

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notes of the Workshop meeting of Stakeholders held at Ocean 14.07.22

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 09.45pm

Cllr Hookway gave a brief introduction and welcomed all the members to the meeting reminding everyone present that no decisions or recommendations were to be made at the consultation, which was specially convened to discuss the way forward for Placemaking in Exmouth town and Seafront. Cllr Hookway asked that attendees approach the meeting with no preconceptions and stressed the need to get a consensus view.

G Mills – gave a short presentation outlining the format for the meeting and the issues to be addressed (presentation attached).

1. What will successful Place and Prosperity in Exmouth look/feel like?
2. What do local people want to see – what will attract them?
3. What do visitors want to see – what will attract them?

Group need to gain consensus on what the placemaking themes for Exmouth should be
Group need to gain consensus about what placemaking characteristics in Exmouth should be

The meeting then separated into five working groups to consider the themes and the feedback summarised below.

Themes for Placemaking

(Readers are asked to note that where duplicate themes were identified, they are not recorded which may make the groups presenting later in the evening appear to have had less of a contribution – which wasn't the case)

Table 1

- The group broadly agreed with the themes identified.
- Exmouth should capitalise on the Jurassic coast perhaps with a visitors centre
- Sea/Maritime heritage – improve the museum
- Accessible for all – showering changing facilities and toilets
- Hotel – no [group disagreed]
- Cultural building – we already have one, the Pavilion
- Free activities – group felt no – how would they be paid funded?
- Family orientated – group was very divided on this issue
- Arts & culture – already present – but needs investment and venues for artists, musicians (including practice venues)
- A transport interchange – including signage maps cleaning??
- USP is our underdeveloped 2 miles Esplanade
- Should have free parking in town and paid for parking on seafront/beach
- Make a feature of the walkway from the Maer, behind the tennis and cricket clubs and into town – use this to improve the links between the town and seafront.
- Something Iconic – maximise kite surfing – we have world--class kite surfers here.
- The cycling to Exeter is great but the accessibility [for cyclists] in Exmouth is poor around the town

Table 2

- The group broadly agreed with the themes identified – but they are too vague and they miss the ‘Big Picture’:
- Clean – dogs sewage
- Safe – ASB, urination, dog poo, noise, cannabis, fires on beach, vehicles, traffic management pedestrianisation and cycling ‘respect Exmouth ‘ as a theme.
- Quiet – boy racers, speed and noise on the water
- Charm amenity visuals – camper vans overnight keeping
- Except the hotel which is not required.
- We need to use ocean more
- Consideration should be given to a cultural building looking at music, the arts, performance space – Group felt we should only build more facilities when current ones are fully utilised.
- In respect of:
- Family orientated attractions – something for all ages – Group agreed
- Arts and culture facilities including a library
- Sports facilities
- It was felt we already have these with no more required – we should expand the library and support what we have.
- Marine based start-up business units especially in the area of Camperdown creek – yes – we should look at other similar towns
- A transport interchange at the entrance to the town looking at taxis, buses, rail and also the legibility of the gateway to the town for visitors – yes supportive but needs to be radical
- Public realm initiatives must be part of placemaking – yes supportive
- A mixed economy going forward – group were unsure what this meant
- A tramway – Group felt this was too expensive i.e. support what we do have eg the land train rather than a whole new build.
- Asked what was our USP (unique selling point) the beach? Group felt we need to be careful about this – i.e. our natural capital and environment – that we do not spoil it by failing to manage the growth as has happened to date.
- Connectivity (clarified as being digital, roads, rail, and cycling) group felt it is all about cars at the moment – should have more walking, cycling etc.
- A very useful analysis was that Exmouth is very ‘linear’ in nature which made it both unique and a challenge to improve connectivity eg from the town centre to the beach – Group agreed but it just needs managed – need a better land train.
- The need to keep placemaking ‘fresh’ – Group asked of this was a trick question [Gerry Mills comment– no the statement was made at the delivery group – it centred about the offering becoming dated (out of date) hence the comment about keeping it fresh – I hope this helps]
- Retail was finding it very tough – was in competition with Exeter and needed to develop more of a USP for the town centre – Group felt we should modernise and attract more people through the Strand by providing a park and ride at imperial rec, rugby grounds.
- The offering should be ‘classy’ not tacky – high quality – group felt this was a strategic aim
- Lack of activity for young people needed to be addressed – group agreed
- Arts were important – group agreed

