

# Agenda Item

**Overview Committee**

**2<sup>nd</sup> March 2006**

**KH/AMH**



## **Unlocking Exmouth: Results of the public consultation exercise on the Estuary Side site and Imperial Recreation Ground**

### **Summary**

This report details the result of the consultation exercise on Unlocking Exmouth - the Way Forward and sets out a number of consequential recommendations. The second public consultation exercise on Unlocking Exmouth commenced on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2006 and ended on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2006. 2,173 responses were received to the exercise. The largest response representing 62% was opposed to any change on the estuary side site. 37% was in favour of development with the option with the largest support being option 4. Given the strength of public opposition to the development of a supermarket on this site it is recommended that the Council resolve not to relinquish its land holding on this site to deliver a major food supermarket on the Estuary side site.

The consultation exercise has produced an alternative solution for a supermarket between the Strand and the swimming pool that involves highway authority land and would require resolution of transport requirements to assemble a site. It would fall to others to promote such a development and Devon County Council may wish to explore with key stakeholders how such a proposal could be taken forward.

The second part of the consultation exercise related to the development of the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre on the Imperial Recreation Ground. 36% of the respondents were in favour of the proposal with 58% against. Given the strength of objection to the proposed development on this site members are asked to consider whether it is still appropriate that the Council continues to safeguard the site for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre. Members could continue to support this project but explore with the partners of the Interim Project Management Group an alternative location along the sea front.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. EDDC, as landowner, does not promote the provision of a major supermarket development on the Estuary side site identified by East Devon Local Plan Policy LEX6.**
- 2. EDDC note the support from Exmouth Town Council and other stakeholders, such as: Exmouth Residents Association and Exmouth Civic Society for a supermarket development between the Strand and the Swimming Pool on highway land at Marine Way, land not in the ownership of EDDC. In view of Devon County Council's response that "no change" is not an option, Devon County Council, as the land owner, be invited to engage directly with the key stakeholders to assess their proposals.**

- 3. Given the strength of public opposition to the provision of the proposed Exmouth Visitor Gateway Centre on the Imperial Recreation Ground members comments are sought on:**
- a) whether they wish the Council to continue to safeguard the site for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre; or**
  - b) do members wish to indicate their continued support for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre but explore with the partners of the Interim Project Management Group the feasibility of delivering the EGVC along the sea front. Members are asked to note the risk this course of action brings to the Living Landmarks Bid for the Jurassic Coast projects.**

**a) Reasons for Recommendation**

The responses of the public to the proposed options demonstrate a clear wish not to build a supermarket on the Estuary side site. However, key stake holders are in favour of a supermarket development in this area but on highway land. The County Council as landowner and strategic planning and transportation authority may be able to unlock the constraints of the site and deliver a supermarket in accordance with the wishes of the Town Council, S.A.D, Exmouth Civic Society and Exmouth Residents Association.

Discussion of the use of Imperial Recreation Ground for a visitor centre followed on from the original consultation exercise with the public regarding what community benefits the public would wish to see as a result of developing the Estuary side site. This idea also complemented earlier work that was being progressed for a visitor centre. A feasibility study has been supported by EDDC, the Town Council, Devon County Council, SWRDA and community groups. This culminated in a bid being made for lottery funding and an announcement by SWRDA supporting the East Devon visitor centres. Imperial Recreation Ground is an area of local amenity value in recreational use and whilst it is possible to accommodate a centre with a minimal impact, as identified by the response of DCC, the lack of a mandate for developing this site calls into question whether it is appropriate to pursue the centre on this site.

The Exmouth Visitor Gateway Centre is an exciting and important project for the town that should be promoted and progressed. In the absence of support for the Imperial Recreation Ground other sites should be explored, the seafront area with its relationship to the Jurassic Coast being an obvious possibility.

**b) Alternative Options**

The Council could give greater weight to the formal views of the elected authorities, i.e., Exmouth Town Council and Devon County Council and continue to promote a supermarket on the Estuary side site and the Visitor Centre on the Imperial Recreation Ground.

The Exmouth Visitor Gateway Centre: Options Appraisal and Preliminary Feasibility Review considered a number of locations in Exmouth for the centre, they were all rejected in favour of Imperial Recreation Ground. Fall back options were identified as Imperial car park overflow area at the edge of the Estuary and the Lorry and Coach parking area.

