Axminster Renewal Forum

Meeting: 15 February 2023, 1.30PM

Venue: Axminster Guildhall

NOTES

- Keir Duffin, Devon County Council
- Alison Hayward, East Devon District Council
- Linda Perry, East Devon District Council
- Tim Child, East Devon District Council
- Cllr P Hayward Chair: Portfolio Holder Economy and Assets, EDDC (meeting Chair)
- Cllr A Moulding - East Devon District Council
- Josh Dutfield – Axminster Carpets/ Carpets site
- Simon Smith – Waffle House
- Cllr Steve Holt – Axminster Town Council
- Cllr Jill Farrow – Axminster Town Council
- Cllr Andrea Sedgewick – Axminster Town Council
- Jane Rockett – Axminster Printing

Apologies: Cllr Ian Hall, Cllr Nick Hookway, Cllr Sarah Jackson, Kelly Apps

1. **Update on Axminster Urban Renewal Strategy**

The work to develop the Axminster Urban Renewal strategy has now concluded, it is scheduled to be considered and noted by East Devon District Council Cabinet on 1st March 2023. Following this meeting, the Renewal Strategy can be published on the Town Council website.

Devon County Council (DCC) updated on the training requirements that had been sent through on behalf of the businesses occupying the former Axminster Carpets site. A meeting has been scheduled with DCC Head of Skills to discuss if & how DCC can support.

2. **Levelling Up Fund (LUF) outcome and way forward**

As already communicated, the Axe Valley bid to Round 2 of the LUF was unsuccessful. The Government have indicated that there is to be a round 3 of the funding programme. LUF criteria and priorities do change between application rounds – these will need to be reviewed and considered as further information becomes available.

East Devon District Council awaits feedback on the application and this will inform future application strategy. When a round 3 is announced it is proposed that the forum will be convened to discuss the opportunity and if appropriate make an application.

Way Forward - EDDC will review the feasibility of the employment sites – Harepath and Colyford Road both in Seaton and Cloakham Lawns in Axminster and will propose a way

forward and recommendations to Cabinet i.e. EDDC invest in development of the site, **or** take to open market.

There is existing Cabinet approval to take the Seaton Moridunum site to market. This exercise is now moving forward.

There was a discussion about the potential to ring-fence any proceeds from the sale of these sites to be invested in regeneration in the Axe Valley. That would be a matter for EDDC cabinet to consider.

The redevelopment of the Websters site and addressing transport issues were discussed. Officers are following up on these.

3. Axminster Quick Win Project – E-Bikes

This project remains on the South West railways shortlist for funding. Axminster Town Council is working with Devon County Council to evidence and document ownership.

4. Business Case - Websters Garage Site

Hardisty Jones Associates are working on the business case. Planning consent is being sought by the current owners. The group felt that the business case process should move forward given the uncertainty of planning application outcome, even though it may not be something that the Group can take forward.

5. Future meetings and role of the group

Meetings will be on a quarterly basis in the future with a focus on the projects listed in the Renewal Strategy.
For individual projects, the work required on delivery of these will be led by the stakeholder named in the Strategy and as necessary, small project groups will be established.
There is shared responsibility in terms of project leadership (and delivery) – as identified in the Strategy.
Expectations will need to be managed in terms of deliverability of the projects as these are dependent on financial and staff/stakeholder resources to deliver.
The Town Council will discuss the Renewal Strategy at its future meeting in mid-March, and what, if any support it can offer in terms of arranging future meetings.

6. A.O.B

Exeter University – Professor Lee Elliot Major, is a member of the Social Mobility Commission – useful local contact.