

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND PARK DIRECTION**

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**SUBJECT: VARIATION TO FINANCIAL STANDARDS FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF A DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT**

**Background**

The Authority's Financial procedure requires the Authority to obtain 3 quotations on the procurement on expenditure between £10,000 and £25,000. The Development Management Team are currently working at a reduced capacity due to long term sickness of one team member. In addition to this the team are working through a backlog of applications caused by limitations on the service due to Covid-19 and recent IT problems. Since September 2020 the Authority has utilised a planning consultant to assist with the backlog of applications and with the processing of new applications. The expenditure on the consultant currently totals £3,756.60, and in accordance with our financial procedures will require the Authority to obtain 3 quotes for this service.

The requirement to obtain and consider 3 separate quotes would result in a break in the service from the current planning consultant, having an adverse impact on the delivery of the Development Management service and adding to the existing backlog of work and staff pressures.

The consultant, Prospero Planning, have been utilised by the Authority for short-term periods over a number of years. Consequently they are familiar with the Authority's working practices, IT systems and provide a reliable quality service.

The Development Management service needs to retain the use of Prospero Planning to ensure continuity of the service and to address the existing backlog.

**Financial considerations**

During this financial year the Authority has spent £3,756.60 on the consultant services of Prospero Planning. It is not clear when the officer on long term sick leave will return to work, as such, in order to maintain an effective service it is proposed to allow the continued use of the consultant up to a maximum expenditure £25,000.

**Risk considerations**

The reputation of the Park Authority is a consideration in the timely management of planning application decisions.

Increased pressure on existing staff members.

### Equality considerations

There are no specific implications

### Welsh Language

There are no specific implications

### Conclusion

The continued use of Prospero Planning as a consultant will assist with reducing the backlog of planning applications and the continued processing of new planning applications.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Members are asked to agree to a maximum spend on the provision of a Development Management consultant service of £25,000.**

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