor Chris Wright, Personal, Member is a former tenant of the Queen's Drive Redevelopment site.

Minute 11. Review of Terms of Reference.  
Councillor Joe Whibley, Personal, Member is also an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 11. Review of Terms of Reference.  
Councillor Nick Hookway, Personal, Member was very involved with Save Exmouth Seafront prior to election to EDDC, but is no longer involved and confirms he is not biased or predetermined.

Minute 11. Review of Terms of Reference.  
Councillor Olly Davey, Personal, Member is also an Exmouth Town Councillor.

## 11 **Review of Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference were discussed and it was agreed to recommend that the development and management of the Ocean building be included in the Terms of Reference.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Cabinet agrees to include the development and management of the Ocean building in the Terms of Reference for the Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group.

## 12 **Review of chronology of activities - follow up to item discussed at October Delivery Group**

A chronology of activities had been published with the agenda.

Comments on the chronology of activities received from others were summarised by Cllr Whibley as follows:

- There was a mistrust of the previous process, with perceived pre-determination of the proposed schemes
- There was a perceived sense of unease at the lack of transparency on the part of the developers
- Activities now needed to be forward looking
- Development should be sympathetic to the environmental impact, with honest and open consultation including all sections of the community and beyond

- Those involved were feeling more enfranchised in the process
- Consultation was key to the process

The Delivery Group discussed referring the chronology of activities to the Scrutiny Committee.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Chair would draft a proposal for the Scrutiny Committee to consider the chronology of activities and circulate the proposal to members of the Delivery Group for their comments prior to its submission to the Scrutiny Committee, and that the proposal would include

1. Scrutiny of what had taken place, in the interests of EDDC understanding its own processes
2. Understanding what lessons needed to be learned and what could be done differently moving forward.

## 13 **Exmouth Queen's Drive Cost Report**

A cost report had been published with the agenda. The report was introduced by Simon Davey, Strategic Lead for Finance, and the following points highlighted:

- The report was in two parts; capital project costs and Queen's Drive Space revenue costs
- The cost of moving the road and the car park was £1.7 million
- The report linked to the Cabinet paper of November 2016 when the budget had been agreed
- Receipts for the Phase 3 capital programme had been unknown and had not been relied upon
- There were no outstanding financial commitments where receipts were expected
- The breakdown of the cost of £166k for compensation and legal fees was circa £86k for compensation and £80k for litigation

Discussion included the following points:

- The £3 million cost was an investment by EDDC in Exmouth with benefits to residents and businesses
- The £1.7 million cost of moving the road was high for what seemed to be a small amount of work
- The cost of moving the road, and how this would be funded, had been misleading from the outset
- The figures did not include the loss of income from businesses on the seafront
- No business plan had been in place

### **RESOLVED**

That the cost report be noted.

In response to the earlier question from public speaker Sally Galsworthy regarding a breakdown of the costs for Ocean, Peter Gilpin, CEO of LED, advised that

- LED is five years into a 25 year lease on the Ocean building. LED is a commercial tenant of the building and this lease is entirely separate from LED's leisure centre operations for the Council and is therefore accounted for separately
- LED Leisure Management Ltd is a charitable trust, officially a Community Benefit Society. Its subsidiary trading company, LED Leisure Enterprises Ltd, deals with the non-charitable income which has to be accounted for separately, predominantly derived from sales of food and beverages at Ocean and The Pavilion. Surpluses are then transferred to the parent Trust
- LED Leisure Management Ltd produces group accounts showing a total figure for income and expenditure from its sports and leisure activities and the non-charitable income from the trading subsidiary
- LED Leisure Enterprises Ltd currently has five directors; Peter Gilpin together with two trustees from the parent Trust and two non-executive (voluntary) directors from commercial backgrounds. The board is looking to recruit an additional non-executive voluntary director with food and beverage experience

## 14 **Report outlining considerations for temporary uses for 2021**

The report on considerations for temporary uses of Queen's Drive Space for 2021 had been published with the agenda and was introduced by Tim Child, Service Lead – Place, Assets and Commercialisation.

The Delivery Group discussed various options and suggestions for recreation and leisure and noted that planning permission would need to be extended for continued temporary uses after next year. It was advised that any temporary uses would not influence how the land would be developed ultimately.

Discussion included the following points:

- Temporary uses for 2021 should remain the same as previous years
- Suggestions for temporary uses included pop-up events, beach volleyball, bungee jumping and extending the Dinosaur Play Park
- Seating could be replaced by picnic benches which could be re-used elsewhere
- Attractions should be aimed at children over 10 years old, teenagers and young adults
- The temporary car park should be removed
- It was noted that annual income from the temporary car park was between £20-£30k with the risk that this would be redirected to Devon County Council car parks if the temporary car park was removed
- The market could be tested for alternative operators to mitigate any loss of income from the temporary car park should it be removed
- Vehicle drop-off points near Queen's Drive Space would be helpful

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**It was agreed to recommend to Cabinet**

1. Not to proceed with the temporary car park and to provide clearer signage to other car parks on Exmouth seafront

2. To instruct Tim Child to research and report back on alternative options for use of the temporary car park land, in consultation with Cllr Chris Wright and Cllr Nick Hookway

Regarding recommendation 2 above, it was suggested that the EDDC Events Team should also be involved in discussions on options for temporary use of the car park land.

