

Queen's Drive Space  
Temporary, Meanwhile Uses as part of the Queen's Drive Redevelopment  
Overview of last 3 years to assist Members in providing direction to Officers for 2021

### **Purpose of Report**

**This report provides a brief overview of the activities and management arrangements put in place for the site over the last 3 years, along with details of the financial performance. It highlights key considerations for next year. This information is to enable Members to make informed decisions about a way forward and to provide instruction as to what the Delivery Group wish to be provided on the site next year.**

### **Background**

Queen's Drive Space is what is known as a 'Meanwhile Use' put in place for a temporary period whilst the Queen's Drive visioning exercise took place and the redevelopment moved forward in its various phases. Cabinet approved the proposal for the temporary development in November 2017 committing to ensuring that the site was utilised for a mix of play and leisure activities including free play facilities, pending the delivery of the permanent vision for phase 3. Designed to be only a temporary measure, the site was zoned to make use of the existing layout, in situ pathways, boundaries etc. Delegated authority was given for the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Strategic Lead (Governance and Licensing) to take forward and deliver plans for temporary uses.

The Queen's Drive Space offer was put together by a multi-disciplinary team across many services within the council, and utilising external professional support and contractors where necessary. The site opened in May 2018 and the principal activities on the site have been the free play, the food and beverage offer and the events.

### **Planning**

Planning permission (conditional) was granted for the temporary use (as zoned) until 31st March 2022.

### **Premises Licence**

The food, beverage and events areas have a premises licence.

### **Free Play**

This was commissioned by the Engineering Team at EDDC and has been a very popular feature on the site. This is managed by StreetScene who are responsible for all Council play areas.

### **Food and Beverage**

In 2018 the food offer was managed by Taste of the West who recruited individual traders to operate from the site. A few traders were fixed for the season, (about 5), and others came and went for particular weekends/events. The management of this was very intensive both for Taste of the West and internally for Officers, in part due to this being a new destination and new venture for all concerned. In 2019, we tendered for just 4 food traders to operate throughout the season. We appointed an events consultant (Andrew Hopkins) to manage the site for us in 2019. We have

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tested different approaches to managing the charging process to traders, with a flat rate for the season being the most effective. At the end of 2019 it was agreed to continue with the same traders for 2020, but advised them that this was only for 1 more year (i.e. 2020) and that if the site were to be operational again in 2021, the trader offer would be retendered.

The Bar was operated by Oddfellows for the first 2 years. We tendered this earlier this year and LED Enterprises Ltd are now operating the bar. They opened in July this year and have therefore only had a short season. We have found a positive level of communication working with LED on this. Their lease terminates at the end of January and depending on what operations are required by Members on site for 2021, this could be renewed or the opportunity can be marketed again.

## Events

The decision to put on a programme of events was a new venture for the council and has generally been well received. In 2018, the team was supported by Carla Highley, Events Officer at the Town Council, who worked with the Team part time and curated an events programme.

In 2018, events included:

- Free attendance by nearly 600 people at 3 live screenings from Royal Opera House;
- 8 films attended by 770 people
- 3 theatre companies gave performances enjoyed by over 100.
- 2 summer sessions with free live music on 2 Saturday afternoons
- Live performance by Exmouth Shanty Men and from further afield, the Australian Shanty Men who were on their UK tour.

Film nights had mixed success, depending on the offer. The Greatest Showman could have sold more than the 400 tickets and had a second night. Others did less well. The theatre nights were not so successful, in part due to lack of marketing and promotion which had been difficult to achieve in such a short space of time. Music events were mixed, again mostly due to lack of marketing and awareness which was a timing issue. Members of the community helped out with leaflet distribution for the events.

In 2019, the events programme grew significantly, with more organisations coming forward to organise their own event in the space.

Details of events held:

- 70 events held during the season
- 45 events enabled and assisted by the Events Consultant
- 20 events directly organised by the Events Consultant
- 804 people attended the Royal Opera House Screenings
- 1,190 people attended the Open-Air Cinema Screenings

A diverse event programme was curated catering for all ages which included free Royal Opera House screenings; film nights hosting an Exmouth Chamber of Commerce networking evening, the Deaf Academy Colour Bomb event, Centre Stage Pirates of Penzance, a free cinema event for over 300 Primary School children in Exmouth, RNLI Maer Rocks, Best of Rum and Reggae Festival, Paws for the

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Cause, Wild Exmouth Story Telling, welcome events for international students attending Mountlands Language School, Whizz Kids cycling events, circus skills events and more.

A difference between 2018 and 2019 was that more organisations were coming forward requesting to use the events space to hold their own events.

### **Site Management**

We have had different approaches over the 3 years. Management of the site has been more intensive for EDDC staff resource over this summer and we have missed the resource of our Events Consultant who (due to there being no events) was diverted to support other teams at EDDC. Queen's Drive Space was developed and designed as a temporary and meanwhile use during the Queen's Drive redevelopment, as such, it was not intended to be an ongoing, long term management resource issue. However, if a similar operation is required for summer 2021, consideration would need to be given as to how the site will be managed on a day to day basis based on current staffing resources and conflicting priorities.

### **Seating Area**

This was designed and installed by an external contractor. It was constructed using recycled timbers from old pallets and designed only for a short life span. It is now showing signs of ageing and has become unsafe to use. A quote has been received from the original contractor for a mix of replacement and repair with a cost of between £17,000 and £27,000 (details available if required). The contractor however, is not available to carry out any repair work until late spring 2021 due to other work commitments. If it is desirable that the area be used for seating again in 2021, a decision needs to be taken on how to proceed with repairing/replacing the seating offer. A more affordable option could be explored such as removing the seating and replacing with picnic benches. The walkways could also be removed. Appropriate provision could be made for wheelchair users to access the area. Some installations could be saved such as the canopies.

### **Financial Information**

In autumn 2017, a capital budget of £300,000 was made available to create the temporary uses offer. Details of this expenditure are captured within the overall Queen's Drive budget (£3.1m).

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A revenue budget has also been provided. A summary for the last 3 years is provided below.

	2018	2019	2020 (to date)
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>Total Employment Costs</b>	£ 5,000.00	£ 18,890.00	£ 3,310.00
<b>Total Premises Costs</b>	£ -	£ 28,337.00	£ 12,013.00
<b>total Event Costs</b>		£ 32,917.00	£ 1,075.00
<b>Total marketing costs</b>	£ -	£ 2,271.00	£ 588.00
<b>Total Supplies &amp; Services</b>	£ 30,051.00	£ 11,446.00	£ 1,843.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£35,051.00</b>	<b>£93,861.00</b>	£ 18,829.00
<b>INCOME</b>			
<b>Ticket Sales</b>	£ 7,106.00	£ 7,357.00	£ -
<b>Events</b>	£ 3,087.00	£ 632.00	£ -
<b>Sponsorship</b>	£ 7,500.00	£ 3,000.00	£ -
<b>Rent from Food traders &amp; bar</b>	£ 7,756.00	£ 23,647.00	£ 10,981.00
<b>Service charge from Food traders &amp; bar</b>		£ -	£ 5,251.00
<b>Facilities/Deposit</b>		£ 1,257.00	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£ 25,449.00</b>	<b>£35,893.00</b>	£ 16,232.00
<b>SURPLUS/LOSS</b>	<b>-£ 9,602.00</b>	<b>-£ 57,968.00</b>	<b>-£ 2,597.00</b>

**Notes**

1. For 2018, this is not a true picture of the running costs of the site as some would have been absorbed by the capital budget.
2. The 2019 figures provide a more accurate reflection of the site running costs for a fully operational season.
3. There is more expenditure for 2020 to be added e.g. recharges from other services for site maintenance and repair, utilities. Some more income also.

**2020 – Covid-19 Pandemic**

The impact of Covid -19 upon the opening, operation and offer on the site during 2020 has been significant. There have been no events organised on the site but traders did open on the site when lockdown restrictions were eased. The free play offer and open access seating area has remained popular, particularly during this most difficult and challenging of years.

**The considerations for next year (2021)**

1. Need for repair and / or replacement of seating area. This could include the removal of most of the existing seating area structure (keeping what is feasible to retain, such as the canopies) and replace with picnic benches.

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2. Options for food offering for next year, if Members wish to continue with this. This could go out to tender to identify a number of food and beverage traders – indeed traders had been informed that this would be happening. Consideration should be given to the number of traders on the site and the mix of offer; this will impact upon the financial value of the opportunity and management arrangements (a lower number of traders, could ensure that there is sufficient business for all). Review of budget and charges for food and beverage operators (as QDS is becoming established as a visitor destination, the value of the trading opportunity may have increased).
3. Site management arrangements and options need to be explored for next year to ensure good service is maintained – this may or may not include intensive use of EDDC Officers.
4. Is a bar still required for summer 2021? The options could be to continue with the existing offer (the current arrangement was tendered in March 2020 and the current lease expires at the end of January 2021) or the opportunity could be put out to tender again.
5. Do members wish to review the charging for events?
6. The Events Team (Streetscene) could run an events programme if an agreement is reached and resources allow (see note below regarding financial resource).
7. If the temporary meanwhile uses continue to be offered on a similar basis to last year, Members will need both capital budget, revenue budget (acknowledging the net cost to EDDC) and management resources to facilitate delivery. Based on previous years of expenditure and income, if Members are minded to pursue temporary meanwhile uses for summer 2021, there will be a need for a capital budget for necessary repairs (to be determined based on Member instruction) along with a revenue budget of approximately £60,000, plus additional EDDC resourcing (Legal, Property and Estates, Streetscene etc.) There is currently insufficient resource within the Place, Assets and Commercialisation Service to take forward the development and implementation of proposals for 2021 in a similar way to previous years. Once Members provide a direction of travel we will then be able to explore how to resource delivery and management.

### **Moving Forward**

Given the above information and considerations, The Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group are asked to provide instruction as to what they wish to happen next year.