

Agenda Item

Executive Board

6 August 2008

Exmouth Interpretation Centre development



Request of exemption to standing orders

Summary

On May 28 2008 the newly appointed Board of Trustees for the Exmouth and Seaton Interpretation Centres agreed the recommendation that the option to include the Exmouth Interpretation Centre within the proposed regeneration programme/envelop should be pursued. Therefore the Exmouth Interpretation Centre is now moving ahead in partnership with ASM/ASDA, and ASM require outline Interpretation centre designs to enable them to progress their planning application. In order to facilitate the first phase of the work needed to bring the centre to a full detailed design, EDDC need to engage some specialist support and advice through the outline planning process, and we would like to engage Form Design, of Plymouth, to do some preliminary planning and design work.

Form Design were engaged as architects to undertake the design elements of the original feasibility study for these projects, and so they have been a part of the selection process undertaken by the project management partners in 2005 (DCC, EDDC, Exmouth and Seaton Town Councils, SWRDA). The work needed for the Exmouth design constitutes adding more detail to the work which formed the basis of this feasibility study, yet which fell outside the original brief. EDDC also agreed to engage Form Design to add further detail to their designs for the Seaton Centre, under an exemption to standing orders request made in October 2007, and the work we require them to do in Exmouth is to add more detail to, and update, their original designs. We would like to use Form Design, since they have been involved with the project for over 2 years, and have been instrumental in creating the briefs for both design projects in order to meet the stringent funding criteria for the Interpretation Centres. They understand the needs of the project on behalf of all the stakeholders and funders (Devon County council, Exmouth and Seaton town councils, SWRDA) and will enable the preliminary design work to be done very quickly, yet at the required high level.

Recommendation

That Executive board agrees the exemption to standing orders for the expenditure of in the region of £8000 whilst only having received one quote for this specialist project work

a) Reasons for Recommendation

This work involves specialist design for Interpretation Centres, including an understanding of visitor behaviours and access needs. Form Design have worked on the Seaton project and have supported the development of appropriate design briefs. They can quickly develop those briefs to the next stage and support ASM/ASDA to provide a high quality design for the Centre as part of an outline planning application. This work covers only preliminary designs – and the full detailed designs will still be going through the more formal tender (a process that takes between six weeks and 75 days). The speed at which Form Design can complete the work is crucial, due to their prior knowledge and particular experience of this project, as it will enable the project to remain on its critical path to delivery. All funding is in place to undertake this work, and this work would have normally fitted into the work programme managed by the development manager. However, the timetable on the SWRDA funding to cover the costs slipped back and the funding, along with the Board of Trustees to take the decision to move ahead in this direction, were both delayed, leaving us with a tighter deadline than planned.

b) Alternative Options

The alternative is to go through a full formal tender process for this preliminary design, which will take a minimum of 6 weeks and will seriously delay the planning application and design process for the whole Exmouth Regeneration scheme – as well as risking the reassurance and ‘buy-in’ of all key stakeholders (ie. most notably DCC and SWERDA).

c) Risk Considerations

The risk is very low. This work will be to outline planning detail only, in order to enable the full regeneration programme to move forward on target. All funding is already in place for this work from the funding agreement awarded by SWRDA for a total of £2.75 million development budget, £100,000 of which can be drawn down this year for development costs.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The expenditure does not originate from EDDC budgets, but will be included in the work funded by SWRDA to develop the Interpretation Centres. The project is also supported by EDDC, DCC, Exmouth and Seaton Town Councils.

e) Date for Review of Decision

October 2008

1 Main Body of the Report

The Exmouth Interpretation Centre is now moving ahead in partnership with ASM and the Developers involved in the ASDA proposals for the regeneration of Exmouth town. EDDC requires specialist architectural and design advice in order to bring the Exmouth Centre project forward to outline planning in the short term, to enable us to maximise the opportunities available through the partnership with the wider development (both in terms of in-kind contributions and expertise).

Time is now of the essence due to the ASM/ASDA regeneration gaining support from Exmouth Town Council, EDDC and DCC – as well as the newly appointed Board of Trustees from the Exmouth and Seaton Interpretation Centre Board, and the Exmouth Regeneration Board. In order to facilitate the work necessary to move forward in line the ASM/ASDA planning application and public consultation we would like to engage Form Design, Plymouth to do some preliminary planning and design for the proposed Centre. Form Design have worked closely on the Seaton Centre and are fully briefed on the project, the aspirations of all the project partners and the other stakeholders involved and so we would like to capitalise on their current knowledge of the brief. Form Design have also been approved (with a high rating) for the ‘Devon Tenders’ programme, and so are a preferred supplier for Devon County, Torbay, Plymouth and other local authorities - though I have not at time of this application been able to confirm that EDDC is signed up to the ‘Devon Tenders’ programme.

These works are not outside the agreed programme, and all funding to cover the costs is in place, it is simply an issue that the delays caused by the full tender process would have significant impact on the Exmouth regeneration programme as a whole, and the ability of the developers to move forward with their proposed planning applications. The use of Form Design allows us to capitalise on the 2 years of work they have already been engaged in around the Interpretation Centre projects. This will save EDDC both time and staff resource, and enable us to make optimum use of ASM/ADSA’s expertise and in-kind support. We anticipate the savings we would be able to make, based on outline quotes from Form Design in the past, to be in the region of £15000 in the first instance, with further savings possible through negotiation between Form Design as specialist advisors, and the developers.

Legal Implications

A waiver of financial standing orders to enable this contractor to be engaged has been approved by the legal service

Financial Implications

The financial details are contained within the report.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

This project has been given positive feedback and direction from Executive Board, Asset Management committee, the Interpretation Centre Task and Finish Forum and the Overview committee, as presented by Karime Hassan and Tracey Guiry. Consultation is on-going with all stakeholders, EDDC, DCC, Exmouth and Seaton Town Council's, SWRDA, Jurassic Coast WHS Steering Committee and the Jurassic Coast Trust – as well as regional agencies and private investors.

Background papers

Signed request for exemption to Standing Orders

Tracey Guiry X2064

6 August 2008

Interpretation Centre Project Development Manager

Executive Board