- Group asked how sustainable was prosperity based solely on hospitality/café culture – the need to develop an all-year offering was put forward – Group felt that we should focus on the natural environment all year round.
- Linking of the micro areas eg beach, Docks, Strand, Shopping centre Brixington and Littleham – all great areas but not interlinked – the land train could be used
- Something Iconic – our Nature is iconic – lets capitalise on it
- Signage needed to help people to get around the town/parking – Group felt this could mean more cars
- What to do with Ocean – can it be adapted needed to develop a National Profile – group felt it should be used more
- Imperial Rd area lacked legibility – group weren't sure what this meant
- Walking/cycling to Exeter needed improvement – Group felt what we had was already pretty good
- Alternative transport and a move away from cars – group strongly agreed with this

Table 3

Placemaking should be mixed use in nature and include a range of free and 'paid for' facilities – Group unanimously agreed

Themes to celebrate were:-

- The Jurassic coast (a consensus was that Exmouth needed to capitalise on this more than it had to date) - Group unanimously disagreed
- Sea/maritime Heritage Group unanimously agreed adding use of plaques, photomontages historic info or trail be developed
- Future development must be accessible for all - Group unanimously agreed – but though we needed to strike a balance
- The group posed a question – was a Hotel necessary to be provided to develop Queen's Drive and asked what was around it [the hotel if provided] that would attract tourists? Group disagreed – Not on Queen's drive space – but maybe somewhere else and not on public recreation land.
- Consideration should be given to a cultural building looking at music, the arts, performance space – group weren't unanimous on this – felt we should use Ocean more.
- Free activities should be considered and the popularity of the dinosaur park was noted – Group disagreed – they felt the dinosaur park was poor and was only popular because there was nothing else
- Paid for attractions eg crazy golf were also put forward as ideas – Group agreed yes but it should be 21st century (Teignmouth was mentioned as a good example)
- Seating was raised for all users - Group unanimously agreed
- Family orientated attractions – something for all ages - Group unanimously agreed Arts and culture facilities including a library – Group felt this could be part of something else
- Sports facilities – Group felt some were fairly well catered for - room for others outdoors
- Marine based start-up business units especially in the area of Camperdown creek – Group felt this would depend on whether they were new buildings, how many of them – need to be 'in character'
- A transport interchange at the entrance to the town looking at taxis, buses, rail and the legibility of the gateway to the town for visitors – Group agreed with this. Other ideas included park and ride; electric minibuses, a souped-up land train; pedicabs; rickshaws
- Public realm initiatives must be part of placemaking
- A mixed economy going forward

- A tramway - not supported - unclear where it was to be located.
- Asked what was our USP (unique selling point) the beach? – Group said many agreed but not unanimous – there were other things not being managed. The environment. Need to look beyond the beach.
- Connectivity (clarified as being digital, roads, rail, cycling) Group felt this needs improved
- A very useful analysis was that Exmouth is very 'linear' in nature which made it both unique and a challenge to improve connectivity eg from the town centre to the beach – Group felt a souped-up land train and park and ride could be a solution. (Dinan way was questioned)
- The need to keep placemaking 'fresh' – group agreed
- Retail was finding it very tough – was in competition with Exeter and needed to develop more of a USP for the town centre – Group felt this would be even tougher if we had more of the same.
- The offering should be 'classy' not tacky – high quality – lack of good quality shops.
- Lack of activity for young people needed to be addressed – the group's views differed – some felt more was needed for the 11-17 age group. Pointed out facilities at Phear park, the hive, sea cadets, marine cadets
- Arts were important – group unanimously agreed
- Group asked how sustainable was prosperity based solely on hospitality/café culture – the need to develop an all-year offering was put forward – Group felt more was needed
- Linking of the micro areas eg beach, Docks, Strand, Shopping centre Brixington and Littleham – all great areas but not interlinked
- Something Iconic – Group felt a focus on an 'eco resort' the environment – speak to transition exmouth.
- Signage needed to help people to get around the town/parking – group felt it needs improving – not overloaded though – use information boards.
- What to do with Ocean – can it be adapted needed to develop a National Profile – felt it would be better as a gallery or visitor centre – should remove the gaming machines
- Imperial Rd area lacked legibility – group felt it was not attractive
- Walking/cycling to Exeter needed improvement – need speed limit for cyclists – it should be called a multi-use path - agreed
- Alternative transport and a move away from cars

