

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 13 December 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.01 am and ended at 10.42 am

11 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

12 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 October 2022

Members asked for a small amendment to the minutes of the previous meeting at item 10, to clarify that it was *the current tenants* of the former play park who were consulted or invited to engage in consultation, to provide their views. The revised minutes to be presented at the next meeting.

13 Declarations of interest

Cllr B De Saram: Minute 14; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor.

Cllr J Whibley: Minute 14; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor.

14 Progress Update on Placemaking in Exmouth

The Project Manager – Place & Prosperity (Exmouth) ran through the update report which summarised progress since the Group's last meeting, including:

- Following a debrief meeting with the traders at Queen's Drive Space, all the current traders have submitted interest in taking the pitches for the 2023 season.
- Planning consent is being prepared for the fitness area; it expires in July 2023 and needs to be renewed.
- The Events Space has been marketed as agreed to see if a reliable operator can be secured either for the whole season or for the summer holidays.
- A small budget has been identified for car park signage and this will proceed with colleagues who look after car parking in Exmouth.
- We have begun preparing the planning consent for the Strand which expires in September 2023 and needs to be renewed.
- Following the Placemaking in Exmouth Consultation, the budget of £160k to develop the Placemaking Strategy was approved by Full Council on 7 December 2022 and in anticipation of that, the tender specification was written to appoint the team which will report on to the Placemaking Group in due course, as set out in Appendix A to the update report.
- Led by colleagues in Devon County Council, the Levelling Up Fund Bid was submitted and a letter of support has been issued by both East Devon District Council and Exmouth Town Council, as has match funding. To date, there has been no news on whether the bid has been successful.

Discussion included the following points:

- It was confirmed that traders on Queen's Drive Space were offered a 15% discount.
- Members discussed the use of grassed areas in the Strand. One Member expressed concern that because traders were licensed to use the grassed areas, the space was not

available for one-off events. The Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation commented that the agreements with traders covered two seasons, to enable them to plan, so an agreement for arrangements for summer of 2023 was already in place. However, it was agreed with the traders and the PETS Group that these arrangements would be reviewed thereafter, and the review could take account of one-off events if that is considered appropriate. It is expected that discussions with traders for the 2024 season will commence in Spring 2023.

- It was noted in respect of the Strand that all of the agreements required traders to remove outside furniture by the end of September; however, some had gone beyond this date, with one trader having only very recently removed their tables and chairs but leaving some flower pots and fencing, and officers would be addressing this with the trader today. A Member commented that this is entirely unsatisfactory conduct on behalf of that tenant. This has been a very challenging issue for Officers going over 2 or 3 years and there has been bullying conduct towards Officers by some of the licensees. The tenant has carried on making extra dollar, on the public of East Devon, throughout the autumn and into the Christmas season and if they had wanted to do that, they should have come back to the Council and applied, and paid for something different. The Member felt it was important that these points are recorded in the minutes to demonstrate if necessary to the MP, who supported the traders but did not know his facts, that this Council has not driven the traders out but has been very tolerant, and the Member expects thanks from the licensees for this Council's forbearance.
- There is a firm proposal for LED to take on the Fitness Space at Queen's Drive for the 2023 and 2024 seasons, but not immediately post-Christmas.
- Members were disappointed that an update has not been received from DLUHC on the Levelling Up Bid and it was agreed to email East Devon MPs Simon Jupp and Richard Foord to ask for an update on when a decision can be expected, for both the Exmouth and Axe Valley bids.

Members of the Group noted the progress since the last meeting of 10 October 2022.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

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

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

G Jung

Officers in attendance:

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

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer
Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure
Matthew Blythe, Service Lead Environmental Health & Car Parks

Councillor apologies:

A Colman

Chair

Date: