

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of a Meeting of the Exmouth Joint Forum Held at Exmouth Town Hall on Monday, 18 September 2006

Present:

Councillors:

Miss J M Elson
Mrs P A Stott
B C J Hughes
Mrs B O Taylor
Mrs E E Wragg
W Heath
Mrs J Mitchell
B J Toye

East Devon District Council
East Devon District Council
Devon County Council
Devon County Council
Devon County Council
Exmouth Town Council
Exmouth Town Council
Exmouth Town Council

Officers:

Karime Hassan
Edward Chorlton

Sue Craythorne
Meg Booth
Alan Stone
John Wokersien
David Kerr

Corporate Director – Environment, EDDC
Deputy Chief Executive & Director of
Environment, Economy & Culture, DCC
Community Strategy Officer, DCC
Local Services Officer, DCC
Urban Designer, DCC
Clerk to Exmouth Town Council
Exmouth Town Manager

Apologies:

Cllr Mrs K J Bamsey
Cllr P A Diviani
Cllr T G Reeves
Emily Farrell

East Devon District Council
East Devon District Council
Exmouth Town Council
Community Regeneration Manger, SWRDA

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.30 am.

***1 Election of Chairman**

Councillor Mrs B O Taylor was elected as Chairman for the following year.

***2 Appointment of Vice Chairman**

Councillor Mrs P A Stott was appointed as Vice Chairman for the following year.

***3 Report of the last meeting**

The report of the previous meeting of the Exmouth Joint Forum held on 6 March 2006 was noted.

East Devon World Heritage Visitor Centres

Concern was expressed over the Seaton Gateway Visitor Centre 'going it alone'. The Corporate Director – Environment, EDDC, explained that these fears were unfounded. No decisions had yet been taken over any governance arrangements. The key issue was how the community ensured it delivered the ethos of the project and became a self-supporting business. He then outlined how organisations could operate under charitable trust status.

*3 **Report of the last meeting (cont'd)**

Sea Wall

On behalf of the town, Nick Harrison from DEFRA and Mike Baker, EDDC engineer were thanked for the great job they were doing with the sea wall works.

*4 **Introduction of the new Exmouth Town Manager**

David Kerr, new Town Manager for Exmouth was introduced and welcomed to his first meeting of the Exmouth Joint Forum. He stated that he was delighted to be Town Manager and had been made to feel very welcome in Exmouth.

5 **Progress report from the working group on the location of a supermarket in Exmouth**

Consideration was given to the notes of the working group held on 22 May 2006, circulated with the agenda. Officers and Councillors from the three councils had met to investigate options for a supermarket development in Exmouth. In particular the Forum wished to test the option of developing a supermarket on the Marine Way site between the Strand and the sports centre, along with an investigation of other options for a supermarket in Exmouth. The workshop reviewed and considered the original objections to the estuary side supermarket proposal, explored ideas and aspirations for traffic management solutions, reviewed the objectives of a supermarket development and determined outcomes to be reported to the Forum.

Exmouth supermarket highway options

Following the workshop three highway options plans had been produced and circulated for discussion at the meeting by the Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Environment, Economy & Culture of Devon County Council. These were not proposals, but outlined possible highway options and members were asked to consider whether they felt that any were unacceptable.

Option 1 was a new link road from Marine Way to The Royal Avenue through the bus station site. Option 1A would have access to the Strand/Parade from a junction adjacent to the rail station and Option 1B would have access to the Strand/Parade from Imperial Road. Both of these options would involve traffic being brought alongside the Estuary.

Option 1A featured a traffic signal control at the junction adjacent to the rail station, with signaled pedestrian crossings included in the junction control for access to the rail station and a pedestrian link to New Street. This would mean that pedestrians would not have to cross any roads between the Strand and the site, therefore linking the two. Also the inclusion of signal control at the rail station bend should negate the effect of a lower 20mph design speed. However, pedestrian access to the rail station would be governed by signal timings for the junction.

Option 1B featured a puffin crossing at Marine Way adjacent to the rail station with a pedestrian link to New Street. There would also be a zebra or puffin crossing at Imperial Road. The advantages of this option were access to the rail station by a dedicated puffin crossing and larger site provision. The disadvantages were that pedestrians would need to cross Imperial Road to access the site from the Strand, the vehicle route between the Strand and Marine Way would be indirect and would increase the use of Exeter Road, and the rail station bend did not have the protection of a signal junction.

Progress report from the working group on the location of a supermarket in Exmouth (cont'd)

Option 2 was for the retention of the existing road layout with the removal of the Imperial Road roundabout junction. This option featured traffic signal control of the Marine Way/Imperial Road junction incorporating a pedestrian phase. There would be a puffin crossing on Marine Way adjacent to the rail station with a pedestrian link to New Street. As this option retained the existing road pattern, disruption to existing businesses would be reduced and traffic would not be passing directly adjacent to the Estuary. However, access to the site would involve crossing a major road, thus physically detaching the site from the town centre. Variations on option 2 included a raised table junction without formal control for vehicles or pedestrians, or reducing the width of Imperial Road by three metres between the Marine Way new junction and the existing zebra crossing.

During the subsequent discussion concern was expressed over traffic running alongside the Estuary although it was noted that some traffic already travelled along The Royal Avenue in order to access the car park and rail station. Various issues were raised such as land ownership, congregations of people in certain areas at different times of the day and night, restricting the size of the supermarket site, the need for a transport modal interchange and to make bus and rail connections available, parking adjacent to a supermarket, and the use of pedestrian bridges and their associated problems. It was noted that the current bus station was actually used as a bus storage depot as opposed to operating as a transport interchange. Members felt that the area at the end of The Royal Avenue currently used for coach and lorry parking was a waste of valuable space and alternative use options could be explored.

Different members of the Forum appeared to favour different options and it was agreed that it was important to keep options open to allow negotiations with developers. The overall opinion of the Forum was that it was not against any of the three options, but that options 1A and 1B were preferred to Option 2. On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked the highways officers for doing such an excellent job in producing and presenting the possibilities.

Priority objectives for a supermarket development

The priority objectives identified by the workshop for a supermarket development were (in no particular order):

- Quality design, taking into account the environmental sensitivity of the site.
- Scheme must encourage linked trips
- Regeneration of the town centre (the supermarket development must compliment the town centre)
- A new library
- Store size must be enough to get maximum community benefit and maximum commercial potential (the right balance)
- A new and larger sports centre, providing opportunities for integration of many sports and physical activities
- Pedestrians are the priority (with good links to the town)
- Building design must be 'green'
- Relocate bus/lorry park
- Developer must sell the scheme to the public

It was noted that the Councils would receive full market value for their land, which would be exchanged for the benefit of the community. It was vital to look at the larger vision and think big. It was also noted that the population of Exmouth increased substantially during the summer months. There were many options and the developers would need to negotiate. It would take time to ensure all the benefits of any development.

5 **Progress report from the working group on the location of a supermarket in Exmouth (cont'd)**

The Forum agreed to endorse the priorities listed above and wished to take these forward. The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Environment, Economy & Culture, DCC was thanked for his work.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted, with a preference for highways options 1A and 1B, but not ruling out option 2, and that the priority objectives be endorsed;

RECOMMENDED: that the above be accepted as the basis upon which further negotiations with potential developers could be pursued.

*6 **Devon County Council Local Services items**

A verbal report was given by Devon County Council's Local Services Officer who gave an update on the progress made so far this year. Work on the footways between Foxholes car park and Orcombe Point would begin in October 2006 with the same materials used as had been over the past three years. In order to ease some of the boy racer problems the footway would be widened to narrow the carriageway and there would also be some build outs to minimise the amount of straight, wide parts of road. This would be done especially on the north side, as well as raising the kerbs on that side of the road to give a more defined footway area. It was noted that the Queen's Road junction by Foxholes café was deliberately being left out of the improvements due to proposals for a new lifeboat station.

Once the sea wall works were complete improvements would begin on the Mamhead View to Clock Tower footways. Work had also taken place on Imperial Road. A request was made for the seafront to be pedestrianised in order to make it as user friendly as possible and members discussed various ideas and options.

Work was progressing on the design of the Exmouth to Lympstone section of the National Cycle Network and it was hoped some of the physical works would commence at the end of the year.

There was a small amount of design work to do on the town centre to seafront pedestrian link and the Local Services Officer hoped to bring some plans to the next meeting of the Forum.

Members thanked the Local Services team for their work on the footpaths and welcomed its continuation.

Concern was expressed over the problems regarding the route between Exmouth and Exeter and members questioned the long term plan for improvements along the A376. This road was becoming more and more congested and it was reported that at times it could take an hour and a half to get to the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital from Exmouth. Stagecoach had also reduced its number 58 bus service and changed the timetable. Part of the regeneration of Exmouth would require the improvement of the A376 and encouraged use of the railway. The Local Services Officer reported that DCC would be looking at public transport improvement via pedestrian access to, and the location of, bus stops. It was important to know where people were coming from to use the bus stops and to have these in accessible locations.

*6 **Devon County Council Local Services items (cont'd)**

With requests for pedestrianisation of the Strand, seafront and works to the Parade, the Local Services Officer requested a way forward for Exmouth from the Forum. It was suggested that another workshop be held in spring 2007 to discuss how and where there could be pedestrianisation in Exmouth. The format for this workshop would be considered at the next meeting of the Forum.

*7 **Future meetings**

Members reviewed the dates and times of future meetings of the Forum. It was agreed that future meetings would be held at 2pm on Mondays. The next meeting would be held at 2pm on Monday, 15 January 2007.