With regard to other considerations for temporary uses of the remaining land at Queen's Drive Space, as outlined in the report, the following points were discussed:

- The provision of seating which, subsequently, could be used elsewhere
- Food and beverage offering could remain the same with a preference for supporting local traders
- Play equipment to be kept in good order
- Arranging events to be put on hold pending clarity on the situation with the Covid-19 pandemic
- Possible removal of the old decking
- The bar to be retained

Tim Child advised that it would be good practice to re-tender the space as the rates had been set several years previously.

It was agreed that Tim Child would undertake more research and report back on trading options for 2021.

It was also agreed to note the report outlining considerations for temporary uses for 2021.

The agenda for the next meeting would include an item on the traders, the bar and the resulting implications for EDDC of managing the site.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Councillors present:**

P Arnott (Chair)  
P Hayward (Vice-Chair)  
M Armstrong  
O Davey  
N Hookway  
A Colman  
D Ledger  
B Taylor  
J Whibley  
C Wright  
A Bailey (Exmouth Town Council)  
S Gazzard (for Exmouth Town Council)

#### **Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

P Faithfull  
M Howe  
B Ingham

J Loudoun  
K McLauchlan  
A Moulding  
M Rixson  
E Wragg

**Officers in attendance:**

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer  
Mark Williams, Chief Executive

**Also in attendance:**

Peter Gilpin, LED  
Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk, Exmouth Town Council

**Councillor apologies:**

None

Chair .....

Date: .....



Report to: Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group

Date of Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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## **Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group – Terms of Reference**

### **Report summary:**

Terms of reference previously agreed by Cabinet were presented to the Delivery Group at its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020. It was resolved that a full review of the terms of reference for the Delivery Group be undertaken at the next meeting of the Group.

As such, Terms of Reference formed an agenda item at the Delivery Group meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 with a recommendation that Cabinet agrees to include the development and management of the Ocean building in the Terms of Reference for the Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group.

At Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 this recommendation was agreed.

Attached is the new amended Terms of Reference for information and will be made publicly available.

### **Recommendation:**

N/A

### **Reason for recommendation:**

N/A

Officer: Tim Child, Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation [tchild@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tchild@eastdevon.gov.uk)

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action
- ☐ Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- ☐ Democracy and Transparency

- ☒ Economy and Assets
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Financial implications:**

N/A

**Legal implications:**

N/A

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information**

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ Outstanding Place and Environment
- ☐ Outstanding Homes and Communities
- ☒ Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- ☐ Outstanding Council and Council Services

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**Report in full**

N/A

## **Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group**

### **Membership:**

#### *From East Devon District Council;*

Leader (Chair), Deputy Leader (Vice Chair), Portfolio Holders for Economy & Assets and Strategic Planning, Ward Members from Brixington (x1), Halsdon (x 1), Littleham (x 2), Town (x 2) and Withycombe Raleigh (x 1).

#### *From Exmouth Town Council;*

The Mayor and one further Councillor

#### *Support officers;*

Service Lead (Place, Assets & Commercialisation), Project Manager in Place, Assets and Commercialisation, 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 provide a reference group of district and town councillors with officer support to make recommendations to East Devon District Council's Cabinet on the development and management of the Ocean building.
- ☐ 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 be open to the public (Part A) but may have a private part to the meeting (Part B) to discuss confidential and sensitive matters.

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.

**Report To:** Queen's Drive Delivery Group  
**Date of Meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
**From:** Peter Gilpin, CEO, LED Community Leisure  
**Subject:** Ocean

In response to a question at the previous meeting, the following is a summary of the relationship between LED Community Leisure (LED) and the Ocean family entertainment centre on Queen's Drive.

LED is now into its 6<sup>th</sup> year of a 25-year lease of the Ocean building. LED is a commercial tenant of the building and this lease is entirely separate from LED's leisure centre operations for the Council and is therefore accounted for separately.

None of the Management Fee paid to LED for the management of the Council's public leisure services is used to support Ocean. Prior to the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, Ocean was generating an operating surplus.

LED pays a commercial rent to its Landlord, East Devon District Council (EDDC). Until early 2020 the Landlord was Harlequinns Leisure Ltd, with whom LED took out its lease.

Due to the first lockdown in 2020, which closed Ocean for 3 months, EDDC granted a rent deferral for the period; this is to be repaid in 2021. No further deferrals have been requested or granted for the second or third lockdown periods.

LED is a charitable trust, officially a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Its subsidiary trading company, LED Enterprises Ltd (LEDE), deals with the non-charitable income which must be accounted for separately, derived from the soft play, events, and the sales of food and beverages at Ocean and The Pavilion. Surpluses are then transferred to the parent Trust.