### **c) Risk Considerations**

The major risks are: retail developers argue there is no available town centre site to meet their needs and therefore they seek out of town centre locations.

DCC is unable or unwilling to take up the role of leading the promotion of a supermarket on Marine Way.

SWRDA withdraws its financial commitment to the East Devon Visitor Centre projects. The Living Landmarks bid is fundamentally weakened by uncertainty regarding the site.

The private sector loses some confidence in the town as a location for investment fearful of resistance to change.

### **d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations**

This is a property report and does not raise land use planning policy considerations that would require highlighting. The regeneration agenda is a key corporate priority and this clearly raises questions about a key plank of this agenda.

### **e) Date for Review of Decision**

N/a

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the outset of the launch of “Unlocking Exmouth” Members accepted that the land use planning policy context for Exmouth was set out in the East Devon local plan 1995-2011. Thus, the Council was promoting Unlocking Exmouth in its land owning capacity. Members took the view that a number of key sites within the town are in Council ownership and instead of bringing sites forward to the market in the traditional way Members wished to take the initiative to engage in a wider debate as to whether there was a desire to use the Council’s land holdings to unlock some of the long standing barriers to investing in community benefits. The reasoned justification behind Unlocking Exmouth was set out in two earlier reports to Executive Board dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 2004 and 19<sup>th</sup> October 2005. The results of the first public consultation exercise were reported to Executive Board on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2005.
- 1.2 The Estuary side site is a key site because it was identified in the local plan as one of two sites suitable for commercial development, and it had been the subject of private sector interest for a major supermarket for a number of years. Following work with consultants on retail impact statements, sequential tests and assessments of commercial interest, the Estuary side site was identified as the best opportunity to provide a major supermarket close to the town centre in accordance with planning policy.
- 1.3 The original consultation exercise sought to engage with key stakeholders to produce a planning brief for the site and to establish the community benefits that would flow from any development, and in turn to establish whether contributions could be achieved for off site community infrastructure to assist regeneration efforts elsewhere in the town. The response to the original consultation exercise demonstrated a great deal of concern about any development along the estuary side and, in particular, concerns about a major supermarket proposal. Much concern had been expressed about the prospect of the swimming pool and sports centre being replaced. There was genuine fear that the loss of the swimming pool would result in a loss of a facility that may not be replaced. In spite of numerous reassurances that any proposal to replace the swimming pool and sports centre would be guaranteed with a replacement facility and continuity of use, the message was lost. Given the concerns relating to the future of the pool and sports centre, the second consultation exercise gave a number of options for handling a supermarket proposal with different scenarios for the sports centre, namely: replacement in whole for the pool and sport centre; retention of pool but replacement of sport centre; and retention of pool and sports centre.

1.4 On the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2005 Executive Board agreed that three development options for the Estuary side site be put out to public consultation including a no change option. These options had been prepared following the public response to the original report entitled Unlocking Exmouth when a petition signed by 10,500 people had been submitted to the Council. The petition called for rejection of proposed plans for a major convenience store led development in the area of the Estuary site. In brief the four options included in the public consultation exercise were:-

- Option 1 – no change
- Option 2 – 35,000sqft supermarket, sports centre unchanged
- Option 3 – 25-35,000sqft supermarket at first floor level, swimming pool retained with remainder of sports centre replaced at first floor.
- Option 4 – 40,000sqft supermarket, new swimming pool and sports centre.

1.5 This report sets out the summary responses to the second public consultation exercise on Unlocking Exmouth, it provides in brief the total number of responses to what was a much more focused exercise. Officers continue to work on capturing detailed comments from the consultation exercise but it was felt important because of the public interest that the totals be reported as soon as possible following the end of the consultation period.

## 2.0 Consultation Responses

2.1 The public consultation exercise ran for 9 weeks from 24<sup>th</sup> October to the 24<sup>th</sup> January. Once again there has been a high level of public involvement and interest. 2,173 responses have been received. The consultation exercise has been wide ranging with the Council making use of a shop unit at Exeter Road for a six week period and has involved the use of a touring bus and visits to local schools. The level of interaction and community engagement has been extensive; so much publicity has been given to the subject of the exercise by the local media that it is reasonable for members to assume that the output of the exercise is a genuine measure of public opinion regarding the development proposals. A clear a view has emerged on both the Estuary side site and the Imperial Recreation Ground.

