

Agenda Item: 22

Executive Committee

15 July 2009

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Funding for the production of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and request for Exemption to Standing Orders to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Exeter Area and East Devon New Growth Point.

Summary

The Exeter & East Devon New Growth Point Steering Board has approved the funding of £20,000 for the production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy. Executive Board approval is now sought for an exemption to the Council's Standing Orders procedures to facilitate the appointment of specialist consultants, Landscape Design Associates (LDA) to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy, as a continuation of the work they completed in relation to the production of the Green Infrastructure Study for the Exeter Area and East Devon New Growth Point.

Follow link to East Devon website to view the Green Infrastructure Study –

http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/planning-ldf_greeninfrastructure

Recommendation

1. That Executive Board approves the Exeter & East Devon New Growth Point Steering Board allocation of £20,000 for the production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy.
2. That Executive Board approves the exemption from Standing Orders for the appointment of Landscape Design Associates (LDA) to progress with Phase 2 of the Green Infrastructure work for the New Growth Point area for the reasons set out in the Contracts Management Handbook form attached to this report –

“Extension to an existing contract for the purpose of achieving Best Value”

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The reasons are as detailed in the body of the report.

b) Alternative Options

No cost or time efficient alternative has been identified.

c) Risk Considerations

Without the Green Infrastructure Strategy opportunities to provide Green Infrastructure as an integral part of development to enhance quality of life and the successful accommodation of change, as required by the draft Regional Spatial Strategy, may be lost.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The cost of this commission will be met from funding available within the Growth Point Team's resources and has been agreed by the Steering Board.

A budget of £20,000 to complete the Phase 2 Green Infrastructure Strategy has been agreed to come from the £640,000 revenue budget for Technical Studies.

e) Date for Review of Decision

Not applicable. The finalised Green Infrastructure Strategy will be reported to the Growth Point Steering Board.

Main Body of the Report

1.1 Introduction

The Green Infrastructure (GI) Study (Phase 1) was commissioned by East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Teignbridge District Council and Natural England as part of their ongoing commitment to meeting the needs of new and future communities and ensure environmental protection and enhancement.

1.2 Progress to date

The first phase of work has delivered a series of key outputs:

- i) A vision for Green Infrastructure for the New Growth Point area
- ii) A sound 'evidence base' in map form to inform the LDF process
- iii) A spatial framework to identify the structural landscape elements that will have an important role in shaping the image and identity of the Exeter Area and East Devon New Growth Point area
- iv) A Biodiversity Network
- v) A Sustainable Movement Network
- vi) Potential GI Projects
- vii) Setting out the next steps to making this happen

1.3 Phase 2 will deliver

- i) A GI Strategy – Spatial Framework in plan form - for the Exeter Area and East Devon New Growth Point
- ii) A sound GI Policy
- iii) A greater level of detail for major development sites to inform masterplanning
- iv) Recommendations on Governance and Management

1.4 Reason to proceed with current consultant

- i) "Extension to an existing contract for the purpose of achieving Best Value".

This avoids the need for a detailed tendering process (adds cost), enables the work to proceed immediately without researching the background and checking previous work and by LDA have accepted an 'open book' approach to rates.

Conclusion

The intention is that the Phase 2 Green Infrastructure outputs will be submitted as part of the Core Strategy to inform the LDF process. The Green Infrastructure outputs will be used in conjunction with other infrastructure studies to ensure high quality sustainable growth for the area.

Legal Implications

The report identifies clearly the reason for seeking exemption from CSOs and should be supported.

Financial Implications

The cost of the study can be met from within the Growth Point Team's budget.

Background Papers

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26 June 2009

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