

POSSIBLE 2006/07 BIDS

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B1. Buildings mechanical and electrical maintenance</b>
<b>Amount: £50,000</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> The Council currently has a contract for the planned and reactive maintenance of most major mechanical and electrical plant across the Authority. This includes boilers, swimming pool plant and equipment, air handling units, gas, electrical and water services, heating and alarms. Skanska currently provides this service under a 5 year contract that was extended for 18 months. The contract has now expired and we have managed to negotiate with Skanska to continue providing their service at the previously agreed rates. However, this arrangement cannot continue and we are currently putting together a tender document to seek bids for the provision of M&amp;E work.</p> <p>It is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the costs of this contract largely as a result in the hourly rate paid to engineers experienced in this field. The payment to Skanska is considerably below the current market rate and it is inevitable that the costs will rise significantly. In addition, the completion of Dartmouth Leisure Centre has meant that there is further plant and equipment that now has to be inspected and maintained.</p> <p>Whilst it is not possible to be certain it is estimated that the additional contract costs could be in the region of £50,000. The actual costs will not be known until the tender exercise has been carried out. However, by looking at the current costs of labour in this field it is believed that the increase will not be less than the £50,000 in this bid.</p>	
<p><b>Statutory Powers:</b> There are a number of statutory requirements relating to this matter including: Health and Safety, Electrical Regulations, Gas Regulations, Legionella Testing, Pool Water Safety, Water Regulations.</p> <p>Failure to ensure that M&amp;E maintenance is kept fully up to date could lead to the Council breaching legislation and potentially being taken to court or sued. A recent case of Legionella infection resulted in several deaths of members of the public and the Council was prosecuted for corporate manslaughter.</p>	
<p><b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP5 and 6 are both relevant in this context. If we do not ensure the Council's plant is properly managed and maintained then there is a risk that service delivery will be adversely affected and public access to services likewise. In addition, it could lead to unnecessary costs relating to the breakdown of equipment and early replacement resulting from poor maintenance and servicing.</p>	
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b> There is a HIGH risk that failing to ensure the M&amp;E equipment is properly serviced and maintained could lead to:</p> <p>Injury/death of public/staff; failure of equipment leading to inability to deliver services; impact on revenue where facilities are unavailable for public use;</p>	

image of Council adversely affected; reduction in life of equipment leading to increased costs of renewals; reduction in value of assets.

In effect the Council has no real choice other than to incur these costs.

**Alternative approaches explored:** External profession advice sought regarding options. These have included:

In house expertise developed – risks of difficulties in provided cover during holidays and sickness, range of skills required and more importantly the inability to deal with major incidents/works.

Re-appraisal of level of planned maintenance undertaken – risk of more frequent breakdowns leading to potentially higher costs etc.

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B2 Housing Options Officer top up funding</b>
<b>Amount: £17,000</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item</b> Proposed increase in funding of £17,000 to provide a full time Housing Options Officer. This is not a new post, but an extension of hours of an existing part time post set up in April 2004.</p> <p>The Council appointed a four day per week Homelessness Prevention Officer in 2004 with 50% of the funding being met from Government Grant from the ODPM. The post has been re-designated Housing Options Officer to reflect that the post is trying to proactively find options which prevent a household from becoming homeless. The purpose of creating this post was to enable more work to be undertaken to help people keep their homes or secure accommodation in the private sector and reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast and other Council temporary accommodation. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has recently issued a challenging target for Local Authorities to reduce their temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010. This will partly be met by more affordable housing being provided but also by more effective prevention of homelessness. This is an important corporate target which will have an impact on the Council's future CPA score.</p> <p>This is a spend to save bid. In part, because of the work of the Housing Options Officer last year. The Council's gross Bed and Breakfast spend reduced from £164,862 for 03/04 to £89,741 in 04/05. Similarly, the number of households accepted as being statutorily homeless fell from 172 in 03/04 to 95 for 04/05</p> <p>Currently the Council provides £11,600 per year towards the Homelessness Prevention Officer post which is recurring. This is supplemented by £11,600 per year from Government Homelessness grants. The post is currently four days per week and the post is for a fixed period of two years. The proposal is</p>	

for the Council to increase the recurring funding to £28,600 in order that the post can be graded as a scale 4/5 permanent full time post from April 2006, which is when the current two year fixed post comes to an end. The ODPM grant would be used to finance a Homeless Prevention Fund. Grant funding would be used to provide households with advance rental loans to enable them to secure private rented accommodation. Agreements are reached with the household to repay the loan back to the Council at an affordable monthly payment. If households are not assisted in this way and they are accepted as statutorily homeless, the Council has a duty to provide them with temporary accommodation until they can be provided with a settled permanent home through a nomination to a Housing Association property. A number of other councils have adopted this approach including Wychavon District Council, who have become the first authority to receive an excellent rating by the Housing Inspector with 'excellent prospects for improvement'.

The work undertaken by the Housing Options Officer includes the following:

- a) Helping tenants reduce their arrears through taking up Housing Benefit or discretionary housing payments and negotiating with landlords.
- b) Attending court and helping prepare budget plans to show how arrears might be reduced and homelessness prevented.
- c) Preventing young people from being excluded by negotiating with the family and the young person to see if they can return home if that is appropriate. A mediation agency is commissioned by the Prevention Officer to mediate between the family and the young person.
- d) At present because of the nature of the housing market comparatively few people are presenting with mortgage arrears and being repossessed by their lender. However, in these situations, efforts are undertaken to assist with reducing the debts such as extending the term of the mortgage or proposing a number of other methods to resolve the arrears.
- e) Help with private renting is offered to households likely to be accepted as statutorily homeless through the use of a new Rent In Advance Scheme and the Council's long standing Deposit Guarantee Scheme. Effectively because of the shortage in temporary accommodation the Council is having to move towards a position where it seeks to help people help themselves by assisting in securing private rented accommodation for households who would otherwise be accepted as being statutorily homeless and consequently placed in temporary accommodation.
- f) The majority of households presenting with housing difficulties, or who are threatened with homelessness are interviewed by the Housing Options Officer as they present to the Council to see how they can be helped to resolve their problems.
- g) Liaison with the Youth Enquiry Service, CAB, and other organisations which support vulnerable households.

The Homelessness Prevention Fund described above would comprise the £11,600 grant from the ODPM, which would no longer be required to support

the Housing Options Officer post. The Housing Options Officer would use the funding to support the work responsibilities of the post e.g. introducing a rent in advance loan scheme. While the ODPM grant continues there would be no revenue consequence for the Council. Members should however note that the loan repayment from homeless clients can not be guaranteed, despite repayment agreements. On the other hand, if the initiative is successful, the fund could be topped up by viring money from the bed and breakfast budget which should be under less pressure.

If the bid to fund the extension of the post is not accepted, and the post remains part time and part funded by the ODPM, officers would recommend identification of funding to establish a Homelessness Prevention Fund.

**Statutory Powers:** Housing Act 1996 as amended and the Homelessness Act 2002

**Impact on Corporate Priorities:** CP1 Affordable Housing and Corporate Targets CP1A (no. on the housing register) and CP1B (use of B&B).

**Risk Assessment:** High Risk. Government recognises that because of the shortage of affordable housing in the Country and the high numbers of statutorily homeless households placed in temporary accommodation, LA's should increase their efforts to provide homeless households with other options or prevent their homelessness in the first place. Government has recently published a report entitled 'Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; Changing Lives' in which a target has been set to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010. Additionally, a Best Value Performance Indicator came into operation in April 2005 which requires Local Authorities to measure and report on the amount of work undertaken to prevent homelessness. There are now 6 BVPI's relating to homelessness which reinforces the importance Government are placing on the prevention of homelessness.

The ODPM will link an Authority's performance in reducing the number of units of temporary accommodation to the level of homelessness grant it receives every year.

**Alternative approaches explored:** A number of actions are in place to reduce homelessness. The Council's enhanced affordable housing development programme has enabled a number of people to be housed permanently who might otherwise have become homeless, and often provides local people the only option for being housed in the District.

Another factor that has contributed to the reduction in the number of households accepted as being statutorily homeless households is the appointment of a Medical Advisor to give advice on which households are vulnerable and in need of accommodation. The medical Advisor visits the

Housing Office fortnightly to help with homelessness vulnerability assessments and to assess information for medical points on the Council's Housing Register. Prior to the use of a Medical Advisor, officers had to make these decisions on vulnerability and as they were not medically qualified they were more inclined to accept households as being vulnerable and in priority need for accommodation.

It should be noted that the Council will continue to need to have a stock, albeit a reduced one if the Government's target is met, of suitable temporary accommodation in order that sufficient housing is available for those households unable or unwilling to help themselves. At present there is no compulsion in law on homeless households taking up housing options such as private rented accommodation instead of temporary housing from the Council.

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B3 Member Training and Development</b>
<b>Amount: £7,500</b>	
<b>Description of Item:</b> The Improvement Plan outlines the Council's desire to introduce Member appraisals and to review the Member Development Programme. Council has agreed to introduce a training requirement for Members of the Licensing and Development Control Committees. Greater focus is being placed on Member Development through participation in the Devon Improvement Programme (DIP). In addition, the external auditors have commented on the absence of a structured Member Development Programme for 2004/05.	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Discretionary – Local Government Act 2000	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> Member Development activities link indirectly to all corporate priorities and commitments	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b> It is likely that Member Development activities will continue, the provision of a dedicated budget will demonstrate a commitment to Member Development to the external auditors	
<b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> Funding for Member Development activities is likely to be available through the DIP but it is inappropriate to rely on this for all the Council's planned activities	

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B4. Renewal of litter bins</b>
<b>Amount: £18,400</b>	
<b>Description of Item:</b> Renewing of Litter Bins. The budget has been set at the same amount for a number of years. The number of bin renewals and the increase in the cost of renewals can no longer be met by the current budget. The additional funds will be required for one year only to renew the bins in Dartmouth, Kingsbridge, Salcombe and Totnes	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> - Local Government Acts	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP4	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b> Due to monies not available to replace damaged/worn out litter bins, standards could fall. An increase in budget is required to prevent the standards falling.	

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B5 Environmental Health - new shared post, Contaminated Land Officer</b>
<b>Amount £10,550</b>	
<b>Description of Item:</b> Statutory duty to identify and remediate contaminated land – repeated failings to progress the issue. In order to meet statutory requirements within a reasonable timeframe, it will be necessary to employ a specialist contaminated land officer. Other authorities are in a similar position, wishing to progress the issue but with limited budgets. This bid will finance a 3 year fixed term post shared between Mid Devon and North Devon on a pro-rata basis. The resourcing will allow all desk top prioritisation of contaminated sites to be completed, together with some initial on site investigations.	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Environmental Protection Act 1990 – statutory duty to identify, investigate and remediate contaminated land	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP3 Clean Environment	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b> The implementation of the Contaminated Land Strategy has been severely delayed following the departure of the temporary post-holder. Significant progress is unlikely to be made without dedicated resources. New BVPI's have been published in relation to dealing with contaminated land reflecting the Government's concern to progress the issue. Contaminated land now forms part of the Audit Commission's 'Key lines of Enquiry' for Environmental Health. Potential public health issues	
<b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> Resource swapping with Teignbridge's Contaminated Land Officer has progressed the issue but this approach is limited. West Devon have completed their contaminated land enquiries.	

The partnership approach with Mid and North Devon offers the most realistic method of progressing the issue. Confirmation of the exact level of resources to be supplied by the other authorities is awaited. (Awaiting final decision as to extent of involvement).

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B6 Homeworking trial with Benefits staff</b>
<b>Amount: £10,000</b>	
<b>Description of Item:</b> Homeworking pilot for 4 staff in Benefits to assess feasibility, costs, ICT issues, health and safety risks, impact on current accommodation etc. of implementing a homeworking policy. This issue will become more and more relevant to meeting efficiency targets and providing flexible working arrangements under the single status negotiations	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Local Government Act 1972	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP6	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b> Low but homeworking can be a key driver for achieving efficiency savings. In addition, it is seen as an important issue for implementing flexible working and staff retention.	

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B7 Change Management and Business process Re-engineering</b>
<b>Amount: £60,000 for two years</b>	
<b>Description of Item:</b> The Council lacks the capacity and business ability to be able to research, develop, co-ordinate and implement all the issues within the 'Shared Services' agenda and back office efficiency parts of the Council's modernisation agenda at a sufficiently swift pace to deliver service improvements and long term cost savings identified in our financial strategy.	
<p>We particularly need specific skills, eg, in process re-engineering, lean thinking and partnership development. These skills are specialist and needed intensively but for a relatively short period. The Council could also benefit from training staff to fulfil such work under the supervision of a lead specialist.</p> <p>We also need to ensure we have the capacity in our mainstream support services to support partnership and other changes on the scale envisaged. If necessary this would be as a full time secondment to a task and finish special projects group.</p>	

Some of the specialist skills may be provided by the employment of consultant(s) but it is believed that the time required could justify a full time but short term contract. We also need to have resources available to backfill mainstream posts if required. The only related unused resource at present is a vacant post in Business Development which when filled will support the special projects team.

The resources required need to be funded on an intensive but medium term basis and the proposal of £60,000 for each of two years is a provisional figure to supplement other resources.

**Statutory Powers:** Section 3 Local Government Act 1999 Securing continuous improvement

**Impact on Corporate Priorities:** Relates to all corporate priorities and commitments by enabling the improved delivery of direct and indirect services

**Risk Assessment:** We do not currently have the resources to undertake this essential activity and must be missing opportunities current and future to improve the delivery of services in line with 'Gershon' principles

**Alternative approaches explored:** The equivalent cost of using Vanguard Consulting, the leading exponent of Lean Fundamentals, which is a facilitated work management process, would be in the region of £95,000 for two services (in tandem) over a 4 month period. This would cover only part of the proposed post's functions.

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B8 Personnel &amp; payroll - increased administration support</b>
<b>Amount: £3,700</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> Increased Personnel administration workload arising from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementation of a new/revised Job Evaluation scheme</li> <li>2. Supporting introduction of new Personnel policies and procedures arising from Single Status</li> <li>3. Undertaking future review of our recruitment procedure and roll out across whole Council</li> <li>4. Increasing demand for Management information statistics from HoS and managers</li> </ol>	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Local Government Act 1972	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> Supports Corporate priorities particularly CP6 through facilitating service delivery improvements	

<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unable to support Job Evaluation which is required to establish a fair pay and grading structure</li> <li>2. Unable to develop/improve the current recruitment procedure which could then fall behind industry good practice</li> <li>3. Unable to respond efficiently to requests for statistical information</li> </ol>
<p><b>Alternative approaches explored:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Service has looked to possible sharing of these additional work demands with other Service Areas but no capacity exists</li> <li>2. Confidential nature of some of the work requires it to be contained within a Personnel environment</li> </ol>

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B9 External legal advice</b>
<b>Amount: £15,000</b>	
<b>Description of Item:</b> The cost of the Monitoring Officer taking advice externally on probity and legality issues	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Section 5 Housing and Local Government Act 1989/Local Government Act 2000 – Ethical Framework	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> - Supports Corporate priorities particularly CP6	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b> In respect of expenditure 2005/2006 I have taken external advice from Counsel and Solicitors in some five cases where the risk to the Council has been high in situations where the risk has been either unforeseen or could not have been reasonable anticipated – alternatively it has arisen in circumstances where Officers could not have been expected to manage the situation any differently	
<b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> Currently the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer agree exceptional expenditure under delegated powers on an ad hoc basis. This has been discussed with SMT who felt that the costs should be composited and put into a bid	

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B10 Public Relations - additional support</b>
<b>Amount: £7800</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> : Increasing demand is being placed on the PR office internally and externally:  Arising from necessary promotion of and reaction to major projects e.g. Totnes Southern Area, Sherford, Waste, etc and increasing public and community expectation for information. Also the more active the Council is in communicating effectively the better it is understood and perceived. Over time this will reduce the cost of responding to poor perception, criticism or attacks upon the Council's reputation. MORI research shows that Councils with equivalent performance have satisfaction ratings relating to their investment in effective communications.</p> <p>The Council needs to be more active in promoting the positive, improve its strategic communications and have more capacity to respond to negative publicity. Initiatives such as a quarterly South Hams magazine, a monthly parish newsletter, working with editors, continuing to improve branding and more proactive communication requires extra capacity.</p> <p>There is currently one assistant post of 18.5 hours and admin support of 4 hours. The proposal is for an amalgamation of these hours plus an additional 15 hours of capacity per week, bringing the Assistant PR Officer hours up to a full time role, allowing the PR Officer to concentrate on strategic issues, reputation management and communications support for major council projects.</p>	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Local Government Act 1972	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> More effective delivery of CP1 – 6 and CC5 Communication, Consultation and Openness	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b> The PR Office will fail to meet current workload pressures and continue to operate just a 'press' function. Media relations may deteriorate and the councils reputation in local communities could suffer	
<b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> There is currently one post of 18.5 hours and admin support of 4 hours – this approach is disjointed and is not the most effective use of the PR budget	

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B11 Housing - new post, strategy and affordable housing delivery</b>
<b>Amount: £30,000</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> The bid is for a new post to assist with the Council's Strategic and Enabling role and to supplement the existing two members of staff who undertake the majority of these functions.</p> <p>The amount of work associated with the provision of affordable housing continues to increase with the emerging LDF, existing sites and windfall sites which have to include an element of affordable housing in accordance with the SPG. For example all planning applications in rural parts of the District require an element of affordable housing. This requires often extensive discussions with landowners, developers or agents on each site.</p> <p>The amount of sub regional and county work is also having a significant impact on workloads with sub regional allocations of funding, and also requirement for Housing Needs Surveys and Housing Market Assessments. In addition the Supporting People agenda requires a lot of District input as well as representing Devon Strategic Housing Group as a lead for a particular client group. The delivery of the existing capital programme provides the team with an enormous number of challenges which require staff input to progress the schemes – recent examples include Saint Barnabas in Dartmouth, Bishop's Court in Newton Ferrers, and the Helmer's Site in Chillington. There are a number of new projects coming forward including the refurbishment of Avondale House in South Brent and adaptations to two Council owned properties in Totnes. The Council is also exploring the possibility of undertaking our own Homebuy scheme on land owned by the Council.</p> <p>The team has no research or policy function which is needed to help shape the longer term Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy. Members are keen to see further work developed to make significant progress to address the scale of the housing problem. Current staff resources are focussed on delivery of the approved Housing Strategy Action Plan 2006 – 2011.</p> <p>The ODPM and the Housing Corporation are encouraging Local Authorities to invest in their Strategic and Enabling role which they see as being at the heart of the Council's community leadership role in terms of the provision of affordable housing.</p> <p>This bid needs to be assessed in the context of the Community Policy Development Group discussion held on 24 November, which identified the need for further additional resources to enable the Council to more effectively deliver its affordable housing priorities. How this objective could be achieved and resourced is currently being assessed and may super cede this bid.</p>	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Housing Act 1996	

<p><b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP1 Affordable Housing; CP6 – improve core service performance in a cost effective way.</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b> High Financial Risk. The amount of money required to fund the Housing Capital programme or find other alternatives is becoming increasingly important. If sufficient new affordable housing isn't delivered this will increase the number of homeless households having to live in temporary accommodation for longer with associated revenue costs for the Council.</p>
<p><b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> Possible use of consultants but as they will require extensive briefing this will have an impact on staff time. Some strategic work is being undertaken by the Devon Wide Affordable Housing Co-ordinator funded for 2 years from 2<sup>nd</sup> homes money. However this work is focussed on county wide issues, rather than priorities in South Hams.</p>

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B12 Contribution to South Hams Volunteer Centre</b>
<b>Amount: £7,000</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> Bid for a grant of £7,000 per annum to contribute to a partnership-funded proposal, known as the South Hams Volunteer Centre. This would require a new Service Level Agreement with South Hams CVS. The project would provide a co-ordinator looking at new and creative methods of recruiting and retaining volunteers, taking into account local needs and trends, as well as supporting voluntary and community organisations that involve volunteers in their activities.</p>	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Discretionary. Local Government Act 2000	
<p><b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> South Hams CVS represents the hundreds of voluntary organisations and groups across the South Hams as one of the Council's key strategic partners. An existing contribution to the CVS of £21,970, plus a rental contribution of £6,600 towards office accommodation owned by the Council should be noted. This current funding contributes towards the recognised core function of a CVS, i.e. support services (training, forum activities, newsletter, website, outreach visits); development work (helping new community groups establish, governance and financial arrangements); and representation/strategic partnership work e.g. Strategic Partnership involvement, consultation activities etc.</p> <p>The CVS's new Volunteer Centre proposal could make a general contribution to the Council's overall aim 'to improve the well-being of the people of the South Hams'. It would provide the recognised core functions of a volunteer bureau, i.e. developing volunteering opportunities; marketing volunteering; brokerage between those needing volunteers and those offering</p>	

their time; developing good practice; policy responses and strategic development of volunteering. This range of activities potentially supports CP2, bringing people back to work along with supporting all other priorities and could help the Council to fulfil the 6 Council commitments which underpin those priorities. The bid does not specifically link to any defined corporate targets, but the SLA could be structured to secure this.

**Risk Assessment:** South Hams remains the only district in Devon without a Volunteer Centre (volunteer bureau) service. This is because for the past few years work has been concentrated on securing a sustainable funding foundation for the CVS. The CVS have spent the last 2 years collating data, researching the need and developing plans for a viable service.

If the bid is not supported, the opportunity to harness new volunteer labour and the skills volunteers bring to a range of community groups would be lost, as would the opportunity to utilise both the enthusiasm of young people to volunteer in their communities, promoting active citizenship; and the skills and knowledge of the retired population locally, who it is known are travelling outside of the district to volunteer.

**Alternative approaches explored:** This would be a partnership project, requiring a new Service Level Agreement, which would define specific outcomes. This could enable the Council to ensure that activities are focused towards the Council’s priorities, and justify the investment of £7,000. If the bid is not supported, the CVS will approach grant-making trusts, however this avenue of funding is usually short term project related and therefore not sustainable. If some core funding can be secured, future national CVS funding streams can be approached.

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B13 Building Control Partnership Funding</b>
<b>Amount: £17,000 recurring expenditure; £20,000 one off capital sum ( see report to Executive 8.12.05)</b>	
<b>Description of Item:</b> This service is likely to join the Devon Building Control Partnership. To join the Partnership the service is required to have defined staffing capacity, and require investment in IT. The costs will be covered by fee increases and part use of Building Control Reserves	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Building Act 1984	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP6 Target (C)	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b> High Risk. The service is in urgent need of improvement to meet customer need in a competitive environment	
<b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> Investment in a stand alone service is likely to be more expensive. Partnership after initial investment in set up costs will be more cost effective.	