### **Exmouth Town Council**

2.2 Accepts the need for a supermarket closely related to the town centre subject to:-

- A supermarket the size of that described in option 3 being supported but with the suggestion that the supermarket is brought forward closer to the town;
- Consideration be given to a first floor level building with the suggestion that a level could be constructed over the existing swimming pool;
- The proposal that Marine Way should be routed behind the development to be considered;
- A pedestrian priority scheme be created for the front of the building to create strong pedestrian linkage to the Town Centre and ensure the strongest possible integration of the site with the existing commercial area of the town;
- Car parking to remain in control of the Local Authority with any concessions to be at the expense of the supermarket;
- Shopping trolleys to be on a controlled coin operated system to reduce the instances of trolleys being taken off site”.

The Town Council supports the Visitor Centre on Imperial Recreation Ground.

## **Devon County Council**

- 2.3 Does not prefer a no change option, but reserves its position on the development options pending a full analysis of the retail impact. It supports the principle of the mixed use redevelopment of the site focused on a new large food supermarket. Preferred location for new library of 1250-1500sqm. A number of integrated transport requirements, including public transport interchange (incorporating shop-mobility and taxi and coach provision); pedestrian/ cycle connections to the town centre; presume future rail enhancements including second platform face; recognition of car parking pricing and provision strategy; and safeguarding of South West Coast Path and National Cycle Network routes with links to the town centre.

Imperial Recreation Ground should be safeguarded as the potential site for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre. The site was proposed as the site for the E.G.V.C. as it offers the greatest opportunity to provide a free standing landmark building of the desired scale, design and scope, and capable of meeting the identified project requirements.

## **Exmouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce**

- 2.4 Support an amendment of Option 2: a 25-30,000sq.ft food supermarket with improved sports centre facilities and no affordable housing on the site.

## **Exmouth Society**

- 2.5 Support development of supermarket on Marine Way as promoted by Mr G Morris (of Exmouth Residents Association)

## **Exmouth and District Community Transport Group:**

- 2.6 Request that site be found beside the bus/rail interchange for shop mobility and "Ring and Ride" services.

## **Leisure East Devon**

- 2.7 Favoured Option 4 with one major amendment. Make available the whole of the Estuary site for Retail development (and car parking) and to provide new Sports Centre facilities elsewhere. It is the view of LED that there are compelling arguments which suggest that the most appropriate location would be a site at either Phear Park or Exmouth Community College, with the actual site to be determined by feasibility study. The reasons are:

- Dual use links with Education would improve the financial viability of the facility with guaranteed day-time usage (in addition to Exmouth Community College there are several Primary Schools close by). The proposal has the support of the College Principal.
- Shared management arrangements with existing facilities in the immediate vicinity (i.e. E.D. Tennis Centre, astro-truf pitches, approach golf course, bowling green would have a significant impact on costs.
- The car parking issues on the present site would be resolved with adequate free car parking being included in the design brief.
- There would be improved, safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Members of the Leisure East Devon Board have indicated their willingness to meet with Members and officers of EDDC to further discuss the ideas put forward in the response, if this was felt to be helpful.

## **Save the Avenues from Despoliation**

- 2.8 Main concern is how increased traffic flow and car parking will be managed. The A376 should cross the railway by bridge at Sansom's Boat yard, this will release the Marine Way for parking. If supermarket permitted it should be food only and no larger than 25,000 sq ft and should be located on marine way, i.e., between the Strand and Sports Centre.

## **Exmouth Citizens Forum**

- 2.9 Concerned about impact of supermarket on local businesses, needs for supermarket should be re-examined in light of Tesco's mezzanine and likely expansion in Brixington. Trend for more and more multi-national superstores running out of steam, now against supermarkets in favour of local produce. A supermarket would be environmentally unfriendly. Proposal to knock down sports centre gross extravagance.

Do not oppose visitor centre but unhappy that EDDC has suggested only one possible site when other locations nearer to Jurassic Coast are available. Imperial Recreation Ground should be preserved as open space. Size of building would inevitably invade green space.

The consultation exercise unsatisfactory on a number of counts: ignored result of first consultation exercise; no assessment of impact on roads; poor presentation in shop in Exeter Road; information on visitor centre misleading; should not count responses from school children; should not make decision before future of the Rolle College site has been determined.

## **Transport 2000**

- 2.10 The biggest disaster for Exmouth would be more large scale developments "out of town" which can only be reached by motorists. A supermarket close to the railway station and existing bus routes is ideal. Exmouth is lucky to have good rail connections direct with Exeter. These should play a big part in bringing people into shop and to visit attractions including any major visitor centre.

## **Campaign to Protect Rural England, East Devon Group**

- 2.11 Estuary side: Development options on the Estuary side site would place future demand on the A376 and should be avoided unless load capacity increased or railway is dual tracked. The estuary is an SSSI and Ramsar site and needs to be protected.  
Imperial Recreation Ground: Previous contamination of site raises questions about suitability. Council should factor new hotel in order that Exmouth benefits directly. Also, need to ensure sufficient car parking.

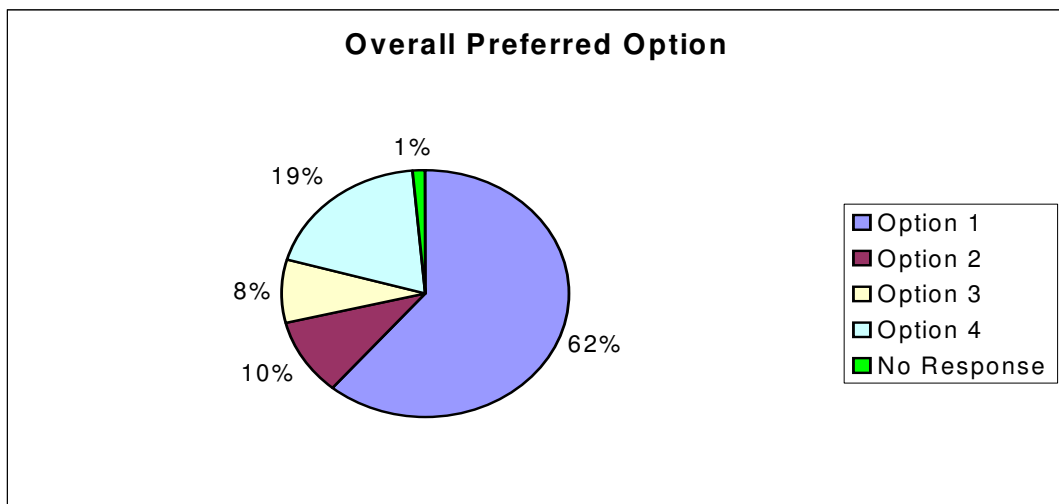
## **M.S. Marine Services**

- 2.12 Mr Sansom of M.S. Marine Services who occupies the boatyard to the north of the lorry park has concerns about access to and from the yard if a supermarket development takes place. About 70 boats in the winter and 30 in the summer are stored in the yard. Most of these boats are lifted out of the water by drying them out at the Imperial Recreation slipway area and then lifted and carried to the yard on a wheeled lifting frame towed by a trailer. The trailer is 14 feet wide and requires both lanes of the access road. With the small amount of traffic at present this operation causes minimal disruption but it would not be possible with the increased level of traffic associated with a supermarket. Mr Sansom would prefer to move his business to Camperdown Depot site but would require an area the size of the public car park and Devon County Depot combined. Mr Sansom seeks assurance as to what provisions will be put in place for him to carry out his business.

## The Public Response to the Consultation Exercise

### The Estuary Side Site

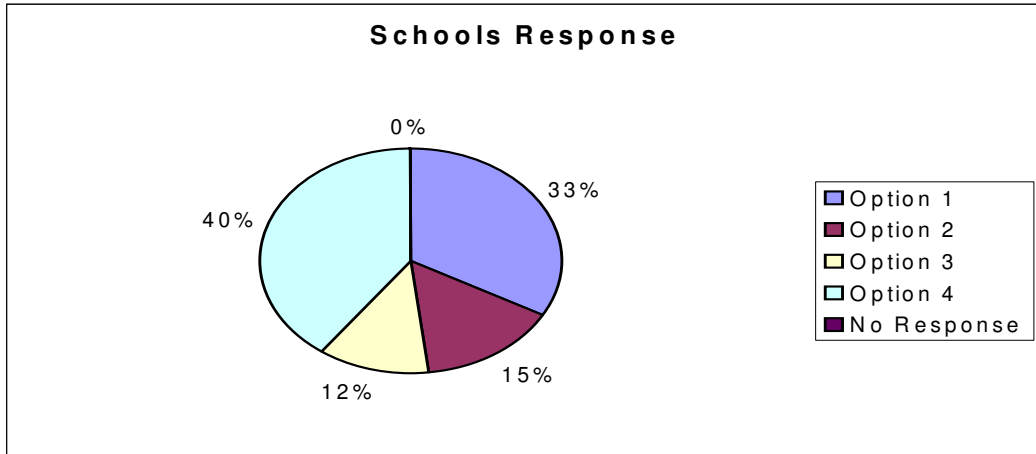
2.13 2,173 responses received. The option with the highest level of support was for no change. The level of opposition to the supermarket led development was significant; a clear majority of respondents are in favour of no change to the Estuary side site. A decisive 62% of all respondents are in favour of no change to the Estuary side site; of those who responded in favour of development there was a clear preference for option 4 - the larger supermarket on the site of the sport centre and providing a new swimming pool and sports centre in the area of the current lorry park. The figure for no change is more emphatic if visitors and responses from school children are excluded from the results. No change was supported by 65% of respondents from the Exmouth catchment area. Members will also be aware that a consultation exercise was carried out with the local schools. 361 responses were received from pupils. No change was supported by 33% of respondents, with option 4 receiving most support 40%.



### Comments Received

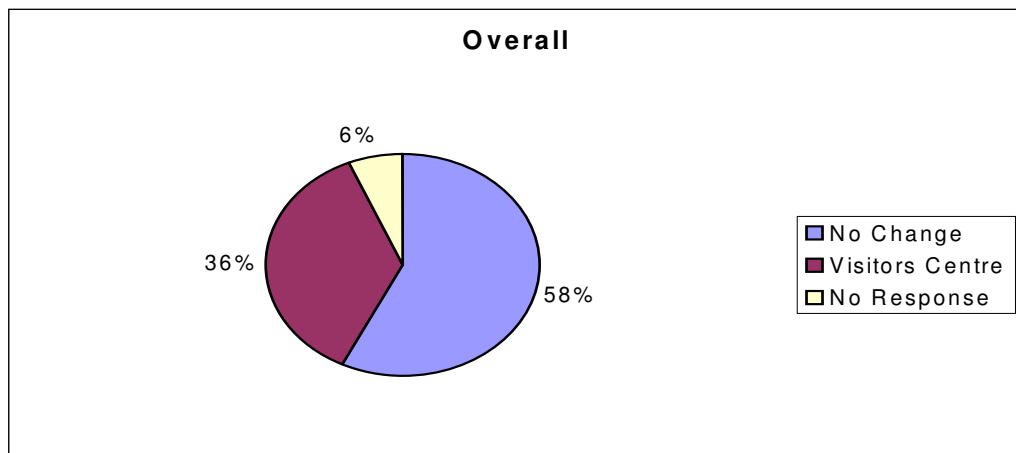
### No.

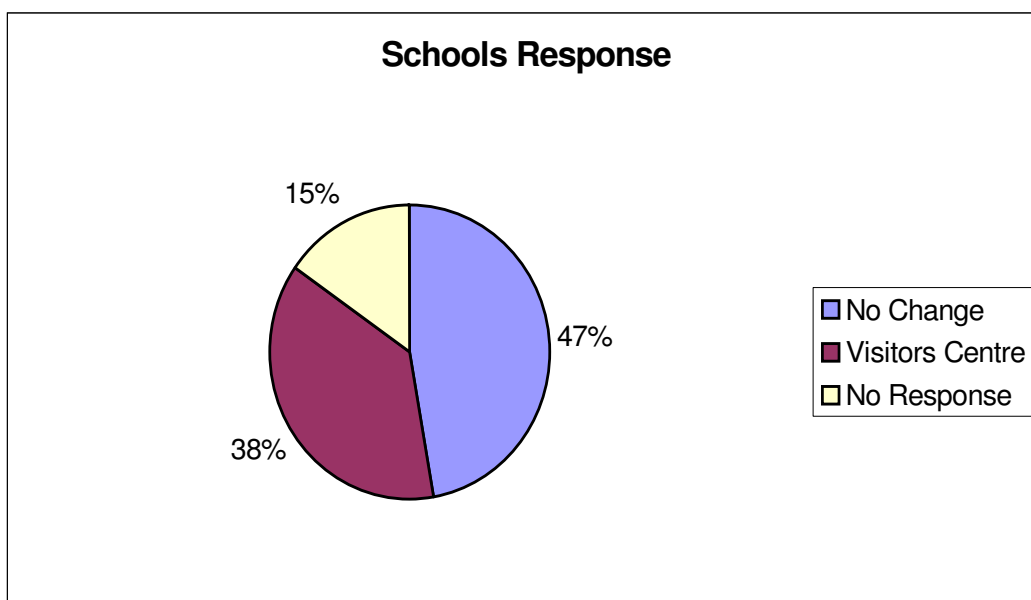
Reconsider entire project	166
Infrastructure concerns	119
Support supermarket but in different location	117
No change	94
Positive about projects	94
Recreational concerns	80
Environmental concerns	61
Keep Imperial Recreation Ground as open space	46
Critical of Council	42
Economic concerns	40
Supportive of Exmouth Gateway Visitors Centre but in different location	36
Increase recreational usage	31
Concern over future of Spinnakers	4
Wait until Rolle College closes	2



### Imperial Recreation Ground

2.14 The second part of the consultation exercise related to the development of the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre on the Imperial Recreation Ground. 36% of the respondents were in favour of the proposals with 58% against. A total of 2,173 responses were received, 361 from pupils, 86 from visitors, with 1,726 responses from residents living within the Exmouth catchment area (this includes Budleigh Salterton, East Budleigh, Lymstone and Woodbury).





### 3.0 Assessment

#### Estuary side site

- 3.1 The reasons for wishing to promote the Estuary side site for a supermarket led development have been made elsewhere and in great detail. The planning arguments have not changed and exist as a matter of public record. The Local Plan policy that permits a commercial led development on this site will remain. This consultation exercise has been to establish whether the Council as land owner should actively promote this site for development and, specifically, for a supermarket led development. The views of some key stakeholders', Exmouth Town Council and Devon County Council are supportive of redevelopment and back retail led development, but there is no real public appetite for a supermarket on this site. This is clear and beyond argument. It is recommended that the Council does not use its land ownership to deliver a supermarket development on the Estuary side site.

#### The Marine Way Option

- 3.2 As with the original consultation exercise, both the Town Council and Devon County Council have stated 'no change' is not an option. Exmouth Residents Association, S.A.D., Joint Residents Development Group and Exmouth Civic Society have promoted the idea of developing a supermarket between the Strand and the Swimming pool on highway land at Marine Way, this would require routing Marine Way through the bus station site. This would allow a supermarket to have a strong pedestrian access to the town centre. There is merit in this proposal, but it was previously assessed in the 90's and rejected because of concerns about the impact on traffic generation on Exeter Road as a consequence of altering the access arrangements at Marine Way, and because of the implications for the railway station. Such a scheme would require the relocation of the railway station further away from the town centre in order to provide enough room for servicing, access and parking arrangements. Without relocating the railway station there is insufficient room to accommodate a building of sufficient size as to make it commercially viable. Thus this option had been rejected and was not put forward to public consultation. However, given the comments of the County Council

that no change is not an option, together with their desire for integrated transport improvements, the County Council may wish to consider using their land ownership to take forward this development option. As the strategic planning and transportation authority they are in the best position to have a dialogue with the transport users to resolve their integrated transport requirements including the future needs of the railway station, car parking and cycling and bus provision. Clearly, if the County Council was prepared to take a lead in bringing their land forward to achieve a solution to the satisfaction of these key stakeholders it is open to the District Council to be supportive and enabling.

