

OVERVIEW

Exmouth is seen as a traditional seaside town. Its beautiful long sandy beach and views across the estuary are the main reason for people to visit. People's tastes and leisure habits are changing and increasingly, traditional seaside resorts are investing in and refreshing their leisure offer to remain relevant and competitive.

The outstanding seafront location deserves to have lots of space for open air activities and temporary dining. But the space also needs to be designed to cover up when the weather turns and out of season.

Completion of Queen's Drive Phase 1 road and car park shows the council's commitment to the site and, with Sideshore's (the new watersports centre) construction underway, gives confidence to businesses/ operators looking to invest

The site offers a superb seafront location but demand remains currently very seasonal

Visitor spend is low - as identified in the 2016 visitor survey, suggesting a lack of variety and number of attractions to keep people in the town, spending money.

Creating an all season mix of leisure attractions on the site will generate more out of season trade that compliments the current offer of a great beach. Sideshore and Phase 3 will enhance this USP with a place for people to come for other reasons e.g. sport activities, free play, social space, food and drink.

The presence of the Watersports Centre and the new Michael Caines offer will be a real change for Exmouth, enhancing the location and demonstrating confidence in the town.

CURRENT MARKET CONDITIONS

There are more and more independent restaurants opening now as consumers seek a more varied and local offer than the chain restaurants.

The hotel sector continues to invest and grow.

Exmouth is currently missing out on some of the opportunities that are available from hotel and restaurant businesses that are keen to find new venues and that can bring exciting new additions to the town. Such facilities can give more choice to local people as well as encourage visitors to stay in the town for longer than just a day trip and spend more money in the local economy.

Lyme Regis, Torquay, St Ives, West Bay are all examples of towns that have found ways to attract new restaurants, hotels and leisure attractions to serve the changing expectations of locals and visitors

WHAT WE WERE ASKED TO CONSIDER

LSH were asked to review and assess the Phase 3 site at Queen's Drive from a commercial perspective to think about what mix of commercial leisure uses could work on in that location alongside play facilities and public realm.

We work with commercial property experts in the leisure sector and our discussions with them have identified the kind of development and investment that they believe the site can offer.

OUR FINDINGS

We carried out a 'soft market testing' exercise which has demonstrated that we have a mix of regional and national investors interested in both a hotel and a café/restaurant venue.

We think the site of the existing Harbour View cafe offers one of the best locations on the south coast for a new cafe/restaurant to be developed. With a modern design that makes sense of the amazing views, a new food venue at Harbour View would offer a stunning vista of the coastline westwards down to the South Hams headland and eastwards to the start of the World Heritage Coast making this an amazing place that can be used all year round by locals and visitors alike.

WE THINK THIS CAFÉ SITE COULD PROVIDE:

- A modern, two storey café/restaurant offer open morning through to evening
- Affordable but modern food and drink offerings that incorporate local produce
- Outdoor seating that spills on to the beach
- Making sure that we look after our excellent Coastwatch team by providing a new lookout tower that safely and comfortably accommodates their team and all the latest technology that they require
- Ensuring a new building is modern, energy efficient and well designed
- The staffing of the café/restaurant could be 25-30 full time equivalent staff
- This new place will be another reason to be proud of Exmouth – the town where you live

HOTEL:

- The success of the Premier Inn has shown that it's clear there is the continued demand from people who want to stay overnight in Exmouth. Seaside towns are responding to the changes in visitor habits and demands.
- A new hotel will create between 15 and 20 new jobs.
- The addition of such services in the hotel as exercise facilities and a bar could increase full time staffing by 5-6
- Visitors coming to the town, staying longer and spending more money

BENEFITS FOR EXMOUTH

It's clear from the engagement that HemingwayDesign have undertaken that people want a mix of high quality leisure uses on the site, including elements of free play. This needs to be coupled with the original aspiration of supporting the Exmouth economy by providing quality visitor infrastructure, such as a hotel, Watersports centre and parking. This infrastructure also offers a boost via new leisure attractions, new jobs and training opportunities for local people.

Commercial investment will help to create a high quality selection of leisure attractions and can help with the capital and running costs of play space, public space and landscaping. This will complement the investment already made by the public sector. It brings an income to invest in and maintain, the offer of free leisure elements within the site.

As the temporary uses have shown, food and drink providers, free play and events bring a wide demographic of visitors to the site, with multi-generational family groups, younger and older adults and people enjoying the area on their own.

A new hotel will complement this bringing new visitors to the area and creating a hotel destination, 365-day all year experience.