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B14 Green Tourism, contribution from Economic Initiatives reserve</b>
<b>Amount: £10,000</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> For the past 3 years the Council has funded a Green Tourism Initiative with £10K contribution p.a. from the Economic Initiatives Reserve, towards a gross partnership budget of £285K. This non-recurring funding ends March 06. This initiative has been the foundation upon which the Council obtained Beacon Status for Sustainable Tourism. In particular, the Pilot Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) currently involving 51 Businesses is to be rolled out by South West Tourism (SWT) across the Region.</p> <p>During this transitional period the Council may wish to ensure 'our lead' in Green Tourism is maintained by supporting and developing the 'business tool' now being taken forward by SWT. This will also enable the 'On the Right Tracks' Visitor Payback scheme (currently it has raised £26K for local Green Lanes) and support to the industry to continue beyond March 06. The proposal will go some way to meeting industry and public expectation expressed through the Community, Prosperity and Tourism Strategy consultation. The sum of £10K p.a. for 3 years can be found from the Economic Initiatives Reserve, subject to sufficient funds being made available.</p>	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Tourism Development Act 1968	
<p><b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP2 Quality economic activity – Measures K – M relating to green tourism and visitor spend. CP3 Distinctive Environment – Measure M relating to environment as reason for visitors coming to South Hams. Commitments to sustainability, community, partnership and value for money.</p>	
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b> The Council could fall behind the rest of the Region as Green Tourism is developed by SWT and Devon County Council through its 'Discover Devon Naturally' Programme. Businesses involved who currently lead the field, may consider previous year's time and investment a waste leading to criticism of the Council and our partners if the impetus is lost within South Hams. The current marketing opportunity would be lost and the South Hams status as the prime UK Green Tourism destination could be undermined. Beacon Council Status has given the Council a national profile which could be overtaken by activities at Regional and County level.</p>	
<p><b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> Team restructuring considered to provide staff support, however, the skills required do not exist within the team at present. Supplementary training could partially address this but not until the future. Negotiations are taking place with current Environment Audit consultants regarding future work in South Hams and how this fits with the regional roll out of GTBS.</p>	

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<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B15 Contribution to Economic Initiatives reserve</b>
<b>Amount: £55,000</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> The annual contribution of £55,000 to the Economic Initiatives Reserve expires in 2005 / 2006. Therefore, a bid is required to maintain the reserve at an appropriate level to meet existing commitments and future calls on the Reserve; a continuation of the previous contribution at £55,000 per annum for 5 years is proposed.</p> <p>Taking into account existing commitments, the balance on the reserve has been estimated at £91,414 at 31 March 2007 and £41,059 at 31 March 2008. The annual contribution to support the regeneration partnership with West Devon (Facilitating Rural Project Development), the cultural tourism assessment and partnership development, and the Business Survey are the main commitments.</p> <p>A number of further calls upon this Reserve are potentially likely to arise from the Prosperity Strategy Review (first draft to be considered by PPDG on November 24 2005) and the ensuing Action Plan. There is also an identified pressure for a continuation of the Green Tourism Project. (see also bid B14)</p>	
<p><b>Statutory Powers:</b> Discretionary Activity Local Govt Act 2000 (Part 1) Section 120 Local Govt Act 1972 Local Govt and Housing Act 1989 (s.33 &amp; 34)</p>	
<p><b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP2 (including corporate N)</p>	
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b> Medium: The principal risk is that, as the Reserve dwindles, there will be no ready funding source for initiatives that may be required over the course of revised Prosperity Strategy. If the bid is not progressed, such initiatives are likely to fail for lack of funds. It will also diminish the Council's ability to provide matched funding for strategically acceptable projects that are likely to arise in the future.</p>	
<p><b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> In view of the level of uncommitted reserves (£91,414 at 31 March 2007 and £41,059 at 31 March 2008), the bid could be deferred until 2007 / 2008.</p>	

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B16 Housing register and homelessness software</b>
<b>Amount: £160,000; £140,000 one off expenditure and £20,000 recurring. (These figures are very approximate estimates)</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> The Council's Housing Register and Homelessness Software needs to be upgraded as it is no longer compatible with corporate IT hardware which will result in significant maintenance costs having to be borne by the Housing Cost Centre. The existing software package is over 15 years old and new products have now become available which would better suit the existing business needs of the team.</p> <p>In addition the Government requires that all Local Authorities change their Allocation Policies to incorporate Choice Based Lettings by 2010. This will require a significant revision of the Council's Housing Software and policies and this will need to be carefully project planned to ensure that Members have an opportunity to input into any new policies and that any decisions that are made are in accordance with the legislation.</p> <p>There will be a lot of training for staff not only on the new system but also in terms of new ways of working as a result of the change from maintaining a Housing Register to operating a Choice Based Lettings system. For example instead of dealing with queries from applicants as to their position on the list, staff resources would be switched to supporting vulnerable applicants to make bids for properties.</p> <p>Due to the size and complexity of this project some additional Project Management resources may be needed both in terms of IT and Housing Staff. It is also likely to take approximately 2 years for the project to go live. Members should note that these costings are very draft at this stage but the sums are potentially significant, and in view of government requirements, some investment will be unavoidable. The major sum will be a one off cost with recurring costs arising from licenses for the software.</p>	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002	
<p><b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b></p> <p>CP1 – secure a supply of housing for local people at affordable levels</p> <p>CP1A Number on housing register Reduce by 10% per annum the number in priority need above 130 points</p> <p>CP1B Use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation by homeless families with children To reduce to nil by March 2004 (except in exceptional cases and then the period of residence will be for a maximum of 6 weeks)</p>	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b> High Financial and Legal Risk. The cost of maintaining the equipment will be very high and as the software becomes obsolete there will be	

additional risk that it will no longer be supported.

The legal risk associated with not meeting the Government’s target of having a CBL system by 2010 could be high if works are not undertaken to upgrade the Council’s IT system. Some Councils and RSLs have already implemented CBL schemes – including Torbay Council.

**Alternative approaches explored:** Discussion with other Districts regarding a Devon Wide approach will not deal with the need to have a software package to manage the Council’s Housing Register, Homelessness and rents system. There may be an opportunity to work on a sub regional basis with adjoining authorities or on a County wide basis in the future.

<b>File Ref:</b>	<b>B17 Tree maintenance</b>
<b>Amount: £15,000</b>	
<p><b>Description of Item:</b> The current Tree safety survey is taking place on all trees in Council ownership. A budget of £19K was approved by Executive to undertake this work. A budget of £16K had been established for works (this sum held back from Grounds Maintenance payment) in the first year. In financial year 04/05 Council’s corporate expenditure on tree works amounted to nearly £32K. The survey is indicating an increasing number of trees in need of surgery to make them safe. Additional funding is therefore needed to meet the liability and duty of care required to make trees safe, however, the level of funding is uncertain until survey work is completed. Arrangements will be made with Finance to ensure that Council is not put at risk by undertaking all emergency and known required tree work during 06/07. This could then lead to a bid in 07/08 when tree data will allow a more informed decision on budget required.</p>	
<b>Statutory Powers:</b> Occupiers Liability Act 57 + 74 - Duty of Care	
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities:</b> CP3 – Distinctive Environment Asset Management Strategy Objective	
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b> Very high risk of liability and claims against the Council for loss of life and property damage, risk of prosecution and very large sums in excess of many hundreds of thousands should the council be found to be negligent in its duty of care.</p>	
<b>Alternative approaches explored:</b> Future costs uncertain until survey complete.	