### **Imperial Recreation Ground**

- 3.3 The Exmouth Visitor Gateway Centre: Options Appraisal and Preliminary Feasibility Review written by Locum Consulting resulted in the selection of the Imperial Recreation Ground as the preferred option for the EGVC. The proposal was for the building to be placed in a central position to the rear of the site so that the open setting with public access to the water edge would remain. Locum Consulting have an international reputation for delivering major visitor attractions. They looked at other sites in Exmouth, both along the sea front and estuary area before arriving at their judgement that Imperial Recreation ground was the correct site. Their view was that other options are not commensurate with the scale and scope of aspirations for the project, which is to create a “world class” visitor facility within the context of the Jurassic Coast Interpretation Action Plan. This is a stand-alone project in physical terms, but will need to be tied into the urban fabric of the town and other visitor destination components in order to achieve the planned for economic benefits for the town. Sea front locations have a weakness in being remote from the town centre and public transport nodes. The transport connections to Exmouth as the westerly gateway to the Jurassic Coast are its great strengths.
- 3.4 The Imperial Recreation Ground is the favoured choice of Exmouth Town Council, the County Council and the Exmouth Promotion Group. The Interim Project Management Group for these proposed centres at Exmouth and Seaton also includes officers from the World Heritage Coast Steering Group and the SWRDA. The IPMG accepted the conclusion of Locum Consulting that Imperial Recreation Ground is the best development site for the Visitor Centre. Those bodies and individuals who have been closest to this project are united in their view that Imperial Recreation Ground is the preferred site. The bid to the Living Landmarks Lottery Fund has been submitted on this location and SWRDA have announced their financial commitment to the Jurassic Coast projects in the full knowledge that Imperial Recreation Ground was the chosen site. A major strength of the Imperial Recreation Ground is the relationship to the Estuary and this provides the EGVC the opportunity of developing more than just the Jurassic Coast theme. The links to the Exe Estuary are well made in the feasibility report and the product mix was its key strength. The feasibility report also considered two fall back positions in case there was a problem in bringing Imperial Recreation Ground forward: The Imperial car park overflow area on the water edge and the Lorry/coach parking area at the estuary side. Clearly they would remain as options should the Imperial Recreation Ground be ruled out and could be explored by the IPMG.
- 3.5 As an area of public open space and local amenity value it would be reasonable to require a clear majority in favour of the development to provide a mandate to go forward with some form of built development. Clearly weight should be given to the views of the Town Council and County Council. The County Council makes the point that at present this is a hugely useful expansive green area, used intensively for recreational purposes, particularly, in addition to walkers, by kite surfers, windsurfers and learners. However it considers a centre could be provided at the centre rear of the site and still allow recreational use to continue. There is no reason to doubt this assessment but in the absence of a clear mandate from the

public it is difficult to assert that the Council should continue to pursue this proposal on this site; and yet, this proposal is of the utmost importance to the town. It potentially can transform the visitor appeal of the resort and add significantly to the local economy. It is potentially one opportunity to match reality with rhetoric and produce something genuinely world class for the town, not just good and acceptable - but "World Class". It is worth re-stating the objectives behind the EGVC: providing a multi-purpose facility for tourism and education provision in the town; stimulating and encouraging the growth of the visitor economy in Exmouth; bringing a range of social benefits to Exmouth and its communities; bringing a range of economic benefits to Exmouth; and contributing to the development of a clear identity for Exmouth. There are challenges for this project, not least is to imagine a future context for this area that can be worthy of world-class designation. This means that Exmouth as a community has to be resolute in its aims, ie., to deliver such a world class facility and flexible in its approach to how we address the many constraints and obstacles that are put in its way. The responses to the consultation exercise have demonstrated neither.

