EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Community Organisation Liaison Panel (COLP)

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on 27th January 2025 in the Town Hall Chamber

Present

Councillor Pauline Stott	PS	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Mark Williamson	MW	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Louise Venables	LV	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Brian Bailey	BB	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Graham Deasy	GD	Exmouth Town Council
Dave Radford	DR	Exmouth Civic Society
Bruce de Saram	BdS	Exmouth Community Association
Geoff Skinner	GS	Exmouth Community Association
Adrian Toole	AT	Transition Exmouth
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council (Officer)
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council (Notetaker)

Apologies

Councillor David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Aurora Bailey	AB	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Andrew Woodward	AW	Exmouth Town Council
Ian Cann	IC	Exmouth Civic Society
Rev Simon Atkinson	SA	Churches Together
Tony Siddall	TS	Churches Together
Keith Bungay	KB	Exmouth Community Association
Simon Kennedy	SK	East Devon District Council (StreetScene)
Peter Crofts	PC	East Devon District Council (StreetScene)
Andrew Gordon-Raby	AGR	East Devon District Council (StreetScene)

1. Welcome and Apologies

PS welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. To agree the notes of the previous meeting held on the 25th of November 2024

All members agreed that the notes were a true record of the meeting on the 25th of November 2024.

3. Matters arising from the previous meeting.

The Jingle and Mingle Community Showcase that took place on the 18th of December went well, with 40-42 organisations taking part. Unfortunately, public footfall was low with many people expecting a Christmas market. The concept was good with lots of networking amongst groups although next year a change of venue and timing is being considered.

4. Exmouth Town Council budget and precept

ETC have issued a press release with the TC budget correlated to a council tax figure for a band D property. LB explained to members how budget and precept is calculated which

entailed going through a rigorous budget setting process looking at expenditure for the coming year which was difficult as there are unknowns in terms of Unitary, such as public toilets.

The council tax base has gone up partly due to new housing being added to the council tax register and second homeowners paying a premium from the 1st of April 2025 which is equivalent to double the amount (2 properties). This artificially inflates the base and if second homes are removed the following year the council tax base will go down which will cause issues.

ETC debated a fair precept and settled on £934,434, the proposed budget therefore equates to a 3% increase for a band D homeowner in Exmouth from £66.05 to £68.05 per annum, a £2 increase on last year. ETC has one of the lowest precepts amongst the major towns in East Devon.

LB urged members to look at the press release which explains the increase in more detail, including the funding of a new road sweeping machine to help with the gully clearing and weed ripping that DCC are no longer able to support.

Members discussed the unfairness that when EDDC issue council tax bills they show the respective percentage increase against the town and parish councils' component, but do not do this for any other precepting authorities. BdS stated that he supports the increase but thinks the council tax bill should be edited to remove the percentage calculation as this could be misleading. LB agreed but commented that when this was requested previously, EDDC had responded that it was unable to edit the billing data to remove the percentage received by town and parish councils.

AT was under the impression that the climate budget had been reduced however, LB explained that this was not the case. Only a fraction of the 50K climate budget has been spent in the current year so it was not justifiable to budget the same amount in the upcoming year. The underspend is still available for climate related expenditure so in theory the same amount is available to spend in the upcoming year.

The Climate Officer has a Climate Action Plan which is not capital heavy but more focussed on community engagement. Also, the climate budget does not include the actual salary of the Climate Officer which is covered under the salary budget for the Council.

LB reminded members that climate change is embedded into the terms of reference for every committee and working party and is supported by all staff members so the Council's commitment to climate change needed to be considered in that context, not just in terms of the revenue budget allocated to project work.

LV reiterated that the council has broader priorities that it must fulfil, and that capacity is the main issue for the Climate Officer, LB agreed and pointed out that the Climate Officer struggles to get councillors and volunteers for community engagement.

5. **Exmouth Beach Management Plan: to note the Town Council's response to the ongoing consultation and to note that EDDC will be holding another Exmouth**

Beach Management Plan update drop-in event at Ocean on the 30th of January 2025 between 2pm and 6pm

ETC has responded to the consultation that the preferred option was for the groynes which will cost 20 million at today's price, they are the most expensive option. GD explained that one of the reasons why the groyne option was chosen was because it would contain the sand and protect the beach amenity.

PS explained all 3 options being consulted on and urged members to join the drop in event at Ocean on the 30th of January.

LB confirmed that with an adopted Beach Management Plan there is better chance of accessing funding sources.

6. **To note that EDDC is consulting on proposals relating to overnight parking of motorhomes and campervans in EDDC carparks. The consultation close on the 13th of February 2025 at 5pm**

A link to the consultation was shared with the agenda.

It was confirmed that ETC set up a Campervan TAFF six years ago to look at problems relating to the campervans and motorhomes overnight parking on the highway which at the time was unlimited.

As a result of complaints by residents and anti-social behaviour, the TAFF sought to bring the District and County Councils together to look at the issue. DCC subsequently prohibited overnight sleeping on the highway and EDDC introduced some restricted overnight sleeping in the Maer Road, Echelon and Imperial Rec carparks on a 3 year trial basis although later the Imperial Rec was removed from the trial due to displacement issues.

After the trial period, the Campervan TAFF reviewed the overnight parking in Maer Road and Echelon carpark and agreed that it could be adopted provided that EDDC dealt with concerns over enforcement and grey waste facilities. A recommendation to increase the parking fee slightly to pay for a wastewater disposal point and additional enforcement went to EDDC Cabinet but was not adopted due to complaints by residents.

EDDC hope that through the consultation they will get a broader picture of what people want although there is still quite a lot of pressure from members of the public who would prefer a total ban of overnight parking. A complete ban could lead to displacement issues in residential areas such as The Avenues so a workable compromise is needed.

PS commented that Foxholes carpark could provide a better overnight campervan/motorhome parking location due to the existing toilet facilities. LB explained that Foxholes was considered but during a site visit the carpark was deemed not suitable for campervan access. It was also noted that the toilet refurbishment in Foxholes carpark is partially funded from a specific Central Government grant scheme to provide a changing room toilet and is not aimed at providing enhanced facilities for campervans and motorhomes..

7. To note that EDDC is consulting on a draft housing strategy

A link to the consultation was shared with the agenda.

PS commented that she found the strategy very interesting, detailing that Exmouth has 2900 second homes and that council housing is in dire need with 6000 people on the waiting list. BdS thought the proposals were positive but wonders how it will be monitored.

EDDC have a statutory obligation to publish an annual report which reports on how many different categories of houses and employment land has been delivered, the report is available on their website, LB will circulate the link.

ETC has a dedicated Housing Needs Assessment for Exmouth, so it will be looking to work with EDDC to deliver the right houses for Exmouth. Concerns were raised over the sale of EDDC owned land which could be used for council houses and the need to prioritise social housing. GD commented that viability of affordable housing provision is being reviewed nationally under proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. To note DCC and EDDC's initial response to the English Devolution White Paper published on the 16th of December 2025

A link to the White Paper was shared with the agenda.

LB reported that DCC debated its response to the White Paper at its Full Council meeting and agreed that they would ask for the county council elections in May to be postponed and for DCC to be part of the priority program that would see a Unitary Council in place by 2027. EDDC is not in agreement.

There were some suggestions that we may end up in a Unitary with Cornwall, but also noted that this was dismissed during a Cornwall Council meeting in the prior week. Further suggestions were that two Unitary Councils could be formed, to include Exeter and Plymouth respectively or that we could be included with Counties to the East. LB confirmed the potential timetable for the formation of a Unitary authority but stated that it is uncertain to what extent ETC will be consulted during the planning stages.

LB explained to members that ETC needs to have a strategic plan in place to help inform what services and assets could be delivered at a very local level so in anticipation of the wider devolution trends, an Asset Transfer Policy was adopted in last week's Full Council meeting.

It was noted that lessons can be learned from Cornwall colleagues. Under the Combined County Authority Programme that is already going through Central Government there is a Team Devon at DCC and the Town Council's sector representative on Team Devon is the chairman of DALC - Liz Brookes-Hocking, who will hopefully be able to represent our sector during early discussions about a way forward.

9. To receive an update on the Dinan Way extension

It was noted that Councillors have raised concerns over the sequencing of the construction of the roundabouts and the need to minimise disruption. A legal order has been published in the Exmouth Journal confirming that a new puffin crossing will be allocated at the top of Courtlands. Once LB has more information from DCC, members will be notified.

10. To receive any relevant updates on the developing Local Plan and to note that "stage 1" of the statutory Regulation 19 consultation in respect of the emerging local plan is expected to start in January 2025, but this is dependent on the governments imminent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and its impact on planning policy and housing numbers. The "stage 2" consultation to consider the new town masterplan will start in May 2025 and both collated consultations would be submitted to the Planning Inspector in Autumn 2025, followed by the Inspector's Public Hearings in late 2025/early 2026 with the adoption in late 2026/early 2027

A link to the latest reports from EDDC's Strategic Planning Committee and the Regulation 19 consultation was shared with the agenda.

The ETC Planning Officer, Chairman of Planning and LB have been invited to a meeting in February where EDDC will provide a briefing on the timetable for the Local Plan consultation and how EDDC proposes to engage with towns and parishes through the process. LB will update members in due course.

11. Street Scene update

There was no Street Scene representative present at the meeting and no report was received.

GD reported that a manhole cover at the bottom of Carlton Hill has blown but repair is in hand.

12. Update from Town Council working parties and outside body representatives

<u>Flooding and Water Quality WP</u>

GD reported that the Phase 1 of the sewage treatment works pipe replacement has been completed but the planned renewal of the section of pipe between Maer Lane and Maer Road carpark that was scheduled to start in January has been delayed and put back until spring 2025. SWW are reviewing the replacement of the pumps at Maer Road carpark to increase capacity as they have concerns over the condition of the pipes and whether they can withstand the increased capacity. A large overflow pipe has been put out beyond Sandy Bay, but SWW have not added the diffusers onto the end. Concerns have been raised about the Hartopp overflow and what is going into the gutters due to heavy downpours.

Climate and Ecological Emergency WP

LV updated members that the Tiny Forest at Brixington has been planted and another film screening has been approved along with a comedy workshop which will take place in February. LV urged councillors to take part in the Carbon Literacy training that is currently available.

It was also reported that the Town Council has been shortlisted in the NALC Star Council Award Scheme for its proactiveness in climate response. The outcome should be known by the end of February.

Active Travel

AT attended an Active Travel meeting where discussions took place as to where the gateway project funds were being spent on improving active travel around Exmouth. LB confirmed that the funds were re-invested into the Dinan Way Scheme for active travel projects, including the aforementioned puffin crossing and other improvements. This was in conformity with revised plans agreed between DCC and Central Government.

LB reminded members that active travel falls within the Terms of Reference of the Exmouth Transport Partnership WP. AT reported that during the previous Active Travel meeting, members identified that public data is required to ascertain what active travel requirements are needed in Exmouth and the scope to commission a survey. LB warned that surveys need to be statistically accurate and would need to be profiled correctly to make sure it is proportionally representative.

Health and Wellbeing Board (WEB)

PS updated members that the Exmouth MIU is now open 7 days a week between 8am and 8pm.

Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group

GD noted that there are personnel changes within the Placemaking team at EDDC, the next meeting will take place on the 10th of February. Public consultations are planned to look at changes at Queens Drive Space between the carpark and play area and also beach gardens carpark opposite the Pavilion. An update will be provided in due course.

13. Any other business

BdS is aware that WHSmith is going to be under new ownership which could result in shop closures. LB commented that ETC has been consulted in the past on plans for the relocation and operation model of the post office within the shop and hoped that this would again be the case if changes to the current arrangements are proposed..

14. Next meeting 24th February 2025

The meeting ended at 11:43