



News release: For Immediate issue

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## **Have your say in 'key moment' for future of Exmouth**

*Calls for key debate on future of Rolle College site*

People are being urged to have their say in what is being described as a 'key moment' for the future of Exmouth and the surrounding area.

Plymouth University is set to unveil outline plans for the Rolle College site in a two-day planning consultation in the town, being held at Ocean on the Esplanade, on Friday October 2 and Saturday October 3. It will give people the chance to review the plans and have their say ahead of the university applying for outline planning permission.

The site, owned by Plymouth University, has been unoccupied since the university relocated its Faculty of Education from Exmouth to its Plymouth Campus in 2008.

Roy Pryke, REL Deputy Chairman, said: "The Rolle College site offers a once in a generation opportunity. Once it's sold it's gone forever. That's why we are urging people to see for themselves what Plymouth University is proposing and then have their say in the consultation. The site has many outstanding and unique qualities and is in a pivotal and prominent position.

"Plymouth University's proposals are not the only options of course. If enough people express their views and are determined to maximise this fantastic opportunity for a wonderful education, business and community centre, then REL can build on that, and seek to buy all or parts of the site for Exmouth. But we really need people to have their say and be clear about what they want. We can then

make progress, conduct further fundraising and start to talk with potential developers about a new partnership approach."

Closure of Rolle College in 2008 cost the Exmouth economy around £5m\* a year, which has never been replaced. In 2010 demand from the local community led to the establishment of Rolle Exmouth Ltd (REL), a community benefit society, with the aim of securing part of the 7.1 acre campus, including a significant modern building (the Owen), to develop new resources for community activities, vocational education, and economic regeneration.

Plymouth University is setting out potential approaches to the site for people to consider at the public exhibition. REL is urging people to consider all the different aspects and potential best use of the site, and say what they believe is best for the town not just now but for future generations.

REL aims to secure a range of uses for key parts of the site, including education and training; facilities and work spaces for small businesses and other organisations; along with cultural and community opportunities. This would involve buying-all or parts of the Rolle site for the town and to make it sustainable as a long-term education, community and business asset.

REL is now urging people not to miss the opportunity to say what they would like to see happen with the site.

Deborah Hallett, REL Chairman, said: "It is widely recognised that delivering a mix of services locally is a brilliant way to boost business, education and community opportunities in towns and rural areas. To have a facility like this in the heart of our town is a wonderful one-off opportunity to do exactly that.

"This is only an outline planning application, but it is critical that the community actively participate in the consultation process. Securing outline planning permission is a critical step to move the project forward but it is not necessarily what

the final outcome will look like – that will be up to the purchasers and developers of the site and final planning approval.

“We will be putting the case to the community and then to potential developers for what we believe should be the right mix between housing and the business, education and community aspects of the site. There are some outstanding mixed use developments being progressed in other parts of the UK, and we believe Exmouth deserves the same approach – the very best approach. We will be striving to work with Plymouth University, potential developers and the local community to try and achieve that.”

Based in Exmouth, REL is a not-for-profit community benefit society owned by its 700 shareholders. Set up in 2010, REL’s purpose and intent for the site is to drive economic and personal growth through investment in facilities for enterprise, education and community use.

For more information about REL go to [www.rollecentre.org](http://www.rollecentre.org)

## **ENDS**

*\*Guardian November 14 2005 "The deputy vice-chancellor, Mark Cleary, added that the university would work with the Exmouth community "to find a future for the site that will minimise the impact of the university leaving the town."*

*He confirmed the move will cost the area £5m, saying: "I recognise that this is still a significant figure, but we will do all we can to mitigate it. My hope is that we will see a continued educational use for the site, and I have already been approached by a number of interested parties."*

### **For more information**

Please contact Dan Pritchard, Astley Media, on 01392 267394, 07730 363728  
[dan.pritchard@astleymedia.co.uk](mailto:dan.pritchard@astleymedia.co.uk)