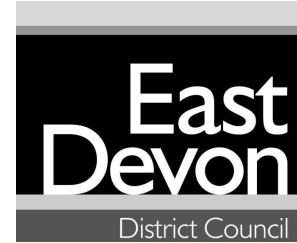


Agenda Item: 23

Executive Board

15 July 2009

jg



Stowford Rise, Sidmouth community centre – exemption from Standing Orders

Summary

I have sought an exemption from Standing Orders and authority to appoint consultants Norfolk Property Service (NPS) to undertake preliminary site investigation works on land in the Council's ownership. The specialist work includes topographical and soil tests and these investigations are an essential precursor to any design work for the community/children's centre.

I have attached the Standing Orders exemption form and request that the Executive Board approve this action.

Recommendation

To approve the exemption from Standing Orders for the reasons set out in the report.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The decision is sought to enable the Council to work in partnership with Devon County Council (DCC) and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to provide a community centre and associated facilities, including Children's Centre and office accommodation.

b) Alternative Options

Not to work in partnership with DCC and/or the PCT.

c) Risk Considerations

Insufficient funding secured for the scheme or a failure to work in partnership.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

These are set out in the Executive Board report of 3 December 2008.

e) Date for Review of Decision

Progress on this project to be reviewed in six months.

1 Stowford Rise Community Centre – site investigations

- 1.1 My report to the Executive Board on 3 December 2008 outlined proposals to provide a Community Centre on land in the Council's ownership at Stowford Rise, Sidmouth.
- 1.2 The report considered funding issues and the potential for a dual use development incorporating a Children's Centre and facilities for Primary Care Trust (PCT) staff. This approach would bring in additional funding to make the project financially viable. Cllr. Stuart Hughes has secured funding from the Devon County Council (£250,000) and we have received a payment relating to a Section 106 agreement with Waitrose (£200,000).

We have an earlier commuted sum payment for recreational use and the Town Council hold some funds which amount to circa £100,000. Additional funding for the Children's Centre and a contribution from the PCT would make our ambitions for a community centre more feasible.

- 1.3 Discussions with Devon County Council and the PCT have progressed to a position where we understand their requirements, and there is now some urgency for the County Council to commit available funding to the project because of conditions imposed on the spending of Children's Centre funding.
- 1.4 Our partners requirements can be summarised as reception/foyer (6m2); two offices (8m2 x 2); room for manager/PCT speech and language therapist (10m2); interview room (10m2); training room (45m2) including kitchen area and storage; access to toilets/baby changing facilities and covered buggy storage area. We anticipate the community centre being a building of approximately 425 m2.
- 1.5 Devon County Council will be seeking our permission to use some of the land for a Children's Centre and will commission Norfolk Property Services (NPS), their preferred architectural and project management service to undertake their design work. A formal partnership will be formed who intend to jointly commission NPS to undertake design work on the whole Community Centre including a feasibility study, detailed design, obtaining planning permission, tendering the work and project management of the development itself. The project working group have also identified the need to appoint a project manager.
- 1.6 In order to get the project started I have sought authority and exemption from Standing Orders to commission consultants NPS to undertake preliminary site investigation work at a cost which will not exceed £10,000. The surveys will include measured topographical; soil investigation; structural/civil feasibility report; and SUDS analysis and drainage study. This information will determine the site constraints and influence the subsequent design of the community/children's centre. The Standing Order exemption form is attached at **annex 1**.
- 1.7 The cost of the work is being financed from the commuted sum payment received from Waitrose for the purpose of providing community facilities.

Legal Implications

The reasons for seeking the exemption are adequately explained in the request schedule.

Financial Implications

The financial implications are detailed in the report

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

None.

Background Papers

- Executive Board report 3 December 2008.
- Stowford Rise brief and bid for DCC funding.
- Project appraisal form – Investing in Devon.

John Golding
Head of Housing and Social Inclusion

