

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the consultative meeting of Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group held Online via the Zoom app on 7 September 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.06 pm

1 Public Speaking

One member of the public had registered to speak and made the following points:

- Multiple minor issues in the town are not being addressed and collectively affect thousands of residents
- A large group of residents is of the view that a multi-agency group with resident membership is needed to assist with finding integrated solutions
- A draft multi-agency TaFF proposal has been prepared setting out what residents wish to achieve and work is now needed to fit the proposal into the existing community structure in order to realise the proposals
- The group of residents seeks to enhance Exmouth, including the town's green credentials, provision for pedestrians and cyclists and good standards of public behaviour
- It was hoped that this initiative could start in October
- Slides to accompany the above points would be sent to the Chair following the meeting

The Chair thanked the member of the public for his contribution.

Members noted the role of the Exmouth Community Association as a voice for the local residents. Ward Members would continue to consider the points raised by the member of the public, some of which are outside the remit of the Delivery Group.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 March 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 March 2021 were recommended for approval by Senior Officers.

3 Declarations of interest

Minute 4. Planning position update.

Councillor Aurora Bailey, Personal, Member is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 4. Planning position update.

Councillor Bruce De Saram, Personal, Member is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 4. Planning position update.

Councillor Nick Hookway, Personal, Member was Chair of the Save Exmouth Seafront until May 2019 and confirmed that he is not pre-determined on any matters regarding the seafront and Queen's Drive redevelopment.

Minute 4. Planning position update.

Councillor Olly Davey, Personal, Member is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 4. Planning position update.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Personal, Member is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

4 **Planning position update**

A position statement had been prepared by Ed Freeman, Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management. The statement outlined:

- a. The current position for site wide redevelopment – outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the Queen's Drive area having now lapsed therefore there is no extant planning permission for the redevelopment of the area, and
- a. Planning permission for temporary uses expires on 15 February 2022 therefore a decision is needed on uses, if only temporary, post February.

Members' views were being sought particularly on what actions should be undertaken in respect of the renewal of the planning permission for temporary uses in order to enable Officers to progress actions for next season.

Mr Freeman also advised that the Queen's Drive site has been put forward in the housing and economic land availability assessment as part of the new Local Plan process. The timetable for the Local Plan production was included in the report and if proposals for the redevelopment of the Queen's Drive area are to be incorporated into the Local Plan, there needs to be clarity very soon about the nature of the redevelopment in order to meet the time constraints of the Local Plan production timetable.

Discussion included the following points:

- Regarding the outline planning consent granted in 2014, the flood risk existed at that time and would not necessarily prevent further consents being granted for hotel and residential use. Detailed flood risk assessment and sequential tests would need to be carried out for regeneration sites going forward.
- There is a risk of challenge should temporary use consent be granted again as this is arguably contrary to government guidance but the risk of such a challenge was considered by Officers to be relatively small.
- Permanent consent for a site with temporary attractions could be sought which would allow flexibility of use in the longer term without the need to continue to seek temporary use consent.
- Regarding carrying out flood risk assessments and habitat regulations assessments, there would be a need firstly to understand the mix of uses and type of developments proposed for a site as the assessments are specific to the nature of the development.
- There is a need to make the temporary uses permanent for clarity going forward.
- If proposals for redevelopment are able to be incorporated into the new Local Plan as a site allocation, there would not be any need for an outline planning application for the site.
- Regarding the 2011 Master Plan, Members' views would need to be sought as to whether the Master Plan should be reviewed on a wider scale within the town, or whether the remit should only cover Queen's Drive. Wider scale regeneration of Exmouth, including re-visiting sites which were considered in the 2011 Master Plan would pose significant issues for production of the new Local Plan.
- There was frustration that previous plans for the site had not come to fruition and it was suggested that alternative uses and investments which had been proposed previously are re-considered together with any current proposals.
- Regarding moving forward, Tim Child advised that once resourcing is in place, over the winter months and into spring, there will be engagement and consultation

with stakeholders, the public and Members about future uses and that all options would need to be considered. No ideas should be dismissed at this point, including ideas put forward in the past.

