

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group (formerly Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group) held at Online via Zoom app on 19 July 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.48 am

1 Public speaking

Two members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

Juniper Connal spoke on Minute 39 Progress Update on Placemaking in Exmouth. Ms Connal was of the view that the online consultation survey was poorly written and would not stand up to scrutiny, outlining a number of examples to illustrate where she felt there were shortcomings. She expressed that the results from the survey would therefore not be valid.

The Project Manager – Place & Prosperity (Exmouth) responded that the survey is largely qualitative, and not scientific in nature but intended to help officers to assess whether the themes and characteristics identified by members of the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group chime with the public's view. He recognised that there are differing views, and these are welcomed.

Mrs Membery spoke on Minute 39 Progress Update on Placemaking in Exmouth. She sought to understand why East Devon DC has to apply for planning permission to build on its own land at Queen's Drive, Exmouth. She also asked questions concerning the leases of the businesses using the Queen's Drive site. She went on to express objection to the building of a hotel on Queen's Drive given that it would be damaging to the environment, particularly due to emissions from more cars using the road along the seafront. She urged the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group to be mindful of environmental protection and wildlife when considering future plans for land in Exmouth.

The Chair expressed agreement with Mrs Membery's comments concerning environmental protection and wildlife and it was noted that environmental protection was emerging as one of the strongest themes from consultation responses to date. The Project Manager – Place & Prosperity (Exmouth) explained that East Devon DC has to go through the same statutory process for planning consent as any other body. He stated that leases on Queen's Drive run from April to October and are renewed annually, but it was not appropriate to go into detail in this meeting about the leases of individual businesses. He commented that there had been mixed views from the consultation concerning hotel accommodation, and all of the findings from the consultation would be published in due course.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 May 2022

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 May 2022 were noted as a true and accurate record.

3 Declarations of interest

There were none.

4 **Progress Update on Placemaking in Exmouth**

The Project Manager – Place & Prosperity (Exmouth) ran through the update report on Placemaking in Exmouth, including:

- An update on the Queen's Drive Space including interest in the fitness space, installation of bike racks, and networking with stakeholder groups.
- Details of the Placemaking in Exmouth consultation which commenced in early June, including an outline of engagement to date via the online questionnaire, public consultation event, and face to face interviews carried out by the South West Research Company independently of East Devon DC.
- An update on the Levelling Up Fund bid which is led by Devon County Council and is ready for submission.
- Outline details of an opportunity being explored by East Devon DC to accept the transfer, at nil consideration, of the freehold of land to the south of Redgates, Salterton Road, Exmouth, with the opportunity to develop four commercial units as part of the Developer's Planning obligation by Unilateral Undertaking under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Discussion included the following points:

- The next public consultation event takes place on Sunday 31st July 2022, 10.00 am – 12.30 pm at Ocean, Exmouth. Members of the public who wish to take part are asked to book in advance with Gerry Mills, Project Manager – Place & Prosperity (Exmouth) – gmills@eastdevon.gov.uk
- It appears from consultation responses to date that people are largely in agreement with the themes and characteristics identified by the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group members. Where themes emerge which the Group did not identify, these will be highlighted to Group members. The strongest themes emerging to date are the town's green credentials and environmental protections; navigating around the town and to the seafront; accommodation; signage; and how to travel to Exmouth.
- Having attended a public consultation event, a member observed that people want to make the most of the town's natural capital, and to mend and improve what the town already has. There did not appear to be an appetite for large new infrastructure projects.
- Given that the environment has emerged as a strong theme, the Group will benefit from engagement with Transition Exmouth and Active Travel Exmouth, as stakeholders.
- A member observed that Exmouth is surrounded by valuable environment including the sea, the Exe Estuary, Pebblebed Heaths and the World Heritage Jurassic Coast; the member would like to see some protection of the countryside that is left around Exmouth. How the housing crisis is solved whilst protecting the environment and also enhancing Exmouth will be a challenge.
- It is important to learn from what has been successful in the past, and listen to what residents have said.
- It is important that recommendations emerging from a recent Motorhomes and Campervans Car Park Workshop dovetail with the work around Placemaking in Exmouth; this is a potential future agenda item for a meeting of this Group.
- The shared cycle path along Exmouth seafront is not safe or popular and it is hoped that Devon County Council officers and councillors will take this on board and work with East Devon DC to resolve the problem.
- The write-up following the consultation and outlining draft options is expected to be ready for February 2023.

The Chair thanked the Project Manager for his report and members noted the progress since the last meeting on 3 May 2022.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott (Vice-Chair)
M Armstrong
O Davey
N Hookway (Chair)
D Ledger
S Gazzard
B De Saram
J Rowland
S Gazzard (Exmouth Town Council)
A Bailey (Exmouth Town Council)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

M Chapman
G Jung
G Pratt
E Rylance
E Wragg

Officers in attendance:

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Caitlin Davey, Streetscene Events Officer
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Gerry Mills, Project Manager Place & Prosperity (Exmouth)
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Also in attendance:

Peter Gilpin, CEO, LED

Councillor apologies:

B Taylor
C Wright

Chair:

Date: