

ITEM 10

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

15 February 2011

EXMOOR COAST INTERPRETATION CENTRE: LYNMOUTH PAVILION PROJECT

Report of the Head of Information and Access Services

<p>Purpose of the report: To update Members on progress with the Exmoor Coast Interpretation Centre.</p>

Business Plan Reference:

Objective F1: To raise awareness of Exmoor and its special qualities and ways in which they can best be experienced and enjoyed.

Objective F4: To provide information about the National Park's special qualities and how they can be understood and enjoyed to people during their visit to the National Park.

Objective F5: To provide opportunities for people to develop a deeper understanding and enjoyment of Exmoor and its special qualities to engender a sense of responsibility resulting in behaviour that sustains such qualities.

Objective G5: To maximise the economic and social benefits to the economy of Exmoor that recreation and tourism bring and to spread these benefits across as wide a range of people and businesses as possible.

Objective H3: To develop the greater Exmoor economy in ways that will increase the range and scope of employment and training opportunities for local people, particularly those that benefit people with relatively low household incomes and that relate to or further conservation and enhancement of Exmoor's special qualities.

Legal and Equality Implications: Section 65(4) Environment Act 1995 – provides powers to the National Park Authority to *“do anything which in the opinion of the Authority, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to-*

(a) the accomplishment of the purposes mentioned in s. 65 (1) [National Park purposes]

(b) the carrying out of any functions conferred on it by virtue of any other enactment.”

The equality impact of the recommendation(s) of this report has been assessed as follows: There are no equality impacts as a result of this report. Equalities concerns form a central consideration in the design and implementation of the project and the services to be provided by the new Centre.

Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendation(s) of this report is as follows: There are no issues arising from the Human Rights Act 1998.

Financial and Risk Implications: The financial and risk implications of the recommendations of this report have been assessed as follows:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Quantity Surveyors report assesses cost of building development works higher than estimated through structural survey	High	Reduced resource for aspirational development within existing timeframe and budget.	Phased development over time to ensure establishment of building shell fit for purpose and operating National Park Centre on the ground floor; flexible space on upper floor. Seek further funding for (eg) interpretation facilities.
Renovation and refurbishment option not feasible	Medium	Reduced support for project; potential objections to planning application.	Ensure options are realistic and explained. Communications Plan to be used to demonstrate wider community/economic benefits.
Demolition and rebuild option required	Medium	Delay in implementation; potential additional costs incurred; initial consultants fees 'at risk' if new scheme required. Reduced support for project; potential objections to planning application	Decision made at an early stage reducing impact on overall project budget. Clear communication of need to review options for site.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) NOTE the progress made to date with regard to this project.
- (2) AGREE to seek renovation and refurbishment of the existing building as a preferred option based on professional advice received.
- (3) APPROVE Terms of Reference for the Project Board.
- (4) DELEGATE decision making and 'sign off' to the Project Board for project development and the appointment of key contractors for the construction phase, fit out and through to completion as per the Project Plan.
- (5) RECEIVE updates on the Project at key milestones programmed in the Project Plan or by exception as directed by the Project Board.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members may recall previous reports brought before the Authority; in April 2009 outlining the vision for the proposed National Park Centre on the site of the Lynmouth Pavilion; and reports in January 2010 (full Authority) and September 2010 (Resources and Performance Committee – reported to the full Authority in November 2010) updating progress with the Project.

