

MG - 660: Appointment of Contractors to Review the Northumberland National Park Building Design Guide**Decision Required:**

The Management Group is requested to:

- a) Agree to waive Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to appoint two specialist contractors to develop the Northumberland National Park Building Design Guide; and**
- b) Authorise the Director of Park Management to conclude arrangements with Spence and Dower and RMJM**

Background

1. At it's meeting in September 2004, the Authority agreed the timetable for the preparation of the Local Development Framework and an overall budget, including an allocation of £25,000 for the Review of the Building Design Guide. This exercise is seen as being critical to delivering the Vision of the Authority, as set out in the Management Plan.
2. To fit in with the agreed timescales for the Local Development Framework and meet corporate priorities, it is suggested that the Management Group waives Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and authorise the appointment of Spence and Dower, who prepared the existing Building Design Guide. Spence and Dower can reapply specialist knowledge, gained when preparing the previous quotes and should be able to provide a higher quality service within the confines of the budget than a new contractor. Spence and Dower are to employ RMJM as sub contractor to provide specialist input in respect of modern architecture and to carry out document design work. There will be additional costs in organising and holding consultation events and producing a number of printed copies of the Building Design Guide.
3. It is acknowledged that Spence and Dower submit planning applications to the National Park Authority. It is considered that engaging them to update the Building Design Guide would not cause a conflict of interest. Firstly, Spence and Dower produced the present Building Design Guide that has been used by the Authority in decision making without a problem. Secondly, Spence and Dower will deliver a draft of the document, that will be subject to Authority approval for consultation, a full consultation process and then revision and adoption by the Authority. The consultation process to shape the new Building Design Guide, will be open to those involved in development in the National Park, Members and local communities
4. When the Authority tendered for innovative designs for the Falstone Tearooms, RMJM were the most innovative architects. During the course of the work, RMJM have developed intimate knowledge of the direction in which the Authority is heading. Also, Authority staff, have gained a high degree of confidence of RMJM to produce practical innovative solutions that respect the special qualities of the area.

Conclusions

5. The Review of the Building Design Guide is a one off piece of work that will not need to be repeated for a number of years. The Management Group is requested to waive Standing Orders in this case to allow the Appointment of Spence and Dower and RMJM to ensure the quick and cost effective review of the Building Design Guide. The Authority's Monitoring Officer has been consulted in respect of the process to be followed in respect of the appointment of the contractors in these circumstances to ensure that the process is appropriate.

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