Initially, soft play was accounted for as a 'charitable' activity, but due to a change in VAT status by HMRC it is now accounted for through LEDE. Ten-pin bowling is seen as a recognised sporting activity, exempt from VAT, and is therefore accounted for through LED. This is a 'profitable' activity providing a contribution to the parent Trust, along with the income from the SEGA entertainment centre.

LEDE is a limited company registered at Companies House. The accounts for LEDE, which deal with the commercial, non-charitable activities, show the following for the last 3 years:

|      |         |                   |
|------|---------|-------------------|
| 2017 | £34,712 | profit before tax |
| 2018 | £8,983  | profit before tax |
| 2019 | £46,147 | profit before tax |

2020 has yet to be accounted for but will inevitably show a loss due to 4 months of enforced closure due to COVID-19, particularly during some peak summer months. This is expected to be recouped once trading returns to pre-COVID levels.

LED Leisure Management Ltd produces group accounts showing a total figure for income and expenditure from its sports and leisure activities and the above non-charitable income from the trading subsidiary, LEDE.

Ocean's turnover is over £2 million pa, employs around 75 local people and purchases from predominantly local suppliers, thereby putting circa £1.5 million back into the local economy.

Report to: Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group

Date of Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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## Exmouth Queen's Drive Space – Temporary Uses for 2021

### Report summary:

A report was presented to the Delivery Group meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and a general steer given by Members as to thoughts for the 2021 season, namely around provision of seating, food and beverage offerings, play equipment, events, repair and / or replacement of seating area and the bar on QDS.

Discussions also included the issue of the temporary car park site and on this issue there were 2 recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

1. Not to proceed with the temporary car park and to provide clearer signage to other car parks on Exmouth seafront.
2. To instruct Tim Child to research and report back on alternative options for use of the temporary car park land, in consultation with Cllr Chris Wright and Cllr Nick Hookway.

On 6<sup>th</sup> January Cabinet resolved that these recommendations be agreed.

This report takes forward both the proposals for 2021 on QDS and recommendation 2 above.

### Recommendation:

That the Delivery Group recommend to Cabinet:

- a) That a temporary planning application be submitted for up to 2 years on the temporary car park site to enable the area to be grassed (seed or turf) and used for fitness uses as per this report.

**Note: it would be for the Delivery Group to recommend to Cabinet whether or not to proceed with the expense of grassing this site prior to the grant of planning consent. Officers would remind Members both of the risk of incurring unnecessary cost and in respect of public perception.**

- b) That the temporary use on the main Queen's Drive Space for the 2021 season progress as detailed in report (paragraphs 3.1-3.8) in respect of arrangements for the bar, the traders, events and replacement of the seating areas.

**Reason for recommendation:**

A request was specially made for this information to be presented.

Officer: Tim Child, Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation [tchild@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tchild@eastdevon.gov.uk)

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action
- ☐ Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- ☐ Democracy and Transparency
- ☒ Economy and Assets
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Financial implications:**

The report highlights the financial implications of the proposals following the direction given by the Delivery Group. The loss of the car park income is in the order of £20k - £30k (how much of this lost income will be recovered from car park users parking in other EDDC car parks is unknown). To provide a grassed surface to the temporary car park is £18k to £38k (capital costs) with additional maintenance costs of £10k per annum. It is expected activities on the site could generate up to £6k. A budget is also being requested of £20k to £35k (capital) to replace existing seating and infrastructure on Queen's Drive Space. It was envisaged that additional budgets would be required, subject to Council approval, and although not included currently in the draft budget for 2021/22 the possibility of costs arising were highlighted. If proposals are adopted at the highest budgeted sums, with car park income assuming a 50% loss, then an increase is requested in the capital budget of total of £73k and net revenue implications of £19k.

**Legal implications:**

There are no specific legal implications requiring comment.

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information**

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ Outstanding Place and Environment
- ☐ Outstanding Homes and Communities
- ☒ Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- ☐ Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## Report in full

### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 A site meeting took place on 10<sup>th</sup> December with Cllr Nick Hookway and Cllr Chris Wright as per the recommendation from the November Delivery Group meeting. Cllr Arnott as Chair of the QD Delivery Group also attended. Officers in attendance were Tim Child, Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation and Angela Gordon - Lennox, Events Officer for StreetScene.
- 1.2 There were two main agenda items which I will address below in order:
- a) Temporary car park site – future temporary uses following QD recommendation to Cabinet not to proceed with the temporary car park
  - b) Temporary ‘meanwhile’ uses on main Queen’s Drive Space site for 2021 season