2. UPDATE

- 2.1 A Project Brief was agreed in November 2010 and used as a basis to tender for the Design Team. This team comprises Architects, Quantity Surveyor and Structural Engineer. A Mechanical & Electrical Engineer will be appointed once a more detailed plan for the building has been developed. An internal design/shop fitting team will be appointed at a later date.
- 2.2 Following an open tender process, the lead architects were appointed in January. They are RGP Architects of Barnstaple. They, and their proposed team, bring a wealth of experience including developments of Tourist Information Centres in Braunton and Ilfracombe and the Marine Parade Shelters redevelopment at Lyme Regis.
- 2.3 Gates Safety Management has been appointed as the project's Construction Design Management (CDM) Co-ordinator to provide services required as defined in the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 and the accompanying Approved Code of Conduct.
- 2.4 Based on initial feedback from surveys and the opinion of professional consultants, it is advised that the most cost effective solution to achieve a modern 'shell', fit for purpose, is to renovate and refurbish the existing building. This also accords with local perceptions, concerns and sensitivities as to how the site should be redeveloped. As reported in September 2010, a structural survey has been completed. The guide costs to provide a modern 'shell' (between £500k and £700k) appear to be within the current budget allocation (£900k). A more detailed estimate of costs will be known following calculations undertaken by the Quantity Surveyor once more detailed drawings have been received.
- 2.5 If, as the detailed investigation and costing of the proposals emerge, this option is not feasible, the Project Board will suspend activities, review options and report back to the full Authority to determine an appropriate way forward.
- 2.6 A Type 3 (fully intrusive) Asbestos Survey is due to be undertaken.
- 2.7 A further consultation event with the local community will be programmed when more detailed plans are available.
- 2.8 It is anticipated that sufficient detailed information will have been collated to produce tender documentation for the construction works during the summer of 2011.
- 2.9 In parallel, a bid has been developed to seek HLF funding for the interpretation element of the project. Partnership funding arrangements are also being explored with the South West Coast Path Team (as a 'Discovery Hub' for the National Trail) and the RSPB in recognition of the coastal bird nesting sites close to the Centre.

3. PROJECT BOARD: TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 Members agreed to establish a Project Board at the Authority meeting on 21 April 2009. The Board comprises Ms Andrea Davis, Dr. Steven Head (both Authority Members), the Head of Information and Access Services, the Authority's Interpretation Manager with the Head of Corporate Services acting in an advisory role.
- 3.2 To date, the Board has overseen the appointment of the Project Managers (Gates Consulting) for the scheme through an open tender process; and has agreed the Project Brief and Project Plan with the Project Managers to enable the appointment of the Design Team as detailed at (2.1) above.
- 3.3 The future role of the Board will be to:
 - 3.3.1 Oversee the Project Plan and ensure that the project runs to time and to budget reporting to the Authority at key stages or by exception.
 - 3.3.2 Develop, in consultation with the Project Managers and Design Team, the Project Plan as appropriate to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Project Brief are achieved.
 - 3.3.3 With responsibility delegated from the Authority, make decisions regarding the appointment of key contractors to enable the construction and fitting out of the new National Park Centre.
 - 3.3.4 With responsibility delegated from the Authority, sign off key stages in developing the Project Plan, design and tender documents.
 - 3.3.5 Any decision beyond the competence or scope of the Project Board will be referred to the full Authority for decision.
 - 3.3.6 Review these Terms of Reference every 6 months.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Project Board will meet as programmed in the Project Plan under the guidance of the Project Managers to review key milestones and progress as appropriate.
- 4.2 The Design Team will be developing detailed drawings to enable a planning application to be submitted. It is anticipated that these drawings will form part of the next consultation exercise.
- 4.2 The Head of Information and Access Services, on behalf of the Project Board, will update Members at key stages or on an exception basis where Authority decisions are required.
- 4.4 It remains an aspiration to have a facility available by the end of the 2012 calendar year. However, based on experience from other places, it may be that a fully operational National Park Centre would be completed by Easter 2013 in time for the main season.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Project is currently running on time and within budget. We are about to start the development of detailed contract specification to enable the preparation of tender documentation for the construction phase.
- 5.2 Further updates will be provided as key milestones in the Project Plan are achieved.

Tim Braund
Head of Information and Access Services
31 January 2011

Background papers on which this report, or an important part of it are based, constitute the list of background papers required by Section 100 D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to be open to members of the public comprise:

ENPA National Park Centre Strategy November 2006

National Park Management Plan 2007-2012

ENPA Report Exmoor Coast Interpretation Centre: Lynmouth Pavilion Project 21/04/09

ENPA Report Exmoor Coast Interpretation Centre: Lynmouth Pavilion Project 19/01/10

ENPA (Resources and Performance Committee) Report Exmoor Coast Interpretation Centre: Lynmouth Pavilion Project 14/09/10