

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Confidential Report of a Meeting of the Exmouth Regeneration Programme Board held at Exmouth Community College on Friday 5 February 2010**

**Present:**

Councillors:

Peter Halse (Chairman), EDDC  
Steve Gazzard – Exmouth Town Council  
Darryl Nicholas, EDDC  
Pauline Stott – Exmouth Town Council  
Timothy Wood, EDDC  
Eileen Wragg, DCC

Rowan Carter – Exmouth Marina  
John Wokersien – Clerk to Exmouth Town Council

DCC Officers:

Ian Harrison – Director of Transport, Environment & Culture

EDDC Officers:

Donna Best – Principal Estates Surveyor  
Ed Freeman – Assistant Development Manager  
Karime Hassan – Corporate Director  
Nick Stephen – Communications Officer  
Rachel Perram – Democratic Services Officer

**Apologies:**

Councillor Bernard Hughes – DCC  
Tony Collins – Exmouth Town Centre Manager

The meeting started at 1.30pm and finished at 3.45pm.

**\*75 Minutes**

The report of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 16 October 2009 was confirmed as a true record subject to an amendment to Recommendation #1 (Minute 70 refers) to read: 'that the Chairman of the Board write to the community groups to assure them that they would be involved in the development brief at the early stages'.

**\*76 Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed Rowan Carter, representing the private sector, to the meeting.

**\*77 Matters arising**

**Cycle Hire**

Eileen Wragg advised Board Members that Sustrans had been in contact and asked that a cycle hire service be provided for users of the new cycle route from Exmouth.

It was understood that such a contract would need to be offered on a tender basis. There appeared to be a feeling that a bigger operator might take over another area along the cycle route if a service in Exmouth did not proceed in the short term.

John Wokersien updated Members that [REDACTED] from the Exe Cycle Group had been talking to several local businesses, with one company being enthusiastic to take on a short-term concession lease – if permitted to proceed as soon as possible.

## **Matters arising (cont'd)**

**RECOMMENDED** that the Board recommend proceeding with the issue of a two year lease to permit a cycle hire concession in Exmouth.

### 78 **Rolle College – an update**

John Wokersien distributed a 'Planning and Design Brief' report to Members for the Rolle Main Campus. Members heard that the report had been developed by Roy Pryke, on behalf of the SAD Design Group, Rolle Starter Group and Rolle Exmouth. The business plan for the site had been developed, with Roger Staker looking at the funding gap and possible options.

Running through the report, Members of the Board discussed the various options and future uses for the site as a whole. It was clear that there was a wish for a sixth form college to be located on the site. This could accommodate students from Exmouth Community College, who were currently housed in cramped and unsatisfactory conditions. The site could also be used to offer vocational training to other sectors of the community. By 2012 it was estimated that 800 people from the school would have a further education need. Local people did not share DCC's view that large volumes of students in a town the size of Exmouth should be expected to travel as far as Exeter to study.

Members heard that Exmouth Town Council had committed funds, which would pay for surveys and the associated costs needed for starting re-development. It was hoped that money could be raised from local businesses and the community in the form of shares, which would transform the site into a community initiative.

Ed Freeman updated the Board on the work that had been undertaken by Plymouth University, the landowner, who were in the process of inviting interested parties for the site. The University had employed the services of GVA Grimley, a land consultant to prepare a marketing development report which examined the details and constraints of the site. The most contentious element of the draft report was the proposed demolition of Eldin House, which was a listed building.

Ian Harrison reported that he had attended an event that was held to discuss the future of the site and was impressed by the commercial realism of the interested groups. It was clear that if a large area of the site was to be allocated for community, it would need to generate at least £24,000 per week in revenue. DCC did not believe that the Rolle site was appropriate for the town's library – access to such a facility for all community members was as important as the provision of a service. The option proposed by Karime Hassan for managed workspace was worth examining as well as how this might be financially viable.

Darryl Nicholas reminded Members that the facilities and infrastructure of the site was paramount to the success of residential development at Rolle. Much previous development in the town was a woeful example of poor facilities and infrastructure.

Rowan Carter suggested that EDDC consider moving their offices to the Rolle site, adding that the land at Knowle in Sidmouth was of much more interest to developers.

**RECOMMENDED** that the design brief from the Rolle College Project Promotion Group was noted and welcomed for informing the future planning considerations of the site and officers would assess the potential for assisting deliver the aspirations of the document.

79 **Update on Master Planning and Development Briefs for town centre sites**

Donna Best updated Members that EDDC had won £50,000 in funding from DCC in December 2009. This money would be used to fund consultants to work on the master plan and brief for Exmouth. The HCA procurement panel had been used in the tender process, with 3 companies of consultants chosen to work together.

These were:

LDA Design – consultants based in Exeter ([www.lda-design.co.uk](http://www.lda-design.co.uk))

Peter Brett Associates – Sustainable transport and engineering consultants ([www.peterbrett.com](http://www.peterbrett.com))

Brand New Media – website developers ([www.brandnewmedia.co.uk](http://www.brandnewmedia.co.uk))

The consultants would be looking at the draft programme and it was anticipated that initial consultation with the community would begin in March 2010.

Board Members recognised that the key focus was that the town had ownership of the development master plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that a meeting at Exmouth Town Council, which would include Exmouth EDDC, DCC, and Ward Members by invitation would be held prior to community consultation in March 2010.

80 **Visitor Centre Update**

Donna Best that Tracey Guiry had now left EDDC, but would be sitting on the Exmouth and Seaton Interpretation Centres Board.

Members heard that [REDACTED] the owners of a piece of land at Mamhead Slipway had proposed to build a Visitor Centre, which would then be leased back to the Exmouth and Seaton Interpretation Centres Board on a long lease.

Members were advised that £85,000 was available to fund various aspects for the visitor centre such as a Project Manager, to be hosted at the East Devon Business Centre in Honiton; construction consultants; interpretation specialists and catering consultants.

It was now time to request the ability to draw down on the funding commitment from DCC and a Cabinet meeting was due on 10 March to discuss this matter. It was clear that DCC would need to know exactly how this money would be spent – a great deal of work was needed, such as in centre design, details for construction and proposed maintenance of facility once built.

Rowan Carter confirmed that the exhibition space would be approximately 2,000 sq ft. and that current thinking was for a two-storey building that could have offices on the upper floor, which would help to generate revenue for the building – thus keeping costs low for the tenants.

Karime Hassan advised Members to consider that whilst this centre was a pared down version of the original visitor centre concept, it would however be built in a great location, (despite parking availability in this area) with direct views of the coastline and access to the Jurassic coast boat trips offered by Stuart Line Cruises.

81 **Any other business**

**Redevelopment of the Strand**

In response to a request for an update, Ian Harrison advised Members that the development construction work had gone out to tender and that the contract was due to be awarded shortly. A separate tender would be issued in due course for the construction of the building on the Strand site. A brief for the building had not been finalised and uncertainty around the requirements for a TIC was unhelpful. Although the Tourist Information Centre has expressed an interest in occupying the building, they had yet to come forward with a business plan.

It was anticipated that provision would be included for a bus stop to the Rolle Street back side of the building and that a performance stage would be built to the side. The lease revenue would be expected to fund a quality building that would pay for itself and afford the Council to maintain high standards. It was important that progress on delivering the building not be held up due to uncertainty over the TIC requirements.

**RECOMMENDED**

1. that Donna Best approach the Exmouth Tourist Information Centre and re-iterate that a full business plan would be required for their possible relocation to the Strand site.
2. that officers from both authorities continue with design plans for the building and accompanying stage and bus stop.

82 **Communications update**

Nick Stephen advised Members that there were three items that had generated requests for information from the media:

1. Tourist Information Centre possible move – no comment had been made, but the press would be advised that a business case was awaited from the Chamber of Commerce.
2. Bowling Centre – awaiting news of revised planning application.
3. Tree Felling in the Strand – there was a large amount of negative public feeling about this issue. Evidence of disease in many of the trees had been recorded by the tree surgeons. It was important to emphasise that many new trees would be planted in the redevelopment of the Strand.

**News**

- An announcement would be made regarding the employment of consultants to produce a masterplan and accompanying consultation exercise for Exmouth.
- A piece to accompany the announcement by Devon County Council of their decision to award the construction contract for the re-development of the Strand.
- EDDC await the outcome of DCC's Cabinet meeting on 10 March for the possible release of funding for the Visitor Centre.

81 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board has been re-scheduled and will be held on Friday 19 March 2010 at 9.15am – venue TBC.

Chairman.....

Date.....