

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 26 April 2005

IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT (IEG) AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Report of the Head of Business Management

Purpose of Report:

To report to members on the budgetary implications of Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) and the overall position of the Sustainable Development Fund.

Legal Implications including Human Rights Act 1998:

In conformity with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Electronic Government Programme.

Financial Implications:

The proposals for the IEG budget are in accordance with funding received from ODPM. The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is managed within the resources allocated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

National Park Purposes:

The proposals for both IEG and SDF allow the Authority to continue to carry out its statutory purposes.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee to NOTE the position regarding IEG and to NOTE that a report on SDF will be presented to a future meeting of the Authority.

1. IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

- 1.1 Members will recall that the Authority was awarded £400,000 for IEG to cover the years 2004/05 and 2005/06 (£300,000 for 2004/05 and £100,000 for 2005/06)
- 1.2 Because of the long lead time for implementing IT projects combined with the need to co-ordinate our progress in line with the joint working being carried out with other national parks, the budget has been regarded as a 'single-pot' covering the two financial years.
- 1.3 Spending requirements to achieve the objectives required by ODPM have been reviewed and the resultant budget across the two years is as follows:

	<i>Budget</i> £'000
Implementation of the National Parks Portal and ENPA Website	10
Implementation of Document Management System and Customer Relations	105
Implementation of National Planning Portal	5
Information Kiosks at National Park Centres	20
E skills Training	30
ICT Infrastructure - Office 2003	20

		<i>Budget</i> £'000
	- Government Gateway	10
	- Home/Remote Working	30
	- Positional Data Project	10
	- Broadband	5
	- 150 15489	5
E Business	- e shop and e accounts)	5
	- e purchasing)	
Corporate	- joint NPAs working	10
	- webcast meetings	10
	- questionnaire/survey software	5
	- project officers	90
Support Costs for National Parks Portal and Document Management		30
TOTAL		400

1.4 The two significant areas of activity to deliver a large proportion of the required ODPM outcomes are the implementation National Parks Portal Project and the introduction of a Document Management System with improvements in Customer Relations management. These two matters are considered in more detail in the following two sections.

2. NATIONAL PARK PORTAL

2.1 This has proved to be the main partnership project which will enable the Authority to deliver many of its IEG targets and the Authority's technical staff have made a significant contribution to its development at national level. An official launch of the portal is planned to coincide with the run-up to National Parks week. The Exmoor National Park Authority website is currently being re-designed with the intention of launching the updated site at the same time as the national portal.

2.2 The new arrangements mean a change in the hosting arrangements for the Authority's Website which up to now has been through Somerset County Council. The new arrangements mean that the Authority has agreed:

- to a three year partnership agreement for the joint management and development of the portal.
- to the Peak District National Park Authority continuing to be the accountable body for contract and financial purposes and the Lake District National Park Authority to be the employer and accommodation provider of a full-time fixed term contract post from 1 April 2005 to June 2006.
- to commit to the revenue costs forecast on the basis that every attempt will be made to reduce these through encouraging more partners to join and by reviewing the staffing support in March 2006. (Contributions in 2005/06 of £12,000 for which provision has been made in the budget).

3. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND CUSTOMER RELATIONS

3.1 Through joint working the requirements for a Document Management System have been compiled with the result that six authorities (including Exmoor) have agreed to implement the Microsoft product "Sharepoint" and two authorities have opted for an alternative because of their different IT configurations and requirements.

3.2 Implementation of the Document Management System is underway and will consist of three phases as follows:

- Phase 1 - Intranet Portal
 - Internal Post (National Park Officer, Business Management and Conservation & Land Management)
 - Committee Minutes
 - Image Library
- Phase 2 - Planning
- Phase 3 - All other Sections

3.3 To support the IEG requirements the Secretarial Services Team has been restructured and reformed into the Admin Support Team to provide a front line service for customer relations. The team will:

- Encompass the Customer Relations function which is one of the mandatory outcomes of Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) which has been defined as the “*establishment of an E-Enabled one stop shop for face-face-customer contact*”,
- carry out a key role in the management of Document Management System (is in the process of implementation); and
- reflect the changes in working practices that have evolved from technology and the admin support service that the sections of the Authority now require.

A radical re-think of the current methods of working and services provided has been carried out resulting in the creation of a team that will embrace both customer relations and admin support.

4. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)**

4.1 DEFRA has continued to fund an SDF and has maintained the allocation at £200,000 for 2005/06

4.2 During 2004/05 payments made by the fund have accelerated as a result of payments made in respect of offers made in earlier years as well as those for the 2004/05 offers. The spending in 2004/05 will be approaching the allocation received and the amount held in reserves will cover outstanding commitments in respect of offers made and not yet paid.

4.3 SDF is a valuable pump priming mechanism and it is interesting to note that grants offered in 2004/05 were in the region of £190,000 whereas the value of the projects exceeds £900,000. An annual report on the activities of the SDF is being prepared for presentation to a future meeting of the Authority and to DEFRA as part of the SDF funding conditions.

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18 April 2005