Table 4

- The Jurassic coast (a consensus was that Exmouth needed to capitalise on this more than it had to date) – group all for this
- Sea/maritime Heritage – group agree plus Littleham and the rural hinterland
- Future development must be accessible for all – agreed community and disabled access.
- The group posed a question – was a Hotel necessary to be provided to develop Queen's Drive and asked what was around it [the hotel if provided] that would attract tourists? – one member agreed others did not
- Consideration should be given to a cultural building looking at music, the arts, performance space – group agreed
- Free activities should be considered and the popularity of the dinosaur park was noted – group agreed
- Paid for attractions eg crazy golf were also put forward as ideas – group disagreed
- Seating was raised for all users – sorry I can't tell what the response was

- Family orientated attractions – something for all ages – group agreed
- Arts and culture facilities including a library – Group agreed need an arts centre
- Sports facilities - agreed
- Marine based start-up business units especially in the area of Camperdown creek - agreed
- A transport interchange at the entrance to the town looking at taxis, buses, rail and also the legibility of the gateway to the town for visitors – no sounds too suburban
- Public realm initiatives must be part of placemaking – Group did not understand what public realm meant.
- A mixed economy going forward - agreed
- A tramway – group disagreed – not clear where to and from
- Asked what was our USP (unique selling point) the beach? agreed
- Connectivity (clarified as being digital, roads, rail, cycling). Group felt - digital ok; roads need to be clear routes within town; station could be moved towards Mudbank to make land available – footpaths are not currently 'shared spaces'; electric hook-ups for cycling
- A very useful analysis was that Exmouth is very 'linear' in nature which made it both unique and a challenge to improve connectivity eg from the town centre to the beach – group agreed.
- The need to keep placemaking 'fresh' - group agreed it should be kept under review.
- Retail was finding it very tough – was in competition with Exeter and needed to develop more of a USP for the town centre – group felt more 'niche' shops need for it to be different
- The offering should be 'classy' not tacky – high quality – group agreed
- Lack of activity for young people needed to be addressed – group agreed
- Arts were important – group agreed - Cultural provision – Bideford, Teignmouth and Crediton all have a dedicated Arts Centres. Exmouth with double the population has not
- Group asked how sustainable was prosperity based solely on hospitality/café culture – the need to develop an all-year offering was put forward – group agreed
- Linking of the micro areas eg beach, Docks, Strand, Shopping centre Brixington and Littleham – all great areas but not interlinked – group agreed
- Something Iconic – group the beach – we love it
- Signage needed to help people to get around the town/parking – group agreed
- What to do with Ocean – can it be adapted needed to develop a National Profile – needs to be used
- Imperial Rd area lacked legibility - agreed
- Walking/cycling to Exeter needed improvement – not
- Alternative transport and a move away from cars - yes

Table 5

Placemaking should be mixed use in nature and include a range of free and 'paid for' facilities – group were happy with 'free' and 'paid for' attractions – but not supportive of residential development on seafront.

Themes to celebrate were:-

- The Jurassic coast (a consensus was that Exmouth needed to capitalise on this more than it had to date) – a good theme but not the only one
- Sea/maritime Heritage – need to develop sea and maritime heritage ore effectively especially heritage side. Material in Exeter [museum?] could be in Exmouth. It is worth keeping up the access up the river [to Exeter] by dredging the sand. Sewage is becoming an issue. A Trail.