- 3.6 Given the strength of objection to the proposed development on this site there is a case on public opinion alone to recommend Imperial Recreation Ground is not safeguarded for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre. The local papers have published a large number of letters from the public who seek to present the public consultation exercise as a referendum. This was never the intention. Public consultation exercises allow the decision makers to hear different opinions and to tests proposals robustly. How does one weigh the response of an elected body such as Devon County Council or Exmouth Town Council with the wider public; bearing in mind that although 58% of those who responded to the exercise from the Exmouth catchment area were against change this represents some 1,000 people out of the 45,000 population in the Exmouth catchment area. If one accepts that the Council's decision on the development of the Estuary side site should be determined as a product of totalling up the responses to the consultation exercise, then it follows from the view point of consistency that Imperial Recreation Ground should not be safeguarded for the EGVC. Although deeply regrettable, this could be argued is the corollary of the public consultation exercise.
- 3.7 It is open to members to continue to support the EGVC project and, as a matter of urgency, indicate a willingness to explore with the partners of the Interim Project Management Group an alternative location along the seafront. Members will recall that at the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2005 meeting of Executive Board the Council resolved that the area between the former outdoor pool site and the entrance to the Maer car park be identified as a development opportunity. A key output being sought by members from a redevelopment of this area included consideration of recreation/leisure opportunities. Members have also considered a development opportunity at Orcombe Point and, through the consultation exercise, others have suggested Foxholes car park area as a suitable site. Accordingly, it would be appropriate that active consideration be given to the potential for delivering the EGVC along the seafront area.
- 3.8 However, Members should be aware that the proposed site at Imperial Recreation Ground followed a feasibility study and is now the subject of a Living Landmarks Bid, therefore there is considerable risk that this decision could fundamentally weaken the bid that has been submitted and put at risk the funding commitment recently made by the SWRDA. Indeed, there must be a concern that the whole of the Jurassic Coast bid that has been made to the Living Landmarks Fund could be at risk because of this decision. Members were informed that progress on the application to Living Landmarks was in the full knowledge that a consultation exercise was underway and could produce the outcome that has materialised. The deadline for bids to Living Landmarks was such that a site had to be identified before the end of this consultation exercise.

## 4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The Estuaryside Site was identified as a possible site for a supermarket by the “Where is Exmouth Going Forum” in 1993. Since then it was considered an appropriate site by the Exmouth Joint Forum and incorporated into Local Plan Policy. In spite of little public reaction to the formal local plan process, public reaction to this property led consultation exercise has been both large and decisive. The public reject a supermarket on this site. The issue of a supermarket will continue to be a live subject, we are aware of the strong commercial interest from most of the national supermarkets for a presence in the town. The likelihood is that the supermarket operators will now independently test the planning system by making a planning application for a site they will identify. There is a risk that this will be for an out of town centre site.
- 4.2 The implications for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre are not clear. This project offers the opportunity for a real step change in the quality of facilities to offer visitors to the town. A “world class” facility is exactly what the town needs, Imperial Recreation Ground offered the opportunity to deliver such a facility close to public transport and with strong connections to the town centre – importantly it provided the opportunity to benefit from the attraction of the Estuary and increase the long term viability of such a centre. SWRDA has committed £7.1 million for Jurassic Coast initiatives of which a sizable amount will be closely linked with community regeneration schemes in Exmouth and Seaton, namely the two centres in East Devon, uncertainty about the site is not helpful to those seeking certainty on delivery. The SWRDA programme is a 5 year programme. The time table under the Living landmarks bid is much more demanding on the Council in its project management capacity. Assuming the bid is successful at stage One we will need to demonstrate tangible progress by 2007. There could be an expectation for an outline planning application to be made for the centre with all the supporting studies such an application would demand. It would be a major challenge to achieve such a time line with a new site on the sea front. It is important that the town understand this risk when assessing the response to the consultation exercise.

### **Legal Implications**

No legal issues which need addressing at this stage.

### **Financial Implications**

If there are any financial implications this will be reported orally at Committee.

### **Consultation on Reports to the Executive**

This report will be considered By Overview Committee prior to consideration by Executive Board.

### **Background Papers**

- Unlocking Exmouth: Part 2 The Way Forward, Report to Executive Board – 19 October 2005
- Proposals for the Regeneration of Exmouth including redevelopment of Estuary area of Exmouth for Retail Supermarket and Mixed Use Development, Executive Board 29<sup>th</sup> September 2005 plus
- Interim report: Responses to the Unlocking Exmouth proposals, Executive Board 6<sup>th</sup> April 2005.
- East Devon Local Plan 1995 – 2011 Revised deposit – September 2003.
- Exmouth Estuary Side, WS Atkins, EDDC, Report of Public Exhibition Summer 1996
- Exmouth Waterfront Study, Master Plan Report January 2000

- Exmouth Visitor Gateway Centre: Options Appraisal and Preliminary Feasibility Review; Locum Consulting, August 2005.
- SWRDA press release 31<sup>st</sup> January 2006, major financial offer for Jurassic Coast

Karime Hassan  
Corporate Director - Environment

Overview Committee/Executive Board