

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Confidential Report of a Meeting of the Exmouth Regeneration Programme Board held at Exmouth Town Hall, Exmouth, on Thursday 18 November 2010

Present:

EDDC Councillors: Peter Halse (Chairman)
Timothy Wood

DCC Councillors: Bernard Hughes
Eileen Wragg

Exmouth Town Council: Steve Gazzard, Exmouth Town Council
Pauline Stott, Exmouth Town Council
John Wokersien, Clerk to Exmouth Town Council

DCC Officers: Ian Harrison - DCC

Other Board Members: Tony Collins, Exmouth Town Centre Manager
Neil Downes, Exe Estuary Management Partnership
Richard Jacobs, EIC Group

EDDC Officers: Ed Freeman – Principal Planning Officer
Donna Best – Principal Estates Surveyor
Karime Hassan – Corporate Director
Chris Lane – Democratic Services Officer
Nick Stephen - Communications Officer

Also Present Cllr Ray Franklin – Chairman of Seaton Regeneration Board

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.50pm.

1 Report of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 30 April 2010

The report of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 30 April 2010 was confirmed and signed as a true record.

***2 Matters Arising**

Cycle Hire (Minute *93refers)

Members were informed that discussions were on going with the railway company and it was hoped that a solution could be found in time for the next Board meeting.

Seafront Masterplan proposals (Minute *97 refers)

Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor confirmed that she would prepare wording for this recommendation.

3 Progress on the Exmouth Town Centre and Seafront Masterplan

Members received a verbal update on progress on the Exmouth Town Centre and Seafront Masterplan from Karime Hassan Corporate Director. This was an informal explanation of the work carried out by LDA Design on their Masterplanning work so far. Members noted that this work raised a number of significant issues - a number of proposals in the plans

3 **Progress on the Exmouth Town Centre and Seafront Masterplan** (Cont)

were not considered to be commercially viable. It was considered that the Masterplan could not be publically released in its current form.

LDA Design considered that Phases 1 & 2 of the London Inn part of the Masterplan were commercially viable. Phase 3 of this part of the Plan included 36,000 sq ft of retail space, 88 residential units, a hotel, 342 car park spaces and significant investment in the public realm. There was the cost of £10 million to build but it was believed that this was deliverable.

A member expressed concern about a commercial hotel being in this part of the scheme. It was anticipated that the proposed multi-storey car park would pay for itself with local authority support. There had been previous proposals for the District Council to pursue the car park development. There was also the possibility of a smaller supermarket/retail development in this area. Members noted that the Masterplan contained the principle that EDDC and DCC would need to forgo the commercial value of some of the sites for the scheme to go ahead and this was an unacceptable assumption.

Richard Jacobs, EIC Group, reported that there was serious demand for hotels in the locality. He believed that a car park would only be as successful as the shopping around it. Exmouth was already over provided with smaller shops and needed bigger national stores. Members noted that LDA Design had not had specific discussions with land owners for their plan. Before detailed proposals were issued to the public there was the need to have more detailed discussions with land owners over proposals.

Moving on to the Estuaryside part of the Masterplan, there was the proposal in Phase 1 of the scheme for the delivery of modern convenience shopping by building on the Rugby Club site and relocation of the Rugby Club to an alternative site. It was proposed to provide 30-31,000 sq ft of retail space with residential development around it. Some problems of the development surrounded possible contamination of the site; which had yet to be tested. The land value was in the region of £7 million but this required the relocation of the Rugby Club to move. Despite the rugby Club issues Members were happy that this was the correct location for a supermarket.

Phase 2 of the Estuaryside plan included refurbishment of the Leisure Centre, redevelopment of the transport exchange and development of a new library. It was this part of the plan that was not to be considered financially viable. Without a major value creating activity on the site, there was no prospect of making a return and therefore of delivery. Members considered a plan that was undeliverable should not be put into the public domain.

During discussions, the following points and questions were noted:

- There was an option to not renew the Rugby Club lease in 2021 when it expired. If an alternative site could be found then the Club should welcome the move;
- Could the Estuaryside Car Park be extended further to provide car parking for people using the cycle way;
- The possibility of linking the library and supermarket, if there was no developer contribution for the library then it was unlikely to be built;
- How could the community benefits that were being sought be prioritised?
- Should the town centre area be developed first, such as redevelopment of the Magnolia Centre?
- If the public was informed of the Masterplan but it did not “stack up” financially, it would be raising false hopes;

