

Report to: Exmouth Queens Drive Delivery Group



Date of Meeting 30th November 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Temporary Uses Update

Report summary:

Following the Part B report on this subject to the Delivery Group on 7th September, a meeting with existing traders on 15th October and feedback obtained from others on the 2021 season, this report sets out how the 2022 season is to be approached.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That the Queen's Drive Delivery Group note the content of this report.

Reason for recommendation:

This report is to provide Members with an understanding of the proposals for 2022 and the work being undertaken.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information

[Link to Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
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Report in full

- 1.1 There is an opportunity now to start planning for the 2022 season. By doing so we can ensure that we can properly market the various opportunities, ensure rental levels are reviewed for all to secure market rents and to provide those operators who will be trading next year with certainty in advance of the season starting to enable investment and planning. The site will also require further investment by the Council if temporary uses are to continue and any continued use will be conditional on grant of planning following expiry of the existing consent.
- 1.2 The report of 7th September 2021 was Part B as it contained commercial data relating to individual traders during 2021. This report focusses entirely on arrangements for the 2022 season.
- 1.3 A very positive meeting took place with a number of the existing traders to review the successes and learnings from this season. Our Events Team have also contacted others who could not attend and obtained further feedback. The feedback from the meeting and other contacts is as follows:
 - That the site should be plastic free – this did not apply in 2021 to the Events Space and therefore defeated the measures put in place by the traders and the site’s general sustainability credentials.
 - The funfair brought in lots of families however some families did comment it was expensive.
 - Most had a good year of trade, but felt 2020 was busier.
 - A suggestion was raised of a more traditional funfair going forward on the rear Events Space.
 - If the site was busy, everyone was busy, but if it was quiet everyone was quiet.
 - We could do with promoting recycling and the environment more on site.
 - We could improve the evening event offering – this was one of the strongest messages that came across as it was felt that the site really only operated during daytime only. Events generally, but also evening events could generate significant revenue potential, potentially for the Council, but also for the traders themselves.
 - Lots of members of the public made comments to the traders on how difficult it was for them to park whilst visiting.
 - The suggestion posed by Officers of an additional trader, with a healthier or plant based food focus was well received.
 - The need to secure commercial rents for 2022 and to ensure that rental levels were consistent across the site. This seemed to be understood by the traders present at the meeting but we assured them that we did not wish to lose them, just that they needed to all pay a commercial rent. Discussions would take place individually in the hope that terms could be agreed for them to return and it would only be if those discussions failed, that the pitch would be marketed.
 - Storage sheds have been popular this year and it was made clear to Officers that we will need an additional storage shed if we have an additional trader.

Proposals for 2022

- 1.4 Based on this feedback and the discussion at the September Delivery Group meeting, proposals for 2022 are as follows:
- 1.5 Traders – There is insufficient capacity within the core Estates Team due to a vacant post. Arrangements already exist with Torbay Development Agency who support the Team on valuation and estates matters. With their experience of the arrangements around Torbay and their knowledge of the market generally and rental charges for these types of offerings they are the obvious choice to take forward this work. The intention is that the pitches will be valued in December and discussions commence with the existing traders in early January with agreement of terms by the end of January or if agreement not reached, marketing of that vacant pitch alongside marketing of the additional pitch being created. Subject to planning consent being granted, the traders will then have 2 months to plan for the 2022 season along with ample time to conclude the new leases.
- 1.6 Events Space – We tender for a funfair operator, but with a stricter remit. We will need to set noise limits, ride limits, consider traditional versus commercial – most likely the former if we receive interest, that it be a plastic free site and be prescriptive over operating hours. This has the potential to generate significant income. The Events Team to lead on this work.
- 1.7 Bar – In the first instance, to discuss arrangements for 2022 with LED. Their running of the bar, relationship with the traders and their thoughts around the running of events, either by them, or jointly with EDDC to encourage more visitors and greater spend is a real opportunity for next season and LED are ideally placed to support / lead this. As with the traders, Torbay Development Agency be asked to have those negotiations with LED. If terms cannot be agreed, which would be disappointing, we could then market.
- 1.8 Fitness Space - The operator this year has had a difficult season and consequently has ended the agreement early. There are issues both with drainage causing boggy puddles but also rutting, both causing health & safety concerns. There is also a lack of lighting and issues with people walking across the site, despite clear signage. There have also been access issues with people parking cars in front of the access gate when the car park is busy which on at least one occasion resulted in a class being cancelled as should there have been an accident, no emergency access was available. Lastly, the absence of anywhere to shelter from the rain was also a concern. These issues together resulted in the site being used a maximum of 3 hours a week and the agreement then being terminated early in September with only a nominal income due for this season. There is one possible interested party for next season but no other expressions of interest have been received. It is therefore quite possible that this grass will remain unlet for 2022. Officers will need not only to look at marketing, but to explore first whether it is viable to undertake further ground works to make this space suitable for fitness uses but the possible further investment required will most likely make this unviable for what at best is only a nominal income. If not viable, we will consider alternative uses.
- 1.9 Ticketed Events – this is an area Officers would like to explore further with LED. The Events Team do not have the capacity to run these alone, but might be able to work with LED, or otherwise, other possible operator.

- 1.10 Investment Costs – A specification of the works needed to the seating, lighting, drainage, wifi, shelter for those in wheelchairs and a seagull scarer will be determined over the next 2 months with a further report back to the Delivery Group in 1st instance. Early indications are that this cost is likely to be upwards of £40,000. The infrastructure currently on-site was only ever intended to be there for a few years and hence the need in recent years and for next year for further investment to enable uses to continue until such time as permanent uses of the site are agreed.

Arrangements for winter

- 1.11 Some of the banners and flags will be removed shortly to preserve them over the winter but the storage sheds will not be removed.

Financial implications:

Although the report is not recommending at this stage, a budget is required for maintenance and improvements to the site. A sum of £40k upwards is highlighted as a possible request for members to consider in a future report.

Legal implications:

Legal Services will work with colleagues to provide the appropriate agreements needed for the various activities and lettings. There are no specific issues raised within the report.