- It was noted that, in the six months since the Delivery Group had last met, for a number of reasons, the Council had not yet been able to appoint the two new Officers to work on the Exmouth Place Making project. The appointment of the new Corporate HR Manager should now help with moving the recruitment process on quickly as it was noted that the Delivery Group is now under-resourced in terms of Officer support. Internal recruitment was to be considered alongside other resourcing options.
- It was also noted that the work, some elements of which have already started, does not solely relate to Queen's Drive, but covers Exmouth, and Members will be presented with a series of options next summer.
- Ed Freeman advised that the timetable for this work on regeneration projects in Exmouth does not fit with the timetable for Local Plan production and yet key projects like this should be included in the plan indeed they could have significant implications for the plan in terms of the growth strategy for Exmouth and the assessment of impacts on protected habitats etc.
- There is now a real need to move forward with ensuring that planning permission is in place for next year to enable the temporary uses to continue.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

That, in order to provide certainty moving forward, permanent planning consent for temporary uses on the Queen's Drive site be sought as soon as possible.

5 Resourcing and next steps

Tim Child provided a verbal update on resourcing and next steps which included the following points:

- At the previous meeting in March, Members debated key opportunities / untapped potential for place and prosperity interventions in Exmouth, the reliance that should or should not be placed on previous consultation and visioning work and what success would look like in 6, 12 and 24 months from now. Information which came from that debate was used to inform the two new officer roles as needed.
- The work moving forward would be a new piece of work, with the bulk of the work in the first 6 months carried out focussing on consultation and wider engagement.
- As discussed above, it has proved difficult to generate interest in the project, and move forward with the recruitment for the two new posts.
- There are concerns at officer level regarding the breadth of skills required for the roles and also for retention and continuity should officers decide not to stay with the Council.
- There are a number of external organisations with experience of delivering similar place making projects for local authorities.
- Tim Child had held a meeting with a leading organisation and is currently waiting for a detailed brief from the organisation which will be shared with the Chair of the Delivery Group and the Leader of the Council.
- Work would involve consultation, engagement and due diligence on all opportunities, and subject to successful appointment, would be carried out during the winter and spring, reporting the options back through the Delivery Group to Cabinet in summer 2022.
- Tim Child advised that it was important that the options are not prejudged.
- Regarding planning and the temporary use of pop-ups, these could be considered as part of the options presented to Members.

Questions from Members and discussion included the following point:

- The proposed full consultation with the public was welcomed

Ed Freeman advised that there are significant timing issues with the production of the Local Plan and careful thought would be needed as to how the Local Plan and plans for Exmouth arising from this piece of work will fit together. Careful consideration of the timings of public consultations on both pieces of work would also be required.

Following advice from Ed Freeman, the following points were made:

- It is crucial that any development and delivery work in Exmouth fits in with the Local Plan process.
- It was recognised that bringing in external consultants may achieve a wider skill set available for the work, however, there needs to be a balance between procuring the necessary expertise and retaining control of the work by Members.

The Chair of the Delivery Group would meet with the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Simon Davey and Tim Child for discussions prior to the next meeting.

6 **Confidential / exempt item**

There is one item to follow which officers recommend should be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded, in accordance with local government legislation.

The Chair thanked those who had been watching the meeting online.

Accordingly the public part of this meeting ended and the live stream to YouTube was switched off.

7 **Temporary uses update**

A report had been prepared by Tim Child to update the Delivery Group on the current year's temporary uses and to enable Officers to progress actions for the next season.

The Chair thanked the Events Team and StreetScene for their work over the summer months.

Members were of the view that the report provided a good foundation for planning for the 2022 season.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott (Vice-Chair)

M Armstrong

O Davey

P Hayward

N Hookway (Chair)

D Ledger

B Taylor

S Gazzard
B De Saram
S Gazzard (Exmouth Town Council)
A Bailey (Exmouth Town Council)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

B Ingham
P Millar
E Wragg

Officers in attendance:

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance:

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

Councillor apologies:

J Whibley
C Wright
J Rowland

Chair

Date: