

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

19 JULY 2005

### NEW HORIZONS PROJECT

#### Report of the National Park Officer

**Purpose of Report:**

To advise members on proposals for a new Learning, Leisure, Health and Business Centre project for West Somerset and seek views on the ways in which the Authority might wish to offer support to this project.

**Legal Implications including Human Rights Act 1998:**

None

**Financial Implications:**

The project has a target funding figure of £15 million and is seeking local funding as well as hoping to draw down European and Regional Development funding

**National Park Purposes:**

Although the proposed new Centre is located outside the National Park, the project aims to encourage greater participation in sports and outdoor activities and has the potential to encourage visitation to the national Park. The facilities provided will be available to the Exmoor community.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Authority CONSIDERS the kind of support that it might provide to the project and NOMINATES 2 or 3 members to meet with the lead project sponsor to discuss the potential for joint working.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The National Park Authority was invited to join the steering group for the New Horizons project some time ago and several meetings have been attended by the National Park Officer. The project is being led by the Principal of West Somerset Community College and includes a wide range of local partners including West Somerset District Council, ARTlife, Business Link Somerset, Learning and Skills Council Somerset, Minehead Market and Coastal Towns Initiative, Somerset Coast Primary Care Trust, Somerset County Council and West Somerset Voluntary Sector Forum.
- 1.2 A detailed Feasibility Study into the possible provision of a learning, leisure, health, culture and business complex was commissioned in April 2004. The Feasibility Study has now been completed with consultants EKOS submitting their final report to a meeting of the Partnership held on 17 May 2005. The study recommends, that the project should now proceed to a 'Development Phase' whereby the partnership would undertake the process of robust planning and development. There is still work to do in terms of finalising a detailed Capital and Revenue Business Plan and this will form an important part of the Development Phase. A copy of the Executive Summary of the feasibility study is attached at appendix 1.

## 2. LINKS TO EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

- 2.1 The Authority has been asked to restate its support and commitment to the project and the holding reply has been sent pending wider discussion within the Authority. The response welcomes significant and substantial progress that has been made in developing the concept for 'New Horizons' and confirms the support and best wishes of Exmoor National Park Authority in seeing the project through to implementation.
- 2.2 It goes on to state that, whilst the capacity of the Authority to provide staff or financial resources to the proposed new building is limited, there may well be scope to contribute to a number of elements of the wider project. In particular, the Authority may well be able to contribute in the following ways:
- Helping to ensure links between the proposed new centre and communities in the National Park
  - Reviewing the overall ecological 'footprint' of the proposed development and seeking ways to ensure that the project's overall impact is a positive one
  - Researching and establishing routeways and links between the proposed new centre and the surrounding area, including the National Park, to maximize the effectiveness of the new centre as a focal point for outdoor leisure/recreational learning.
- 2.3 Members are invited to express their views on the level of involvement of the Authority in helping to realise this worthwhile initiative.

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**Date of Report** 7 July 2005

**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:-**

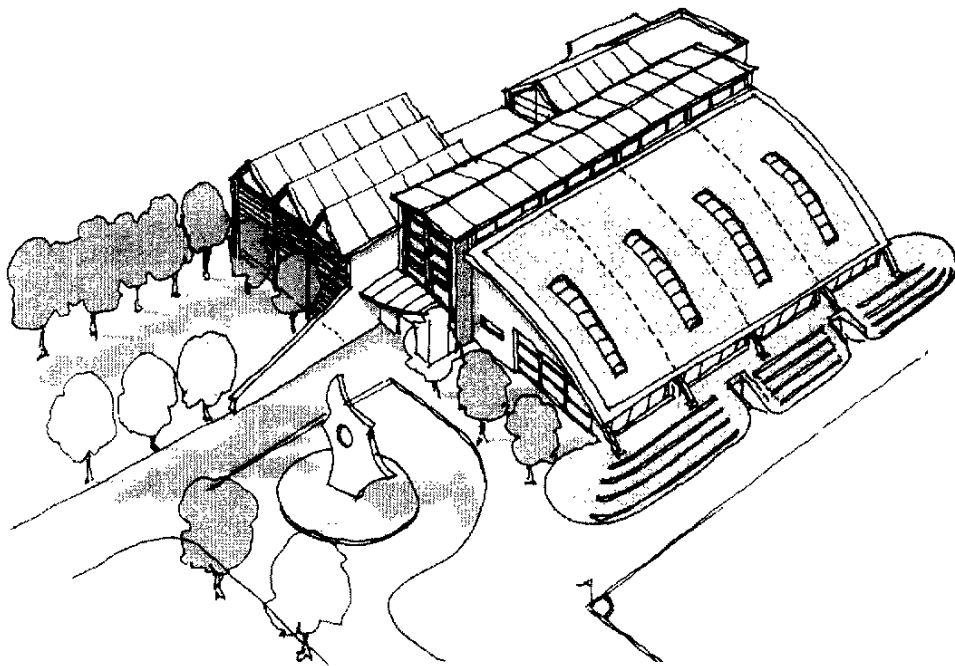
**Attached**

# NEWHORIZONS

*(WORKING TITLE)*

## THE BUSINESS PLAN

17 MAY 2005



## REPORT BY



# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## What is New Horizons?

*This unique centre will bring to West Somerset leading edge integrated services for each person which will create life changing opportunities in sport, leisure, learning, cultural business and healthy lifestyles'* – **Mission Statement**

**Where?** Based in Minehead, but serving all of West Somerset.

**What?** It will be a new purpose built centre with outreach services providing sport, leisure, learning, art and culture, business and health in a 'joined up' way

**Who?** This business plan represents a culmination of effort, commitment and motivation

from a partnership of 10 organisations in West Somerset, with consultation with the wider business community and voluntary sector.

## Why do we need to do this?

West Somerset suffers from a number of problems including:

- Socio-economic factors including: ageing population, deprivation, unemployment, and poor health;
- Low level of educational achievement and participation in learning;
- Low level of participation in sports and activities;
- Staff retention and development problems for key public services;
- Poor/deteriorating existing facilities; and
- Poor provision of services compared to other areas.

The partners involved in the project have a desire for better inter-agency working and a vision to create integrated facilities in line with current best practice.

## Does it fit with other plans?

Yes, the project has a strong fit with European, National, Regional, County and Local strategies and policies in all service areas.

## What will it do?

### Objectives

- Empowering individuals and partners in working together;
- Increasing efficiencies through working together;
- Creating strong, identifiable profile;
- Improving life chances for all;
- Driving up standards and stretching targets; and
- Ensuring sustainability

### Services to be delivered:

- Healthy Lifestyles and Physiotherapy,
- Assisting people with learning difficulties into work;
- Children's Services;
- Adult Education and Vocational Training;
- Swimming, Spa and Hydrotherapy suite;
- Dry sports including, fitness rooms, activity rooms, squash courts, climbing wall, 6 court sports hall,
- Art displays and cultural events;
- Business Workshops and advice sessions;
- Schools development; and
- Early years support and outreach.

## **What Happens Next?**

**The Development Phase** – Between May 2005 and September 2006, the partnership will undertake a process of robust planning and development to ensure that the project runs smoothly and to plan. Key tasks for this stage include:

- Appointment of a development manager;
- Developing a new organisation;
- Securing Planning Permission;
- Scheduling services and operations;
- Securing funding for construction and operational phases;
- Organising procurement; and
- Updating and evolving the business plan.

**Construction Phase** – Running from October 2006 – June 2008 the centre will be constructed under the supervision of the development manager, who will also be responsible for:

- Project managing the site operation;
- Project managing fit out of Centre;
- Managing transition from existing services to centre;
- Developing a performance measurement framework; and
- Recruiting process for core staff.

**Operational Phase** – Running from June 2008 onwards.

## **Who will run it?**

The whole issue of organisation, management and governance is not one that should be taken lightly. The building of capacity in the partnership and support to enable them to move forward with the appropriate structure and management organisation is essential. To this end the development phase for this project will be crucial, hence the inclusion of resources in the development phase for this purpose.

## **How will we know if it works?**

The Centre will use a management system known as the Balanced Scorecard to measure performance according to a four perspectives: Customer, Internal Processes, Employee Learning and Growth and Financial. Prior to the operational phase the partners will need to identify goals and measures of success under each of these perspectives to form the performance measurement plan.

## **Can we afford to build it?**

It is estimated that construction costs will be c £15m. This is inclusive of an uplift to 2007 prices, 17.5% VAT and 9% contingency. A review of potential funding sources has identified an initial possible capital investment of £10.2m. The report also identifies the areas that could be investigated further to reach the aspiration of a £15m project. In the event of this total not being secured in its entirety, the project could proceed on a phased basis.

## **Can we afford to run it?**

Lifecycle costs are c £811k. Based on breakeven assumptions for commercial elements and known potential commitments (in principle or otherwise) by partners, the total identified income is c£678k. This leaves a gap of £133k and the plan identifies a number of clear options for addressing this.