- Future development must be accessible for all – very important need to be able to take a buggy around
- The group posed a question – was a Hotel necessary to be provided to develop Queen's Drive and asked what was around it [the hotel if provided] that would attract tourists? Group didn't want to see a hotel on the seafront – instead keep the Devon Court
- Consideration should be given to a cultural building looking at music, the arts, performance space
- Free activities should be considered and the popularity of the dinosaur park was noted
- Paid for attractions eg crazy golf were also put forward as ideas – happy to see these – a good idea.
- Seating was raised for all users – agreed more seats
- Family orientated attractions – something for all ages – agreed also need showers, changing facilities more toilets easily accessible and well signposted
- Arts and culture facilities including a library – arts and culture good in the town, the library is very good; public art work good.
- Sports facilities – sports are well provided
- Marine based start-up business units especially in the area of Camperdown creek – a good idea esp at Langerwehe Way
- A transport interchange at the entrance to the town looking at taxis, buses, rail and also the legibility of the gateway to the town for visitors – an excellent idea esp bicycles, clear car parking; route to beach; buses need indicating (I think this means how to get to seafront – not sure) Need better separation between pedestrians and cycle routes.
- Public realm initiatives must be part of placemaking – cleaner streets would be good
- A mixed economy going forward
- A tramway – no need for this
- Deaf academy – important and we could make more of it i.e. signing and hearing aids; possibly the business community using the facilities more
- More foreign students needed as pre covid more awareness of what there is
- Could link Stuart line Cruises with land based activities eg nature exhibitions
- Transition Exmouth – needs to be better known (Eco) Need a PR relations officer to make their role clear sorry not 100% this is right?
- Need to keep Coastwatch facility
- Magnolia centre needs upgrading and improving
- Harbour view needs preserving and developing
- Educational visitor centre a very good idea – could develop some of the points above eg
- History
- Natural heritage
- Where to find attraction(s) what's on
- Nighttime economy – needs toilet facilities
- Agree with group 2 – need to get basics right
- Council owned parts of town eg beach huts, tatty and in wrong place
- Group 3 – comments on Magnolia centre supported
- Someone needs to keep an eye on the general state of the town
-
- USP Beach – wind
- Confluence of river and sea

- Digital connectivity ok – room for some improvement; Roads: completion of Dinan way and Exeter Rd essential; A376 inadequate; Expand cycling and routes connectivity to be improved
- Arts - Are important – all of them inc. music
- All year round tourism businesses required
- Signage needs sorting out professionally
- Ocean – needs better managed for more income
- Parking – consider a park and ride
- Glossy shops – not tacky

Characteristics for Placemaking

Table 1

- Natural environment, green issues, environmentally sensitive, pride in the Jurassic coast were all priorities in the group.
- There are multiple groups already in existence who are perhaps not well known or not well linked up eg plastic free
- Entrepreneurial hub for start-up businesses linked to environmental and local concerns
- Eco resort
- Better use of existing buildings rather than building new.
-
- Table 1 agreed with all of the QDDG group 2 characteristics ie
- Accessible and inclusive
- Cultural development should be sensitive to local views
- Traditional to be respected included maritime, fishing, sailing and watersports
- Take pride in the Jurassic Coast
- Coastwatch facility needed
- Be environmentally sensitive
- River Exe SPA (specially protected area) and beach management plan
- An informative educational visitor centre
- Architecture in keeping with the townscape/heritage and not 'Brutal British' need for design flair.
- Table 1 agreed with all of the QDDG group 3 characteristics except point 1 re the nighttime economy – this needs to be carefully managed.