### 2.0 Temporary car park site

- 2.1 At the last Queen’s Drive Delivery Group meeting Members were informed that the temporary planning consent of this land for parking had now expired. The Delivery Group recommended to Cabinet not to proceed with a new temporary application for car parking but to look at alternative future temporary uses. The temporary car park generated £20,000 - £30,000 income per annum, with some of those to be displaced using other EDDC car parks and others using DCC spaces.
- 2.2 The Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation met with colleagues from StreetScene, the Events Team, Planning, Car Parks and Place & Prosperity to start scoping out what was possible/ feasible. A number of suggestions were put forward at the Delivery Group meeting and through subsequent emails received and these were all considered, along with pro’s / con’s of each. The options considered were as follows:
- a. Pop-Up events
  - b. Beach volleyball
  - c. Bungee Jumping
  - d. Extending Dinosaur Play Park
  - e. Crazy Golf
  - f. Go Ape
  - g. Food Traders
  - h. Table Tennis
  - i. Adventure playground for older children
  - j. Maize maze like at Darts Farm
  - k. Rockreef.co.uk type climbing walls / ropes
  - l. Skate / cycling – possibly learn to cycle safely course
  - m. Activities for older children (10 yrs plus)
  - n. Fitness type uses – by hire for sessions
- 2.3 See appendix A for completed matrix outlining pro’s and con’s for each.



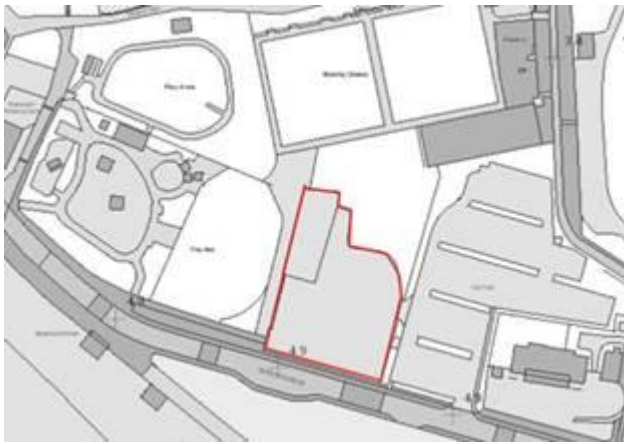
- 2.4 A number of these proposals were ones that had already been considered in the past and have real potential on the main QDS site itself, but on the temporary car park site are perhaps less suitable due to the location and the surface condition which itself would require quite significant investment (even more than for the grass specified in this report) before a number of these types of uses could be considered even on a temporary basis. Some of these uses are also provided elsewhere in the immediate vicinity (beach volleyball, food traders and crazy golf). The loss of parking revenue and the capital costs involved, to likely generate a lesser commercial return directed Officers towards looking at these types of uses, but either on the temporary car park site or the QDS site itself.
- 2.5 Officers were very mindful that we have significant space at the rear of the main site (the events space) and it is possible that some of these types of uses considered above, might best be suited to this space instead, where the surface condition is already better, and the space is currently not generating an income. This space could be made available to the types of uses listed above instead of events, or dependant on use, possibly a variety of pop up type uses and the more traditional events we've had in recent years. Better utilisation of this space would also enhance footfall on the front part of the site providing improved revenue for the traders and bar, improve overall financial performance and with less cost to EDDC.
- 2.6 When considering alternative uses, Members need to be mindful of the planning position. In respect of the main Queen's Drive Space site this is as follows:

Queens Drive space permission 18/2842/FUL. This is a temporary consent and ceases on 31 March 2022. Once the use has ceased all structures shall be permanently removed. The heights of any structure in the event space shall not exceed 10 metres and no structure exceeding 4 metres in height shall be located within 5 metres of any boundary of the site.

Other than that already existing, details of any additional movable or permanent structures or features (such as seating areas, children's play equipment, event space facilities or food and drink retail facilities) proposed on the site for a period in excess of 28 days, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the installation of such equipment.

As for the temporary car park site, as the temporary consent for car parking expired in September 2020 and the proposed use as an area for outdoor exercise would not benefit from the lawful historic use, the Planning Service has therefore advised that a new planning consent would be required, whether for a temporary or permanent use.

- 2.7 Advice has been received from the Project Engineering Team as to costs of making the temporary car park site suitable for other uses. For bitmac surfacing the cost is estimated as £58,000 and would include all that land forward of the trip rail i.e. not the rear grassed part of site nor the protected grasses site. The land is shown outlined in red on the plan below. To turf this same area the cost would be circa £38,000 and with seeding with preparation at circa £30,000 which includes for top soiling due to the current compacted stone surface. Assumes a minimum topsoil depth of 100mm. Circa £10,000 per annum would then be needed to instruct StreetScene to maintain.



- 2.8 The Members and Officers met on site and discussed all these issues and the preferred option by Members was considered to be as follows:
- a) The car park be laid to grass with any fencing being minimal to encourage the feeling of openness.
  - b) In terms of temporary uses for the car park land, for next season or two, the favoured uses related to low key fitness type uses. The rationale for this being:
    - Would fit well with the Council's Health & Wellbeing Agenda and is consistent with themes in the Council Plan and Statement of Intent.
    - Supports Covid recovery for small businesses and would provide much needed wellbeing opportunities for the community.
    - Would complement both aesthetically and practically the current offerings in the locality.
    - Would not compete with businesses in the vicinity.
    - Contributes to the Tourism agenda and Exmouth as a destination in providing additional activities.
    - Would provide a range of activities across the age bands.
    - We know through the Events Team that there's ample demand.
    - Whilst the costs of laying to grass and any fencing (if needed) are not insignificant – est £30K - £40K, the costs will be less compared to those that would be incurred for many other types of surfaces / uses. We need to factor in circa £10,000 annual costs for StreetScene to maintain.
- 2.9 The Events Team received an increasing number of requests to use Council Land for health and wellbeing activities in 2020. These requests included dance fitness classes, boot camps, general fitness and outdoor yoga. Some of these requests specified a beach front location and we feel that this location would be of great interest to a number of organisers.
- 2.10 We have also received a small number of requests from 'branded' operators looking to set up regular military style boot camps on our land. One of these companies is actively seeking a location close to the sea front. They are looking to provide daily classes across the age range to encourage health and fitness. They have also suggested providing classes at no cost to certain groups, where this would add value to the community and also managing the whole area and providing smaller companies the opportunity to use parts of the site in parallel with their own activities.

- 2.11 The tangible benefits of allowing these types of activities are clearly great. However, the revenue opportunities for the Council are minimal. Many of the companies looking to use Council land are 'one man band' with limited scope (and sometimes desire) for profit. The proposal for fitness licences in our latest Events Team Portfolio Holder report, having carried out research with event organisers and other Local Authorities, ranges from £250-£600 per annum, depending on number of classes/clients per week. If there were 10 companies wishing to use the land (perhaps each on a half day basis) then income would equate to £2500 - £6000 per annum but at this stage this is very indicative and should not be relied on.
- 2.12 This low key fitness type use would be managed through the Council's Events Team, consistent with how they manage other sites.
- 2.13 If low key fitness type uses on this land are to happen then the following actions are needed (timescales still indicative):
- a) A decision by Cabinet for this change of use. Assume decision on 3<sup>rd</sup> February
  - b) A submission of an application for temporary planning consent during February. The Planning Service have indicated a period of 4 months from submission to determination.
  - c) Determination of planning during June.
  - d) Marketing of site for fitness uses during intervening period but uses not to commence until July.

\*Note – This assumes that ground works and seeding can take place prior to planning consent and 'at risk'. **To be seeding this site during June / July during a busy summer season and in dry weather would be extremely problematic and delay uses commencing until September. Seeding / turfing can take place prior to a planning consent but would be at risk in relation to both costs and public perception. The decision on whether this could happen would be a Member decision but practically would be best done in March.**

### 3.0 Proposals for QDS in 2021 – Temporary / Worthwhile Uses

- 3.1 With an Events Team now in place and Angela in post we discussed the merits of managing the site in a similar way to other sites already managed by that Team. The Team have the skillsets, contacts and market knowledge, procedures and capacity ideally suited to this type of work. The recommendation is that Angela Gordon-Lennox and her Team oversee temporary uses for the 2021 season, reporting back through this Delivery Group and with arrangements overseen by Tim Child who's Service remain responsible for the site and wider place-making project. An Events Team did not exist in previous years but is now a valuable resource that can be utilised to manage the temporary uses on this site.
- 3.2 Food & Beverage – The traders from 2020 had been told in 2019 that if the site were to be operational again in 2021, the trader offer would be retendered. Now, in light of the challenging market conditions in 2020 and no doubt again in 2021, these traders to be given the opportunity of returning for 2021. The Events Team to assess charging to ensure consistent with rates and approach used elsewhere in District and to consider whether additional traders could be managed on this site. QDS has now become established as a visitor destination therefore the value of the trading opportunity may have increased.

Discussions to take place with previous operators to explore appetite for returning and when. Consultation would follow the Events Team procedures.

- 3.3 Events on land at rear of site – Previously the Council had managed some of the events on the site in-house, such as the film and live opera screenings, and some music and theatre events in the first year of operating, and whilst the product delivered was generally considered to be very good, there was a net cost to the Council which was accepted. The Events Space then gained its own momentum with the local community wanting to use the space for their own events which was successfully achieved by a number of organisations in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. With the Events Team now managing this space, the proposal is now to focus on the latter approach, enabling the community and other organisations to deliver their events rather than the council manage any events in-house. This will be done by taking a different approach by marketing the site.
- 3.4 The site will be marketed as an events space like other sites across the District and operators will come forward with propositions which will then be consulted on as per the Council's procedures. This process requires the organiser to complete an application form and a risk assessment and provide a copy of their Public Liability Insurance. These are reviewed by the Events Team in accordance with the Events Policy and fees and charges structure, as well as by the Council's EH and Licensing teams. Before any permissions to use the land are granted, any EH comments must be complied with and Licences must be applied for and the distribution list for Queen's Drive (which includes Ward Members, the Property & FM Team and Emergency Services) will be consulted.
- 3.5 The prevalence of coronavirus and whether events can take place will be assessed as per the Council's wider approach across the District. At this stage, events on Council land have not restarted. The proposal would be for the event space at Queen's Drive to be made available at the same time as restarting events on other Council land.
- 3.6 Bar – With this having been tendered in March 2020, to allow this arrangement to be renewed and to continue through 2021. The bar did not open until July and therefore LED have not benefitted from a full season.
- 3.7 Repair and / or replacement of seating area – For the Property & FM Team to manage the removal of those items requiring repair and to replace with picnic style benches made from sustainable materials and securely attached. Members have already forwarded to Officers some ideas on specifications and suppliers and these will be considered alongside discussions with StreetScene. Initial work by the Property & FM Team suggests that to remove the existing furniture and replace with sustainable timber picnic benches would cost circa £15,000, similarly if sustainable plastic. If we were also to remove the boardwalk and replace with hard surfacing then the total cost for this and the picnic benches would be circa £20,000 - £35,000 dependant on finish.
- 3.8 Budgetary management of both income and costs attached to temporary uses will not change and will remain with the Queen's Drive budget. Service Lead- Place, Assets & Commercialisation will oversee.

