

# EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

## Town Premises Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 10.00am on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in the Exmouth Town Council Meeting Room, Town Hall, First Floor, St Andrews Road, Exmouth, EX8 1AW

### Present

|                            |    |                      |
|----------------------------|----|----------------------|
| Councillor Cherry Nicholas | CN | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Steve Gazzard   | SG | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Maddie Chapman  | MC | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Brian Toye      | BT | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Tim Dumper      | TD | Exmouth Town Council |
| Lisa Bowman                | LB | Town Clerk/Officer   |
| Mollie Carey               | MC | Admin/note taker     |

### Apologies

|                              |     |                      |
|------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| Councillor Bruce De Saram    | BDS | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Angela Boatwright | AB  | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Brian Bailey      | BB  | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Frank Cullis      | FC  | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Pauline Stott     | PS  | Exmouth Town Council |

#### 1. Welcome and apologies

SG welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

#### 2. To discuss the draft Heads of Terms from East Devon District Council and agree the next steps.

SG asked LB to provide an update on the draft Heads of Terms which had been provided by EDDC's Senior Estates Surveyor. LB had circulated these to Members prior to the meeting.

LB reminded Members that the existing lease actually expired on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023; however, there is no threat of eviction whilst the new lease is being negotiated.

Members noted the following concerns with the Heads of Terms:

- there has been a significant (30%) increase in the proposed rental - especially given that our demised space on the ground floor was not refurbished to the same standard as the rest of the building
- the building has not been open or accessible to the public for long periods of time during the five years we have been in occupancy and there is no commitment in the Heads of Terms that the Town Hall will remain open to the public for a minimum term per week. Members would like provision in the for the town hall to be accessible to the public via the front door for set times during the week, with a manned reception.
- in respect of the lease start date and the interim rent due, Members have queried if we will be charged at the existing rate until such times as the lease is signed?

Members sought clarification on a recent suggestion from EDDC that the Town Council might like to move back downstairs. LB pointed out that this would incur extra costs for the Town Council as the IT network would need to be re-configured and that EDDC enquiries would then fall on the Town Council to deal with.

LB suggested that the Town Council should proceed with lease negotiations based on the existing footprint. It was also noted that the draft Heads of Terms have a flexible break lease clause factored in which allows the Town Council to give six month's notice to terminate the lease, without the usual minimum occupancy period.

TD proposed, MC seconded and it was agreed by all that LB should be given delegated authority to negotiate the Heads of Terms for the Town Council.

**ACTION: LB to negotiate with EDDC on the draft heads of terms following members comments.**

***The meeting adjourned to conduct a site visit to a commercial property for sale in the Town: St John Ambulance, Bastin Hall, Elm Grove, Exmouth with offers in excess of £350,000 being invited.***

After the visit, Members reconvened and discussed the potential premises but all were very much in agreement that the property was not fit for purpose as accommodation for the Town Council. However, Members were still committed to freehold premises for the Town Council and agreed that the search should continue.

### **3. To agree the date of the next meeting**

LB to agree the date of next meeting subject to need.

The meeting finished at 11.50 am.