

Agenda Item

Executive Board

3 March 2010

KH



Exmouth Rolle College Design Brief

Summary

This report seeks to inform members of the work that is going on in Exmouth to prepare a design brief for the Rolle College main campus and to inform members of the emerging proposals that are taking shape among the community groups concerning the future of this site.

Recommendation

That Members note the work of the community groups preparing a design brief for the Rolle College main campus and that the design brief be forwarded to the University of Plymouth.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The design brief is a community initiative that can carry little weight in the formal planning process and a direct communication with the land owner would be the most effective way of influencing the land owner's views on the disposal of this site.

b) Alternative Options

The Council could produce its own design brief informed by planning policies and with a formal consultation exercise. The timing of this work would be questionable given the advanced stage of disposal, and the resources required would challenge the service given the priority of producing the Core Strategy and town centre master plan and development brief.

The Council could add support to the design brief endorsing all or some of the content. The Council could reject all or some of the content.

c) Risk Considerations

The site is owned by the University of Plymouth, some would argue the community groups have a powerful moral case that the University should put something back into the community and not dispose of the site to the highest bidder. There is a risk that community aspirations may run ahead of what the Council could legitimately require of a redevelopment of this site. The reputation and cost implications to the Council could be material. However, there is little risk in noting the work and requesting that the University of Plymouth address the content.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

There is little financial consequence of agreeing the recommendation. The budgetary and policy considerations would arise were the community groups to expect the Council to assist in the projects delivery.

e) Date for Review of Decision

Six months.

1 Main Body of the Report

The February meeting of the Exmouth Regeneration Programme Board heard from John Wokersien, Exmouth Town Clerk, that a design brief for Rolle College had been prepared by Roy Pryke, on behalf of the SAD Design Group, Rolle Starter Group and Rolle Exmouth. A business plan for the site was also being developed looking at the funding gap and possible options. District Council members for Exmouth had asked that the matter be reported to the Executive Board so that the Council was aware of the work that was going on in the Town to shape the future development of this important site.

The attached design brief has been prepared by community groups for the Rolle College main campus.

The document is not a formal planning design brief prepared by the District Council for the purpose of guiding future development of the site.

Members need to be aware that the University of Plymouth, through their agents, will have their own views on how the site may be brought forward for development; certainly officers of the Council have been in contact with representatives of the University over a number of years as the University has prepared itself for marketing and disposal of the site.

The main section which will be of concern to the University is section 4 (quoted below), this sets out clear preferences on the site redevelopment and includes proposals for educational and community use. This will impact on the commercial return from the disposal of the site and therefore the community groups will need to discuss this with the University or their representatives.

“SITE REDEVELOPMENT

- The buildings to be retained, apart from Langstone and Eldin, are ideal for educational and community use with the only significant refurbishment to the buildings being double-glazing, subject to detailed survey.
- The Fairfield Building and Art Workshops are recommended for demolition and reconstruction for identified purposes as skill centres for training and retraining and for adult education.
- The Eldin Building should be renovated and sub-divided into office space for rental purposes.
- Langstone House should be assessed for its viable retention and it, or the land, be utilised for offices or quality residential accommodation.
- The Spicer Building has fallen into neglect. It should be demolished and replaced by a well-designed block of flats to provide low cost accommodation for key workers on site, for students and for conference members.
- The Stork Building has also been neglected. It should be demolished and, along with all other buildings in this part of the main site apart from the Science block, the Eldin Building and Langstone Villa, be replaced by mixed housing.
- The Art Workshops behind the Refectory and Daw Building were poorly constructed. These should be demolished and replaced by purpose built accommodation for skills training and second-stage starter units for small businesses.
- The areas released by demolition of the other buildings should be used for mixed housing development.”

When the Regeneration Programme Board considered the report Members of the Board discussed the various options and future uses for the site as a whole. It was clear that within the town there was a wish for a sixth form college to be located on the site. Some were content that this could accommodate students from Exmouth Community College, the site could also be

used to offer vocational training to other sectors of the community. There is a strong message from the Town that local people do not expect that large numbers of students, in a town the size of Exmouth, should be expected to travel as far as Exeter to study.

The Regeneration Programme Board heard that Exmouth Town Council had committed funds, which would help 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.

The County Council officers have asked for a view on the appropriateness of the site for the Town's library and have stated it is not the appropriate location. The Library will need to be in the Town Centre.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications identified in the report.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

None

Background Papers

Rolle College Design Brief

Karime Hassan 2735
Corporate Director

Executive Board