## Appendix A

Review of Possible Temporary Play/Leisure Uses for the space previously used as overspill car park at Queen's Drive, phase 3 site.

| Activity  | Positives   | Negatives   |
|---|---|---|
| Pop-Up events   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase range of activities on wider site</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duplication of opportunities on events land at rear of site</li> <li>Possible conflict with adjacent uses</li> <li>Est £60K bitmac surfacing costs</li> </ul>                            |
| Beach volleyball  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfilling health &amp; wellbeing agenda</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Already available on better setting on beach</li> <li>Surfacing costs</li> <li>Management of site</li> </ul>   |
| Bungee Jumping  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible tourism/local attraction</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible conflict with adjacent uses</li> <li>Not considered the best site/surface for this type of use</li> <li>Cost of surfacing prohibitive for such a short term offering</li> </ul> |
| Fitness Classes   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfils health &amp; wellbeing agenda</li> <li>Known demand</li> <li>Aligns with current offerings</li> <li>Revenue potential (minimal)</li> <li>All age ranges catered for</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surface costs (turf or seed)</li> <li>Ongoing maintenance costs for the Council</li> </ul>   |
| Extending Dinosaur Play Park  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known demand</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing Play Park cost c £150K so expensive &amp; nil income</li> </ul>   |
| Crazy Golf  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible tourism/local attraction</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competition from neighbouring tenant</li> <li>Cost prohibitive for such a short term offering</li> </ul>   |
| Go Ape  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible tourism/local attraction</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High costs for set-up</li> <li>Possible conflict with adjacent uses</li> </ul>   |
| Food Traders  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known demand</li> <li>Attract visitors to wider site</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dilute offer on main site</li> <li>Surfacing costs</li> </ul>  |
| Table Tennis  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfils health &amp; wellbeing agenda</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surfacing costs</li> <li>Limited demand (already at The Strand)</li> </ul>   |
| Adventure playground / other activities for older children (10 years +) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfils health &amp; wellbeing agenda</li> <li>Members believe high demand</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High set up costs</li> <li>Ongoing maintenance costs for the Council</li> </ul>  |
| Rockreef.co.uk type climbing walls / ropes                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfils health &amp; wellbeing agenda</li> <li>Possible tourism/local attraction</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surfacing costs</li> <li>Possible conflict with adjacent uses</li> </ul>   |
| Skate / cycling – possibly learn to cycle safely course                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community attraction</li> <li>Fulfils health &amp; wellbeing agenda</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High set up costs</li> <li>Ongoing maintenance costs for the Council</li> </ul>  |
| Maize maze like at Darts Farm   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible tourism/local attraction</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsuitable for location</li> </ul>   |

Report to: Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group

Date of Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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## **Exmouth Queen's Drive – Future Resourcing**

### **Report summary:**

At the first Delivery Group meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 the Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation set out in the introductory Briefing Note that as and when Members have made a decision on how they wish to take forward the Queen's Drive site, it would be necessary to consider how we will resource the project moving forward, either through Officers and / or appointed consultants, skillset dependant partly on the nature of any scheme to be taken forward. Members were informed that there was no longer capacity within the Place & Prosperity Team to take this project forward – it becoming clear that this wasn't now a case of simply marketing the site as per the January Cabinet decision. Also, since that January Cabinet decision, a new Team Structure at the beginning of 2020 and responsibility for taking forward a suite of other place & prosperity focussed projects, priorities had by necessity moved on, the importance of this other work being key in terms of both supporting wider economic recovery and in terms of management of the Council's assets ensuring place & prosperity opportunities are realised.

With two Delivery Group meetings having now taken place, discussions with individual Members and contact from interested parties, we are now beginning to see early indications that further engagement will be needed before decisions can be made on the best uses for the site and the resulting work then needed to deliver such a scheme. This work has the potential to be really positive but also resource hungry.