Table 2

- Capitalise on the natural environment - agreed
- Not tacky - agreed
- Diverse – mixing the old (traditional) with the new (respecting our Edwardian and Victoria heritage) - agreed
- Something for everyone – disagreed – not to attract the 'wrong type' ie groups that might dissuade more natural types.
- An all year round offering to support businesses – Group felt that our natural environment does support our existing, adaptable businesses. Need more assistance for those businesses rather than more development.
- Safe and confident – agreed – more police in summer more toilet facilities in summer also.
- Green (environmentally conscious) - agreed

- Have a traditional sea side offering – questioned what this meant – no to more arcades
- Exmouth needs to be clear on its identify and purpose – Exmouth has one – The environment and nature.
- The Dinosaur Park should be refreshed, improved and expanded – Research needed to determine if it is worth funding.
- Accessible and inclusive - agreed
- Cultural development should be sensitive to local views – but also respect nature and wildlife
- Traditional to be respected included maritime, fishing, sailing and watersports
- Take pride in the Jurassic Coast – agreed as gateway to the Jurassic coast
- Coastwatch facility needed - agreed we have it enhance it.
- Be environmentally sensitive - agreed
- River Exe SPA (specially protected area) and beach management plan – agreed it is needed.
- An informative educational visitor centre – yes but in an existing building
- Architecture in keeping with the townscape/heritage and not ‘Brutal British’ need for design flair – no need for new buildings lets enhance what we have
- Need to improve and support the night-time economy - disagree
- Council should take control over those areas of the town it owns and use its influence current unoccupied/derelict and void sites let the town down - agreed
- Felt there should be dialogue with the Magnolia Centre owners/operators, Thomas Tucker Building and the post office - agreed
- There was a need for sympathetic modernisation – appropriate enhancement of existing structures

Table 3

- Capitalise on the natural environment – generally agreed plus protect and conserve
- Not tacky – agreed – town centre is tacky
- Diverse – mixing the old (traditional) with the new (respecting our Edwardian and Victoria heritage) - agreed
- Something for everyone - agreed
- An all year round offering to support businesses - agreed
- Safe and confident - agreed
- Green (environmentally conscious) - agreed
- Have a traditional sea side offering - agreed
- Exmouth needs to be clear on its identify and purpose - agreed
- Re dinosaur play area: The group agreed is that the current site needed changing and expanding with new activity equipment for older children too and with multi-generational activities , fitting in with any new ‘iconic theme’ or marine theme.
- The group thought that what is currently on dinosaur play area should be moved to the Maer play site (This was a possibility originally stated when temporary approval was granted.)
- In discussing Themes most in our group had agreed the dinosaur area was ‘poor’, ‘only ok’ ‘doesn’t cater for older children’ ‘looks popular because there’s nothing else’
- Accessible and inclusive - agreed
- Cultural development should be sensitive to local views – agreed
- Traditional to be respected included maritime, fishing, sailing and watersports – not happy with jet skis – not environmentally friendly

- Take pride in the Jurassic Coast – agreed natural environment
- Coastwatch facility needed - agreed needs updating
- Be environmentally sensitive - agreed
- River Exe SPA (specially protected area) and beach management plan – agreed
- An informative educational visitor centre – agreed
- Architecture in keeping with the townscape/heritage and not ‘Brutal British’ need for design flair – agreed
- Need to improve and support the night-time economy - undecided
- Council should take control over those areas of the town it owns and use its influence current unoccupied/derelict and void sites let the town down – agreed esp the post office/Magnolia Centre/Areas behind
- Felt there should be dialogue with the Magnolia Centre owners/operators, Thomas Tucker Building and the post office – as per point above
- There was a need for sympathetic modernisation - agreed must be sympathetic

Table 4

- Agreed to all characteristics and suggested showers should be part of the seafront offering.
- A central location would bring vibrancy into the town centre all year round. (The Kennaway Centre could be used?) Seafront
- Cold water showers provided at regular intervals would encourage sea swimming. Associated health benefits would encourage tourism

Table 5

- Agreed with the characteristics identified.
- Deaf academy – important and we could make more of it i.e. signing and hearing aids; possibly the business community using the facilities more
- More foreign students needed as pre covid more awareness of what there is
- Could link Stuart line Cruises with land based activities eg nature exhibitions
- Transition Exmouth – needs to be better known (Eco) Need a PR relations officer to make their role clear sorry not 100% this is right?
-
- Need to keep Coastwatch facility
- Magnolia centre needs upgrading and improving
- Harbour view needs preserving and developing
- Educational visitor centre a very good idea – could develop some of the points above eg
- History
- Natural heritage
- Where to find attraction(s) what’s on
- Nighttime economy – needs toilet facilities
- Agree with group 2 – need to get basics right
- Council owned parts of town eg beach huts, tatty and in wrong place
- Group 3 – comments on Magnolia centre supported
- Someone needs to keep an eye on the general state of the town
-
- USP Beach – wind
- Confluence of river and sea

- Digital connectivity ok – room for some improvement; Roads: completion of Dinan way and Exeter Rd essential; A376 inadequate; Expand cycling and routes connectivity to be improved
- Arts - Are important – all of them inc. music
- All year round tourism businesses required
- Signage needs sorting out professionally
- Ocean – needs better managed for more income
- Parking – consider a park and ride
- Glossy shops – not tacky
- Added that business other than maritime need support also

Questions were asked about:

Who attended the 'stakeholder' meetings?

G Mills advised this was taken from a list built up over some time. G Mills accepted the list may not be perfect but anyone not on that list was free to attend the public workshops.

G Mills asked those attending to encourage people to attend and/or complete the online questionnaire.

Questions asked at the meeting.

1.

G Mills was asked if Ocean was profitable for the Council?

G Mills confirmed LED were paying their rent but didn't intend to go into details of their lease as it was out with the scope of the workshop.

2. Was the purpose of the meeting to get views to feed into a wider plan still to be developed?

G Mills advised yes, it was.

3. Who were the stakeholders as some businesses seemed not to be aware of the workshops?

G Mills advised that many stakeholder groups had been invited from a mailing list that had been developed over some time. The challenge was in getting people to come along. G Mills confirm the youth parliament had been invited as had the local college and other business groups eg the Chamber of Commerce. He asked those present to encourage others to come along to the next meeting on the 31st of July 2022 at Ocean from 10am-1230pm.

4. Was there any issue with sharing the feedback once it was produced?

G Mills – advised that the documents would be made public so the views could be shared.

5. What would be developed on Queens Drive Space?

G Mills advised that the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group had moved its focus away from just QDS to looking at the whole of Exmouth. G Mills advise that QDS would be part of the plan and that he had no preconceived ideas about what that might look like.

6. What was the role of the Neighbourhood Plan?

Cllr Brian Bailey advised it had been prepared by ETC and was very much alive. G Mills advised that any developments going forward would have to be scrutinised by ETC as part of the planning process – so there were checks and balances throughout the process.

A closing address was made by Cllr Paul Arnott who thanks everyone for their hard work.

G Mills advised that officers would write up an account of the evening and bring to the next delivery group meeting for consideration and to ensure transparency. Copies of all the material produced would be kept should we need to refer to it in the future. The notes would be circulated to those attendees.

Attendance List

Group 1

Julie Mills
Daphne Currier
Pam Jasper
J.M. Gathercole
Adrian Gathercole
Lyndon Massey
Kayt Massey
Annette Ladbrook

Group 2

Chris Sands
Jackie Sands
Anita Johnson
Brian Johnson
Karen Geoffrey
Geoff Geoffrey
Mike Fowler
Cllr Megan Armstrong
Robert Kathro

Group 3

David West
Susan Davies
Annette Tremlin
Ann Membrey
Helen Bennett
Dave Toomey
Simon Pardoe
Jane Ashton

Group 4

Geoff Skinner
W&A Crocker
Peter Brain
Steve Bennett
Steve Jones
Chrissy Lavis
Alec Huett

Malcolm Dodd

Group 5
Michael Jenkinson
Carol Barnes
Gordon Hodgson
Robert Hughes
Felicity Hughes
Trudi Cotton
Rod Latham

Elected Members attending

Cllr Paul Arnott- EDDC
Cllr Nick Hookway – EDDC
Cllr Aurora Bailey - ETC
Cllr Brian Bailey - ETC

Officers in attendance:

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Gerry Mills, Project Manager for Place and Prosperity (Exmouth)