3 **Progress on the Exmouth Town Centre and Seafront Masterplan**

- The ideas were being put forward at a difficult time financially. to make things work. This meant that the Council had to moderate what could be delivered and ensure that it related to the Local Development Framework;
- DCC was not in a position to fund a library at present without developer contribution;
- There was the need for more flexibility on land uses and that there were significant land assembly issues with many of the proposals;
- It was important to give a picture on what was possible overall in the Masterplan to the public;
- That a 45,000 sq ft retail unit would create a much more valuable site than a 35,000 sq ft unit;
- The possibility of having an alternative site for the Rugby Club at Rolle College or a site at Hulham Road;
- Could the existing Post Office site at Magnolia Centre be a possible location for the library or on the ground floor of the hotel;
- The Masterplan contained substantial proposals and should be rolled out on a phased basis. Would the business community cope during the phased construction work?
- If there was nothing to put to the market then the Masterplan should not be released to the public;
- What Officer resources were available to deliver these proposals when LDA Design had finished their work?
- Needed to have a retail store in the development to provide footfall in the town and also S106 money to proceed with improvements to the town. This would also discourage a potential out of town supermarket from being developed;
- There was active developer interest in the Rugby Club and Stagecoach sites in the town;
- A lot of money had been spent on the Masterplan and the public would expect to be informed of the results;
- The construction industry was keen for work and good prices could be obtained at present;
- From a spatial planning point of view it was important to have the supermarket close to the town centre.

RECOMMENDED

1. that the Rugby Club site identified by LDA as the best site for the development of a supermarket be confirmed, as long as the proposal worked for the Club;
2. that priority be given to redevelopment of the Town Centre area;
3. that development opportunities identified in the LDA Masterplan be put to the public rather than the detailed identification of uses for individual buildings.

4 **Consideration of Exmouth Slipway Appraisals draft study and recommendations**

Consideration was given to the report from the Teignbridge District Council Design and Property Services on the Exmouth Slipway Appraisals draft study and recommendations. The study aimed to assess the existing public slipway facilities provided in Exmouth. By undertaking an appraisal of the existing traffic arrangement, access provisions, tidal use periods, condition data and possible betterment options each slipway could be appraised. Also, by comparing the existing facilities, the report sought to provide recommendations to inform a strategy for the improvement of water access provisions in Exmouth as a whole.

4 **Consideration of Exmouth Slipway Appraisals draft study and recommendations** (Cont)

Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor, reported that the Appraisal considered the Camperdown Car Park Slipway, Belshers Slipway and Carlton Slipway to be either inappropriate or unsuitable for further improvements. This left either Mamhead or Imperial Recreation Ground Slipways for possible further improvements. The site favoured in the report was the Imperial Recreation Ground, which needed further investigation. The quote for this further investigation work was £5,000. Councillor Graham Godbeer, Economy Portfolio Holder indicated that he considered this to be important work for Exmouth and he could find a budget to pay for this investigation work.

Members acknowledged the importance of early consultation with both Natural England and the Environmental Agency for this work.

RECOMMENDED

1. that the Imperial Recreation Ground Slipway be recognised as the favoured site for further improvements;
2. that the Economy Portfolio Holder be requested to agree to secure funding of £5,000 to carry out further investigation work on the Imperial Recreation Ground Slipway.

5 **Exmouth Business Improvement District Proposal**

Tony Collins, Exmouth Town Centre Manager, requested that consideration of the Exmouth Business Improvement District Proposal be deferred until the Board meeting on 13 January 2011. He needed to make a further report to the Exmouth Town Council meeting in December. Members noted the potential 106 Agreement funding of £45,000 from Tesco to for the Town Centre Manager post.

RECOMMENDED

that consideration of the Exmouth Business Improvement District Proposal be considered at the meeting of the Board on 13 January 2011.

6 **Communications**

The Chairman, Councillor Peter Halse, wished to confirm the confidential nature of the meeting and the papers discussed. There was the need to have a document on the Masterplan in the public domain by the next meeting of the Regeneration Board on 13 January 2011. This consultation document would be available in the New Year and the final document would be discussed at the next meeting of the Board. Nick Stephen confirmed that he and his team had undertaken work to prepare for public consultation, but did not yet have the consultation document.

7 **Any other business**

The Strand Improvement Work

Members discussed the proposed building that would be built in The Strand Redevelopment Scheme. It was noted that Paul Humphries Architects had been appointed to design the building. It was anticipated that a planning application would be made early next year with a proposal to start in April. It was accepted that the building was an important part of the development and would provide a rental income to help alleviate some of the extra maintenance cost of the scheme.

7 **Any other business (Cont)**

RECOMMENDED that The Strand redevelopment scheme continue to be progressed and be completed with suitable building.

*8 **Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting of the Board will be on Thursday 13 January 2011 at 9.15am, venue TBC.

Chairman

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