This report addresses the proposals for resourcing the Queen's Drive project over the coming 2 years and makes a recommendation that 2 posts be appointed to on fixed term contracts but that these posts look wider than just the Queen's Drive project, focussing on Place & Prosperity interventions in Exmouth generally. The existing 2 project officers would then be in a position to continue in their new District wide roles without those other projects being adversely affected by having to refocus on Queen's Drive.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Delivery Group recommend to Cabinet:

That up to £200,000 be made available from the Business Rates Pilot Reserve for a Development Surveyor and an Engagement / Project Officer for a term of 2 years, dedicated to moving forward a suite of place & prosperity based projects in Exmouth and to include Queen's Drive.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

This has been discussed with the Leader and with the Economy & Assets Portfolio Holder and the report asked for to enable the Delivery Group to consider this proposal as a way of resourcing the project moving forward.

Officer: Tim Child, Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation [tchild@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tchild@eastdevon.gov.uk)

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action
- ☒ Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- ☐ Democracy and Transparency
- ☒ Economy and Assets
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

### **Financial implications:**

The financial details are contained in the report and members are referred to section 1.11 of the report.

### **Legal implications:**

There are no specific legal implications requiring comment.

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

### **Links to background information**

Link to [Council Plan:](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ Outstanding Place and Environment
- ☐ Outstanding Homes and Communities
- ☒ Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- ☐ Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## **Report in full**

### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 At the first Delivery Group meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 the Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation set out in the introductory Briefing Note that as and when Members have made a decision on how they wish to take forward the Queen's Drive site, it would be necessary to consider how we will resource the project moving forward, either through

Officers and / or appointed consultants, skillset dependant partly on the nature of any scheme to be taken forward. Members were informed that there was no longer capacity within the Place & Prosperity Team to take this project forward – it becoming clear that this wasn't now a case of simply marketing the site as per the January Cabinet decision as per the resourcing plan early this year. At that stage the project was moving from one which was resource intensive on Officers, to being a marketing procedure, albeit a complicated and stepped procedure, driven by external agents.

- 1.2 Also, since that January Cabinet decision, a new Team Structure has taken affect at the beginning of 2020 with the two Officers previously dedicated to this project (now the Project Manager for Place Prosperity and the Place Prosperity Officer) responsible for taking forward a suite of other place & prosperity focussed projects both utilising the Council's own assets but also interventions such as the Reopening High Streets Fund, One Public Estate and other such place making and prosperity type interventions across the District. The Team are now becoming increasingly involved in projects that sit within the pipeline of projects that sit in the Team Devon Economic Recovery work. The Officers in question had committed circa 75% plus of their joint capacity into the Queen's Drive project, but since January 2020 this has reduced to circa 10%, focussed almost exclusively on helping prepare for the two previous Delivery Group meetings.
- 1.3 With two Delivery Group meetings having now taken place, discussions with individual Members and contact from interested parties, we are now beginning to see early indications that further engagement will be needed before decisions can be made on the best uses for the site and the resulting work then needed to deliver such a scheme. This work has the potential to be really positive but also resource hungry.
- 1.4 In looking at how to resource these wider place prosperity projects and Queen's Drive the Service Lead has concluded that additional resource is needed. The question however is whether to secure additional resourcing for the other place prosperity projects or for the Queen's Drive project. There are pro's and con's to each approach but on balance based on the Officers roles now in those other projects which will not be easy to handover, but also a sense that a fresh resource to deliver Queen's Drive, with new ideas, would be most beneficial. The timing of this and its impact on Queen's Drive also fits more comfortably, with other projects needing to maintain momentum over the coming months but with a pause on Queen's Drive giving time to take stock of the current position.
- 1.5 This conclusion and therefore recommendation is no reflection whatsoever on the two Officers concerned and the Service Lead's thoughts on the project so far were made clear at the first Delivery Group meeting which took place in October 2020. The project has delivered on key milestones for the benefit of Exmouth, including the road alignment, new car park, Sideshore and very popular temporary uses but the phase 3 site is proving challenging to obtain consensus from Members and the public on how to move this forward. Whilst past decisions might have proven unpopular over time, as Officers the role was to take forward the activities agreed by Cabinet or Council and this is what has been done.
- 1.6 Considering the resourcing of Queen's Drive we've also needed to be mindful of wider opportunities in Exmouth and to consider this in the context of the covid pandemic and supporting the District in terms of economic recovery through direct interventions, in the context of this report in respect of direct interventions using existing assets which have a catalytic place making and growth / prosperity impact. The potential opportunities in Exmouth are greater than many other areas because of the comparatively larger Council



asset base. A pipeline of projects is being identified through the Team Devon Economic Recovery work and Devon Prospectus which this Service is working together on with the Growth Development & Prosperity Service and this includes potential projects in Exmouth, Queen's Drive being one. Arguably there has never been a better / more pressing time to take forward opportunities that fit neatly within the Places theme of the Devon Prospectus particularly around workspace offer (programme 11), establishing the town as a demonstrator for natural capital (programme 13) and in the area of tourism (programme 14) and Queen's Drive but also other projects within Exmouth where the Council already hold assets, fits neatly with this.

- 1.7 The beginning of 2021 has heralded two key economic development challenges – supporting recovery from the pandemic and adapting to life outside of the European Union. The November 2020 national Spending Review included a commitment to launch a £4bn Levelling Up Fund that will invest in local infrastructure and which will support economic recovery. The Spending Review also includes an initial £220m of investment in 2021/22 to help local areas prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This is the successor to European structural funds.
- 1.8 It is clearly important that we maximise our chances of successfully accessing these funds. This is a concern shared by the Local Enterprise Partnership who have asked the County Council to help prepare a prioritised pipeline of projects, the pipeline referenced earlier in this report. It can be seen that this covers a wide variety of themes from transport and town centres to carbon reduction and culture. Work is underway to populate this template in anticipation of there being a report being taken to the LEP Board meeting in April. Projects will need to continue to be moved forward to an investment ready condition so as to maximise the chances of successfully accessing the funding streams. In turn this will be a further important ingredient in supporting recovery and the LEP is itself moving forward with the publication of a 'Build Back Better' prospectus. A report on this will be coming to Cabinet in February from the Service Lead – Growth, Development & Prosperity. Exmouth being our largest town and with a range of EDDC assets in our ownership, opportunities will be more readily available to enable direct intervention and hence the proposal for a dedicated resource. Devon County Council in November 2020 produced a briefing on economic impacts of covid in East Devon and produced a vulnerability index. Whilst it is acknowledged that both Axminster (Central and West) and Honiton (Steamers Meadow and King Street) have both shown to have been more impacted, they are closely followed by Exmouth Town Centre, Exmouth Littleham, Exmouth Central, Exmouth The Point, Docks and Victoria Road and Exmouth Moorfield areas. 5 of the 10 most vulnerable neighbourhoods in East Devon are in Exmouth. This does not preclude projects in other locations across the District being taken forward and indeed those too are also included in the pipeline document. By providing this dedicated resource for Exmouth, we are creating capacity for the existing Place & Prosperity Team to focus on those other areas, something not possible without this resource.
- 1.9 To actively contribute to the Team Devon Economic Recovery work across the District in terms of the 'place' themes and using our assets we require staffing resource. We have two Officers, previously involved in Queen's Drive, along with support of the Estates Team within the Service who are this resource, but they cannot do both this and deliver Queen's Drive and hence the business case for additional resource. For the reasons outlined above in 1.4 it is considered wise when considering additional resource, to look at using this additional resource to focus on Queen's Drive and other Exmouth based place & prosperity projects, rather than the new resource focussing on other areas of the District where projects are already in-train. The outcome ultimately is the same from a cost perspective but provides a dedicated resource for Exmouth which can report in to the Queen's Drive

Delivery Group (or indeed whatever this group might become) and indeed any other Exmouth based forums. As has already been said, the asset base in Exmouth, whether it be Queen's Drive assets, car parks, Town Hall, depots and land provide for some really exciting interventions to be explored. Indeed whilst perhaps now historic, a range of exciting opportunities were identified from the Exmouth Town Centre and Seafront Masterplan which was published in 2012.

- 1.10 The proposal is to appoint:
  - a) 1x Development Surveyor for a 2 year period.
  - b) 1x Engagement / Project Officer for same 2 year period.
- 1.11 Funding would be through the Council's Business Rates Pilot Reserve to the sum of up to £200,000. This reserve was created from additional business rate income obtained when the Council was successful in a bid to Government (Devon Business Rate Pool) for a year trial of operating a 100% business rate retention scheme. The additional funds obtained were placed in a reserve with the purpose defined by Council as to encourage and protect the economy of the District. There remains at this stage an uncommitted balance on the Reserve of £1.584m. Further reports for member approval to utilise this reserve will come forward but sufficient funding is available to meet this request if supported by members.
- 1.12 These posts to report direct to Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation.
- 1.13 It is envisaged that the resource is to be focussed 50% of time on Queen's Drive (which will take priority) with the remainder of time available on other projects in Exmouth. If Queen's Drive requires additional resource exceeding this allowance, then less capacity will exist for other projects but through managing the Exmouth projects as a programme, the Service Lead and Portfolio Holder with the Queen's Drive Delivery Group can manage this split.
- 1.14 For the first 6 months of the appointments the Engagement / Project Officer will be engaged predominantly with Queen's Drive with the Development Surveyor focussing on a suite of other projects in Exmouth alongside Queen's Drive, determining viability and deliverability.
- 1.15 This proposal will require Cabinet approval and if approved the posts will then be recruited to. Until such time as the appointments are made during the summer of 2021, the Events Team will lead on temporary uses for the 2021 season (separate report to this Delivery Group of 25<sup>th</sup> January) under the direction of the Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation, but progress on the long term uses of Queen's Drive Phase 3 will be put on-hold.