

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 1 April 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Adoption of Exmouth Placemaking Plan and Strategic Outline Business Case

Report summary:

East Devon District Council has completed the updated Exmouth Town Centre and Seafront Placemaking Plan (EPP) and its accompanying Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) following extensive Member, stakeholder and public engagement. A six-week consultation in late 2025 generated strong support for practical improvements to the town centre, seafront and station gateway, with clear priorities emerging around wayfinding, public realm, accessibility and environmental sensitivity. Several earlier large-scale proposals were removed in response to public feedback.

The final EPP and SOBC present a refined, deliverable and community-supported framework for guiding future investment in Exmouth.

Key partners including PETS, Devon County Council and Exmouth Town Council have been asked to endorse the plan, a verbal update on this process will be provided at Cabinet.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Cabinet :

Adopt the Exmouth Placemaking Plan and the Strategic Outline Business Case.

Reason for recommendation:

The Exmouth Placemaking Plan is a strategic document that provides a framework for future placemaking interventions and has been subject to a thorough consultation process. With the EPP now complete, adoption is required to progress key projects in Exmouth town and seafront.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

Assets and Economy

- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

The Exmouth Placemaking Plan seeks to identify changes that contribute to the future climate resilience of Exmouth. Any measures identified in the final document will be reviewed in detail as the measures are implemented.

Risk: Low Risk; The risk has been reviewed for the Exmouth Placemaking Plan (EPP). This is low risk as it is a strategy document. In depth reviews will be undertaken for specific projects emerging from the EPP.

Links to background information [PETS meeting 20th October 2025 Agenda and Minutes Exmouth Placemaking Plan For The Town Centre and the Seafront](#)

[Exmouth Placemaking Plan - Strategic Outline Business Case](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
- Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- Resilient economy that supports local business
- Financially secure and improving quality of services

1. Background:

East Devon District Council (EDDC) commissioned the Exmouth Town Centre and Seafront Placemaking Plan (EPP) and a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) in 2022 and appointed consultants WSP who completed the first draft by the end of 2023. The draft EPP and SOBC were subject to a public consultation exercise in March 2024, the results of this consultation indicated a mixed response from residents/businesses.

The EDDC steering group, 'Placemaking Exmouth Town and Seafront' Group (PETS) recommended that the EPP and SOBC should be refined to reflect the results of the March 2024 public consultation exercise. WSP were commissioned in February 2025 to carry out the review.

WSP completed the review in September 2025. Throughout the process, officers from EDDC, Devon County Council (DDC) and Exmouth Town Council (ETC), along with Members of PETS, EDDC Cabinet and DCC's Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) members group, were engaged to ensure all key stakeholders could contribute to the review

WSP tested the proposed actions under each strategic objective in terms of their deliverability, readiness, ease of implementation and cost, which provided a broad priority list, with the Wayfinding Strategy and the Gateway coming out as the top priorities.

2. Public Engagement:

The final stage of the review involved a community consultation exercise to demonstrate that EDDC had considered public feedback and incorporated appropriate changes.

The public consultation exercise was held online via 'Commonplace' in November and December 2025. In addition to the online consultation, two in person sessions were held on November 12th and the 27th at the Exmouth Pavilion and Exmouth Town Hall.

The methodology for the public consultation used a structured survey, designed to align with each action listed under the plans five Strategic Objectives. Participants were asked to record a response of "agree", or "disagree" for each action. Respondents were then invited to provide optional free-text explaining their views. After the consultation deadline, online and paper responses were collated into a single dataset for analysis.

Summary of public consultation results:

The consultation received 208 responses, showing broad support for practical improvements to Exmouth's town centre, seafront and gateways.

It is worth noting that respondents expressed their gratitude for the removal of several projects outlined in the pre-March 2024 version of the EPP.

Key responses included:

- People prioritised clearer, safer connections between the Station Gateway, Strand and seafront.
- There was strong backing for affordable business space, better wayfinding, improved public realm and sensitive environmental enhancements.
- Transport was also a key area where respondents suggested that shared pedestrian and cycling environments were frequently described as confusing and required improvement, proposals to reduce traffic were supported in principle only where alternatives, such as 'park and ride' was credible and inclusive.
- Respondents frequently commented that car park capacity should not be reduced or removed from key visitor destinations, such as the Pavilion Theatre, although meanwhile uses could be trialled on occasion.

As a result of all the feedback received, the following proposed actions were removed:

- The multi storey car park and leisure centre,
- Pedestrianising Queens Drive to Orcombe Point,
- The Arts and Cultural hub at Foxholes car park,
- Unlocking the Pier Head car park for use as public realm,
- Rationalising traffic movement in the town centre and seafront.

Other general free-text responses included the need for clearer plain English with examples, that accessibility and inclusive access should be a core consideration. Overall, respondents wanted clear, realistic, value-for-money actions to enhance Exmouth's character and everyday

experience. Figure 1 provide an overview of the additional changes to be made to the EPP and SOBC following public consultation.

Figure 1 - Additional changes were made following the final public consultation:	
EPP - concerns	Changes made to EPP & SOBC
Terminology used by professionals not always understood	Glossary added with examples
Not enough mention of sustainability or accessibility	Text added to the appropriate sections to reflect sustainability, accessibility considerations and the need to reduce carbon.
Lack of sensitivity towards the natural environment when describing 'development' opportunities	Text changed to emphasise sensitivity towards development close to protected natural environments
'Update the existing shopfront design guide' considered too simplified	Changed to 'Review and update the existing shopfront design guide. Encourage businesses to incorporate design principles when shopfronts are replaced'
Views expressed at the possible rationalisation of car parking on the seafront	Wording changed to reflect that reviews should not reduce capacity or effect local businesses

3. Stakeholder approval:

Further approval has been sought from:

- Devon County Councils HATOC group 20th March 2026;
- Exmouth Town Council members 23rd March 2026

A verbal update will be provided at Cabinet on the outcome of these meetings.

4. Next Steps:

It is recommended that Cabinet support the adoption of the Exmouth Placemaking Plan. Following Cabinet adoption, the Exmouth Placemaking Plan will move into its delivery phase, subject to available funding and resourcing. Successful implementation will require coordinated working between East Devon District Council, Devon County Council and Exmouth Town Council, supported by clear governance arrangements. PETS will continue to act as the steering group overseeing the development and progression of all projects arising from the plan.

As individual projects come forward, further public engagement will be undertaken to ensure the community remains fully involved in shaping future decisions and that proposals continue to reflect local priorities.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications in the recommendations in this report. Should actions require further funding then a separate report will be required for Cabinet and Council to consider.

Legal implications:

There are no substantive legal issues to add to the report.