



Exmouth Town Council –Newsletter

Newsletter 1

January 2009

Exmouth Regeneration Set Back

How quickly things can change. The confidence in the Private Sector to deliver in all areas of society has taken a blow over the last few months. The ravages within the banking sector are having serious effects which are all too clear in our own town with businesses closing and even our own Exmouth Journal Office being closed as a cost cutting measure. It is the speed of change which has taken our breath away leaving the whole country if not the whole developed world winded and perplexed. The Exmouth Regeneration proposals based upon development of the bus station site and sports centre site with a new sports centre, library and visitor centre are the latest casualty. Falling land and property values have taken the value out of the proposals which were being assembled to the extent that the scheme cannot be delivered without a big injection of cash from Asda. They are not prepared to pay for this shortfall and neither can the Local Authorities, so it is back to the drawing board. It is important for Exmouth to remain optimistic and buoyant and to continue to look forward and embrace the opportunities which will emerge now that Asda's option as preferred developer will lapse. Whatever these opportunities may be, the question of regenerating the economy to ensure that Exmouth can prosper and provide as much employment as possible for those who live here is uppermost in the minds of Councillors.

The question of quality of development will remain high in everyone's minds as a new course is charted for the current poorly used prime land in Exmouth around the bus depot site.

A great deal of work has now been carried out within the Local Authorities, the community and local groups and this has moved thinking on. It has enabled us all to work through the difficult challenges of the site which will help to inform the way forward to find the solution best fitted for Exmouth.

Exmouth Visitor Centre

This scheme has also been dealt some uncomfortable blows in recent times. First South West Regional Development Agency has withdrawn the funding it had promised towards the scheme,

some £1.5m, having to face tough financial choices with its budget slashed. Now the opportunities for a centre linked with the supermarket and library seem unlikely to proceed. The Visitor Centre Board will be looking at the implications for this shortly in terms of back up locations for the Centre, and other funding opportunities to replace those which have been lost. The challenge has always been a difficult one and is now harder than ever. The determination remains to keep this project alive at all levels and there is acceptance from so many quarters that this is a great scheme worth fighting for.

CCTV Exmouth – A Report from the Control Centre

Whilst most people are tucked up and warm at home at night, spare a thought for the volunteers from the Open Door Centre helping to make Exmouth a safer place, and for the CCTV volunteers who keep a watchful eye on the town to help prevent trouble before it starts.

A marked difference of activity in the town has been noticed by the CCTV operators who work late into the night keeping a safety eye on the town. The months leading up to Christmas and the New Year saw quite a few weekends which were markedly quieter than usual. The obvious conclusion to draw is that the closure of The University of Plymouth Rolle Campus has had a marked difference on the amount of people in town at night.

Christmas and New Year were busy as always with a few arrests being made but on the whole activity in the town was good natured. On Christmas Eve there were a few too many Father Christmases and on New Year's Eve there were the usual upsets - Batman having a row with Robin and Grumpy having an argument with Snow White – the usual for Exmouth when so many turn out to celebrate and a special and unique celebration.

The Open Door Centre continues to provide volunteers who are there to take care of those who are in distress for one reason or another, leaving the Police to deal with genuine cases of crime and disorder. The CCTV operators keep an eye on the volunteers to make sure they come to no harm and if problems arise for them, police can soon be dispatched to their aid.

Bridget Harris the CCTV controller says 'that all too often young females are seen walking alone and advice from the police is that it is safer to stay with friends and to keep in the main areas where there are cameras present to avoid being put at risk'. The town is not usually a dangerous place to be at night but sensible precautions need to be observed to keep out of harms way.

Local Development Framework

The Town Council has responded to the Issues Report on the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is the suite of documents which will eventually replace the East Devon Local Plan. It will be important to outline where future planning permissions will be permitted for different uses within East Devon. The response from the Town Council includes the following comments:-

- Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy Generation – Whilst it is easy to tick 'Yes' to say that specific areas or locations should be identified there are many questions such as who pays? Issues around legislation and what is required from developers arise in terms of legal requirements relating to eco building and how this is paid for. Should developers pay? With future owners receiving the pay back from more efficient dwellings or should public subsidy be provided? There is a Central Government responsibility here that

cannot just be off loaded onto Local Authorities without financial consequences being thought through.

- Strategic Direction and Scale of Growth – The mistakes of the past in allowing residential expansion without the provision of social and economic infrastructure should not be repeated;
- It is difficult for the Town Council to suggest a number of affordable houses needed in the future but the Housing Needs Register can indicate the current demand for affordable housing. Exmouth should not continue to be the place where the District’s housing targets are met and this needs to be more widely dispersed encouraging people to be able to live near to where they work and help reduce the decline in rural communities;
- Modest levels of employment development are required in Exmouth and likely to rely on small scale Greenfield development;
- A northerly expansion to Exmouth on land north of Dinan Way between Marley Road and Hulham Road in the vicinity of Goodmore’s Farm would be supported.

Public Toilets – Concern about the seasonal closing of the public toilets at Queen’s Drive at the Eastern end of the sea front will be pursued further with East Devon District Council. There is concern that this is putting people in distress on occasions - however financial constraints continue to put pressure on these services which Local Authorities provide at their discretion.

Town Plan Working Party – A working party continues to meet with a view to starting a community planning process for the town. This should build on much good work carried out in the town over many years but with a view of bringing this all together as an official plan which can inform Principal Authorities of the community wishes for Exmouth into the future.

Exmouth Journal Office – Closure – A letter has been sent to the Managing Director of Archant to express regret at the closure of the Journal Offices in Exeter Road. This is considered by the Council to be a detrimental step and marks the loss of another service to the town to join the likes of the loss of the Job Centre and Magistrates’ Courts at a time when the town is struggling with shop closures due to the economic downturn.

For more information – contact the Town Clerk on 01395 276167, visit the Town Hall, contact your Local Councillor or visit www.exmouth.gov.uk

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