

Exmouth Town Council

Looking to the Future

Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life for Exmouth residents, the experience of visitors and build on the characteristics which make Exmouth special.

Slogan

Exmouth Naturally

Aims

- To provide credible responses to planning applications which will be respected by the community and principal authorities and to seek to influence land use within Exmouth - page 3.
- To be active in Town Management, improving the retail heart and the wider economy of the town and to encourage the diversification of the Town's economic base and pursue all lines of enquiry and action necessary to make Exmouth more self-sufficient. - page 4.
- To encourage any action to promote the natural environment as a resource to be protected for future generations - page 6.
- To encourage the improvement and protection of the built heritage of Exmouth – page 7.
- To seek to take on those functions from the principal authorities where these would be better managed at a local level providing these can be appropriately funded - page 8.
- To ensure that Exmouth Town Council is recognised for its proactive and modern leadership, representation and renewal of Exmouth and is respected in the area for its achievements - page 10.
- To facilitate opportunities for improving public transport options serving Exmouth – page 11.
- To engage fully and play a leading role in Community Safety Partnerships - page 12.

Key Areas

- Town Management

- Employment
- Provision of community facilities
- Wider Community involvement
- Community Safety
- Transport
- Gaining extra resources using the precept to obtain leverage.

Achievements

See annual report.

Aims Objectives and Measures

Planning

Aim

To provide credible responses to planning applications which will be respected by the community and principal authorities and to seek to influence land use within Exmouth.

Description

The role of the Council as a consultee on planning applications is an important one for the town and the people, particularly those who are directly affected. The Council needs to be consistent in its responses and to be clear about what it considers to be the most important issues affecting the town.

The Issues report dated December 1999 of East Devon District Council enabled the Council to respond by identifying how it would wish the town to develop.

Objectives

- To respond to all consultations on Exmouth Planning Applications within 21 days.
- To provide a response to each application based on Material Planning considerations.
- Planning Committee ward members to endeavour to visit all application sites in their wards prior to each planning committee.
- To provide an information point for the public to view planning applications.

Measures

- Number of applications considered per year.
- Number of applications considered within 21 days.
- Number of decisions where EDDC decisions do not coincide with Exmouth Town Council response to be measured as a running total.

2008 statistics

2008 planning applications including amended plans	– 580
Replied beyond the 21 day limit	- 80
Number of EDDC decisions did not coincide with ETC response	- 90

Town Management and Economy

Aim

To be active in town management with a view to improving the retail heart of the town and the wider economy of the town and to encourage the diversification of the Town's Economic base and pursue all lines of enquiry and action necessary to make Exmouth more self-sufficient.

Description

The Town Manager will be responsible for developing a Business Plan for the town and an annual action plan with a road map identifying progress against the business plan. This annual action plan will contain specific targets and objectives.

The headings identified for the business plan are:-

1. Improve the built environment (see also page 7)
2. Engender a sense of pride in all users of the town
3. Extend the range of shops and broaden the retail mix
4. Develop a dynamic atmosphere where things happen
5. Improve access for all
6. Increase footfall
7. Provide marketing for the Town as a whole
8. Improve the visitor experience
9. Provide a standard of customer care throughout the town
10. Improve public safety and reduce the fear of crime
11. Build a stronger culture of partnership and enterprise throughout the public, private and voluntary sectors.
12. Will be active in seeking external funding from medium and large businesses and other sources as appropriate.
13. To encourage the provision of apprenticeships for young people through links with trade, commerce, Devon County Council the Learning Skills Council and any other relevant bodies.

The Town Council aims to strongly influence the Exmouth Joint Forum in bringing about structural change to improve the town through pedestrian priority, development, use of surplus land such as the former swimming pool site, seafront improvements and derelict sites.

The Town Council should seek to identify areas of land which can be used for economic development and to promote their designation and use. Consideration needs to be given to the type of economy which is needed to support Exmouth. It needs to be recognised that many people will seek employment outside of the town. This leads to less opportunities locally, less purchases made within the town during the day, greater pollution created by more journeys of a greater distance to the work place. The Town Council should seek well recognised retail outlets while keeping the balance for 'small' town traders.

Many employers in town provide part time and jobs of a low pay nature. There need to be more full time opportunities including those for young people who do not qualify for university places. Opportunities for young people need to be available to live and work

in Exmouth and to help sustain a balanced population and to allow those who do not wish to migrate to stay in their home town. Potential industry and commerce could include Entertainment, Information and Communications technology. There is currently a lack of both modern small industrial units and modern office accommodation in the town.

The Town Council will seek to influence improvements to community safety through the Exmouth Action Group a sub group of East Devon Community Safety Group. The Town Council will seek to improve integration and improvement of public transport services through Exmouth Public Transport Group.

A separate plan on Town Management will be developed under the leadership of the Town Manager.

Objectives:-

- Use of the Exeter University Study to inform forward planning.
- Continuation of information gathering using methods identified through the Exeter University Study.
- Provision for more industry and commerce to diversify the economy.
- Promotion of town regeneration initiatives.
- Applications for grants to support regeneration to be sought wherever possible.
- Public funds from Town, District and County Council to be used to gain leverage for private investment.
- With the above initiatives, private investment to be actively sought through agents and public advertisement.
- Review impact of car parking charging and how it affects the town centre and the behaviour of visitors and residents.
- Encourage provision of affordable housing particularly for younger families.
- Develop support of twinning links national and international to help access opportunities for which outside funding may be available eg, professional exchanges.
- Seek provision of Dinan Way Link.

Measures

- Annual turnover of a 'basket' of local retailers;
- Annual tourist bed nights;
- Number of new businesses in town annual;
- Number of businesses closing down or leaving annual;
- Potential for larger businesses to trade in or near the town.

Natural Environment

Aim

To encourage any action to promote the natural environment as a resource to be protected for future generations.

Description

Exmouth is located at the mouth of the River Exe and benefits from a sea front protected from the main effects of the sea by an offshore sand bar starting at Dawlish Warren. The strong currents provide a beach which is scoured by clean sea water mixed to some extent with fresh water from the river.

The Town is designated as the 'Western Gateway Town' to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site to the east of Orcombe Rocks. The town benefits from having the only sandy beach in the East Devon District. It also has a variety of natural habitats including sand dunes and The Maer. The River Exe Estuary contains large areas of sand banks and mud and silt which are rich feeding grounds for flocks of over wintering ducks, geese and waders in the winter. Whilst the area is well known to ornithologists there is more that can be done to encourage visitors and provide more visitors to the town in the Winter period. The Exmouth nature reserve now has a warden employed by East Devon District Council and has much potential. High up on the list of priorities must be the protection of this area for the benefit of wildlife and future generations setting a balance between wildlife/country and the future growth of the town.

Objectives:-

- Seek continually to improve the visitor experience of the Waterfront areas.
- Continue to seek improved water quality.
- Pursue the achievement of blue flag status for the beach.
- Improve overall management of the beach.
- Improve the signage on the beach.
- Review the use of the special areas of the beach such as the sand dunes and the Maer.
- Seek to include the natural assets of Exmouth in promotional material.
- Become fully involved with organisations with an interest in the environment whether voluntary such as the RSPB, local authority or private.
- To defend the natural assets of the area against unsuitable development.
- To develop an information centre for the World Heritage Site and Exe Estuary.

Measures

- Annual bird numbers on Exe Estuary – Avocet, Brent Goose, Wigeon, Lapwing and Curlew.
- Numbers of Avocet Cruises on the river annually.

Built Environment

Aim

To encourage the improvement and protection of the built heritage of Exmouth.

Description

Exmouth has a particular character and which has developed around the former docks and the tourist industry. It has some fine buildings on the seafront and the Beacon is notable for its style and history. The exceptional long beach and seaside nature of the town give it an uncluttered feel which is enhanced by fine gardens and landscaped areas.

The Town Council recognises that there is a need to renew some areas and to provide a renaissance of the town which makes the best use of existing buildings whilst bringing in modern and cohesive design and style to meet the expectations of people living in the 21st century.

Objectives:-

- Seek to improve the town centre environment.
- Seek to encourage sympathetic improvements of the waterfront area.
- Seek better arrangements for traffic management in the town and improved highways signing.
- Support the interpretation and explanation of the history of the town and its buildings.
- Support the lively artistic interpretation of the town by local art groups.
- Promote the protection of important buildings and structures where the historic and architectural case is sufficiently strong to justify this.
- Encourage systematic maintenance, decoration and repair of the built environment to high standards.
- Seek to balance highway signing between what is necessary and what is damaging to the street scene.

Measures

- Number of guided heritage walks per annum.
- Proportion of new highway signing per annum.

Local Functions

Aim

To seek to take on those functions from the principal authorities where these would be better managed at local level providing these can be appropriately funded.

Description

Exmouth Town Council is still very new in the terms of the life of Local Authorities. Very few functions were passed to Exmouth Town Council leaving it with little direct control over any functions.

The expectations of the public are that the Exmouth Town Council is responsible for more than it actually is. With current staffing and accommodation available it would be unrealistic to expect a rapid expansion of the role of the Council. However with a planned approach it would make sense for the Council to take on and manage some functions itself. Examples could be as follows:-

- Management of Elizabeth Hall – (transfer of ownership).
- Management of Community wardens (former dog wardens).
- Management of supplementary litter collection arrangements. (Street Scene now providing much better overall service)
- Management of some grounds maintenance/weed control functions (now work with lengthsman).
- Some grounds maintenance responsibilities (play parks ownership and management).
- Management of some parks.
- Management of clocks, war memorials and notice boards.
- Management of Town Hall.
- Direct power of decision on minor planning applications.

With the award of Quality Status and the adoption of the Quality Status Charter, the Council is in a good position to demonstrate its competence to manage further functions. The investigation of Investors in People as another possible award which will help the Council to be more strategic and systematic in its operation may be worth considering.

It may be possible for locally related resources to be locally managed and in some cases owned. With some transfer of income and partnership arrangements why duplicate on resources?

Functions recently taken on by the Council include:-

- Town Hall Management – Some functions.
- Town Hall Reception – Information point.
- Planning application deposit point.
- Performance Stage Bookings.
- Town maintenance functions.

Objectives:-

- Develop the list of functions which this council would wish to manage locally.

- Instigate negotiations with principal authorities.
- Look at further possibilities for partnership arrangements, agency arrangements, direct management arrangements.
- Seek appropriate funding/charging arrangements to pay for the running of functions.
- Identify areas such as Elizabeth Hall, toilets and car parking as areas better managed locally.

Measures

- Number of functions taken on by the Council in the year.

Leadership

Aim

To ensure that Exmouth Town Council is recognised for its proactive and modern leadership, representation and renewal of Exmouth and is respected in the area for its achievements.

The Town Council is able to make a big impact in the town particularly through the role of Mayor. Many visits are made to local organisations throughout the Mayoralty year which provide a service and support to organisations and provide dignity to their efforts and achievements. The Town is also able to make representations on issues such as potential closure of sub-post offices and magistrates courts and to defend local services. It provides focus for improvements to the town and can identify issues which can easily be lost from view in the larger authorities and organisations.

The Town Council is in a position to promote the town and to raise its profile within the district, county and region. It can also ensure that at national, European and international level the town is heard. The local newspapers provide a useful platform for the Town Council's activities but there is a need to spread the word wider than the immediate locality.

Objectives:-

- To promote the town more effectively by raising the town's profile in publications, press, and online.
- To bring together other council's and organisations to improve services in the town such as public transport, highways, landscape, facilities for the arts, leisure, sport and environment.
- To promote an evolving annual arts festival;
- To seek inclusion of all within Exmouth whether young, old, disabled or from different ethnic backgrounds.
- To be fully involved in issues relating to law and order and reduction of the fear of crime.
- To actively involve young people in civic government & engagement with young people.
- To celebrate achievement by individuals and organisations in the town.
- Seek involvement of young people at some Council meetings.

Measures

- List of achievements in the year described in Annual Report.

Public Transport

Aim

To facilitate opportunities for improving Public Transport options serving Exmouth.

Description

Exmouth is relatively well served with bus, train and taxi services. Recent designation of the Avocet Line has helped with improving the status and usage of the line, one of the busiest branch lines in the South West.

Such locally led initiatives are important for encouraging public transport use as a sustainable alternative to the car.

Objectives

- Continue to support initiatives to improve the Avocet Line service.
- Work in partnership with Stagecoach to improve bus services.
- Seek to connect with the X53 Jurassic Coast bus service.
- Seek to encourage use of bus, rail, taxi and bicycle and improve linkages between each.
- Support introduction of Shopmobility.
- Support pedestrian priority and better pedestrian routes throughout the town.
- To provide cheaper parking for outer town parking and possibly have a minimal cost transport for bringing people into town.

Measures

- Bus passenger numbers annual.
- Rail passenger numbers annual.
- Estimated car usage from parking meters.

Community Safety

Aim

To engage fully in and play a leading role in community safety partnerships.

Description

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Town Council has a statutory duty to be involved in Community Safety and Crime Prevention. This is carried out through active membership of Exmouth Action Group which has the following specifically targeted objectives.

Objectives

- To assist and support the police in reducing disorder in Town area and reducing the number of underage drinking incidents.
- Deal with inappropriate driver/rider behaviour particularly the Exmouth seafront area.
- Provide Youth facilities for the town.
- Improve CCTV systems.
- Resolve litter and dog fouling problems within Exmouth Sector.
- To deal with inappropriate parking outside of school premises.
- Reduce graffiti and fly posting in Exmouth Sector.
- Consider where appropriate Acceptable Behaviour Contracts in respect of persons in order to reduce their anti-social behaviour.
- To organise ward community groups so that they can react better with the Town Council.

Measures

Through local crime statistics provided by the police.