

Agenda Item

Executive Board

30 January 2008

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Establishment of Exmouth and Seaton Regeneration Programme Boards

Summary

The Council has firmly established the regeneration of Exmouth and Seaton as a key Council priority. Project working groups comprising officers of town, district and county councils have been meeting regularly to develop a programme. This work has been led by the Corporate Director – Environment at the District Council principally because the programme has been largely shaped by redevelopment considerations involving land in the ownership of the District Council. However, all three councils have been working in partnership, most recently in bringing forward the gateway visitor centres for Exmouth and Seaton; and it is now appropriate that we consider whether the time has come for a structured programme board be established to shape the regeneration programmes and to monitor progress in delivering and achieving the aims of the programme. Whilst land redevelopment will continue to be an important part of the programme, it is apparent that employment growth, community infrastructure, learning and skills, town centre management and environmental enhancement are fundamental elements of a regeneration programme that warrant a more structured approach to engaging key stakeholders in driving a programme of delivery. This report sets out proposals for establishing regeneration programme boards for Exmouth and Seaton with private and public sector membership.

Recommendation

1. **That subject to the consideration and endorsement by Devon County Council and Exmouth Town Council/Seaton Town Council, Regeneration Programme Boards be established for Exmouth and Seaton**
2. **That the Exmouth Joint Forum be abolished.**
3. **That the terms of reference set out in paragraph 2.2 be approved.**
4. **That the membership of the Boards set out in paragraph 3.1 be approved.**
5. **That the arrangements for the chairmanship of the Boards set out in paragraph 4.1 be approved.**
6. **That the Regeneration Programme Boards meet once a quarter.**

a) Reasons for Recommendation

Regeneration is a top council priority and there is a need to establish a regeneration programme and to monitor delivery of the programme.

b) Alternative Options

There is no formal requirement for a programme board and members may wish to carry on as per the current working arrangements. Members could consider more ambitious delivery vehicles such as a regeneration company; however these would normally have significant financial implications. The role of chairman is important to the success of programme boards; members may wish to consider whether the chairman should be retained for the full three year term to give continuity, and whether members consider appointing a chairman from outside the local authorities.

c) Risk Considerations

The Regeneration Boards are a way of managing risk, to reduce the risk of failure to deliver a regeneration programme.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The programme boards are a result of the priority that members have assigned to regeneration. The Council will need to support the working of the boards with officer support.

e) Date for Review of Decision

January 2011.

1.0 Main Report

- 1.1 The setting up of a Regeneration Programme Board for Exmouth and a Regeneration Programme Board for Seaton is in many respects a natural development of the partnership working that already takes place between the local authorities and regional bodies in this part of Devon.
- 1.2 The County, District and Town Councils have a track record of working together for environmental enhancements, transport improvements and a range of initiatives over the years. In Exmouth there has been a formal partnership in operation for a number of years known as the Exmouth Joint Forum. Recently, the Council has been working in partnership with the County Council and Town Council to bring forward the gateway visitor centres for Exmouth and Seaton, and has been supported in this work by SWRDA and community groups.
- 1.3 The Council's new corporate strategy has established a "Thriving economy" as a key priority for the Council and the regeneration of Exmouth and Seaton identified as top priorities. In recognition of this priority the Corporate Director – Environment has been given responsibility for property and economic development to support delivery of the Council's regeneration objectives.
- 1.4 The Council's regeneration programme, as currently constituted, focuses on redevelopment opportunities and the social/community infrastructure aspirations of the community. A lot of work has gone into bringing forward key sites and taking forward key projects, such as the gateway visitor centres. Officer regeneration project meetings take place on a fortnightly basis with attendance from county, district and town councils. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the scope of these meetings need to be broadened and a formal regeneration programme needs to be constituted with a governance structure put in place to drive the programme.
- 1.5 A regeneration programme should include issues such as learning and skills, employment, environmental enhancement, transport infrastructure, as well as land and planning considerations. These issues require a range of skills and responsibilities not currently captured by the informal working arrangements. The participation of the private sector is an important element of the success of regeneration programmes elsewhere in the country, Exmouth Joint Forum and informal officer working groups do not adequately address the participation of the private sector. Likewise there are important statutory bodies, such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, and the SWRDA that have important roles to play in shaping and/or delivering a regeneration programme.
- 1.6 The primary focus of the Board will be to drive the regeneration programme and to champion the regeneration agenda. To enable this role to be carried out effectively it is important that the private sector be engaged. The meetings will need to address matters that relate to land development and property considerations, some of these issues will be of a confidential nature. It would not be appropriate to have this debate in public and open to the press. Community engagement and public communication will continue to be delivered through the local authorities and local elected representatives. The officers and elected member representatives will be expected to report back to their respective organisations.

1.7 Often the problems and issues of coastal towns are not seen as serious as urban deprivation, and it would be fair to say that coastal towns are often over looked in national regeneration programmes. Recently both at a regional and national level there has developed an awareness that issues associated with coastal towns do demand attention, for example the Department of Culture Media and Sports has highlighted the particular issues facing coastal towns, and has recently introduced a £45 million funding programme. A regeneration programme board with private and public sector membership would provide a more effective vehicle to drive delivery and to address regional and national bodies for engagement. Importantly it should enable the development of a broader vision for the communities that go beyond spatial considerations.

2.0 **Vision**

2.1 To provide strategic leadership for the Exmouth/Seaton regeneration programme and to champion the regeneration agenda for Exmouth/Seaton

2.2 **Terms of Reference**

1. To provide a co-ordinating vehicle between the three local authorities and to provide an interface with the SWRDA, and other statutory bodies;
2. To establish a regeneration programme for Exmouth/Seaton
3. To monitor progress on achieving the delivery of the regeneration programme;
4. To provide strategic leadership for the regeneration programme;
3. Co-ordinating and overseeing major physical development projects;
4. Informing the work of East Devon's Local Development Documents
5. Co-ordinating the efforts of infrastructure providers;
6. Unlocking barriers to delivering the regeneration programme;
7. Co-ordinate procurement of specialist advice/services from the private sector;
8. Identifying opportunities associated with national and regional funding streams and the programmes of other agencies to bring in resources.

3.0 **Board Structure**

3.1 Membership of the Steering Board will be comprised as follows:

- EDDC 2 seats
- DCC 2 seats
- Town Council 2 seats
- SWRDA 1 seat
- Environment Agency 1 seat
- Natural England 1 seat
- Private Sector 3 seats

In Exmouth

- Principal of Community College 1 seat
- Exmouth Town Management Partnership Board 1 seat

Officers will attend to advise but not to vote

4.0 **Board Chairmanship**

4.1 The proposal is that the Regeneration Programme Boards should be set up for an initial duration of three years, i.e. 2008/09 to 2010/11 after which a formal review should be conducted to determine the appropriateness of the delivery vehicle and the effectiveness of the arrangements. The proposal is for the chairmanship to rotate annually between the local authorities as follows:

- East Devon District Council 2008/09
- Exmouth/Seaton Town Council 2009/10
- Devon County Council 2010/11

5.0 **Frequency of Meetings**

5.1 It is proposed that the Regeneration Programme Board meet once a quarter.

Legal Implications

No legal observations.

Financial Implications

The financial implications are in the form of officer time which is already included in the Council's budgets.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

None

Background Papers

None

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