

Eco-building using less energy than kettle



Forward thinking charity Disability Essex is leading the way in the reduction of carbon with the construction of a pioneering new eco-building using funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Utilising sustainable methods of design and construction, the building will form the charity's professionally accredited training centre and operational headquarters and is

scheduled to take three years to complete.

The idea for the new eco-building came as a result of the charity identifying the urgent need for new facilities to meet the increasing demands for specialist disability services. Choosing to design and construct the building completely with sustainability in mind the charity is looking to minimise its impact on the environment as well as creating a bespoke and flexible building with minimal running costs.

The new Centre for Disability Studies will incorporate an innovative ecological design and will be constructed to Passivhaus standards - the leading standards for energy efficient construction in Europe – as well as exceeding BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) excellent rating. It will help to minimise the carbon footprint of Disability Essex with an expected reduction in carbon emissions of 80-85 per cent compared to a building of similar size.


Discussing the centre Richard Boyd, chief executive of Disability Essex said: "The centre will be the first non-domestic building to meet the stringent Passivhaus standards of excellence. With under-floor heating and utilising natural light it has been designed with the disabled in mind and is expected to reduce energy consumption to less than £150 per year, or put another way, to that of a 3 kilowatt kettle!"

With ambitious government targets for the UK to achieve an 80 per cent reduction in carbon emissions from 1990 levels by 2050, it is imperative that organisations adopt a low carbon approach in their business activities. Disability Essex is hoping that if the global impact on climate change doesn't persuade businesses to review their approach, then the associated cost-savings might.

This new building will cost £2 million with a contribution of £815,918 from ERDF and the majority of the balance coming from the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) Building Communities Fund. In addition to the charity, the centre will also directly house two businesses providing them with the supply of low carbon energy as well as stimulating the economy by creating 33 jobs.

Richard continued: “As well as being a well equipped training centre specifically designed for use by those with physical sensory and cognitive impairments, it will also become a showcase building demonstrating environmental best practice. We want to encourage other charities and businesses to adopt low a carbon approach by demonstrating that fully sustainable building can be achieved without compromise to design.”

Once the construction of the Centre for Disability Studies is complete, the building will be independently assessed and certified by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to confirm that the highest possible standards of sustainable innovation have been met. An opening celebration is planned for March 2010, when it is hoped that the Princess Royal will be formally opening the centre.

Priority Axis 3			
Funding:	Total Project Cost: £2,039,795 ERDF: £815,918 Public Funds: £800,000 Disability Essex: £423,877		
Solution for Business Product:	Low Carbon Energy Demonstration		
Scope:	Essex	Project Duration:	March–November 2009
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ERDF Details:	<p>The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is a seven-year investment programme part financed by the European Union. Its objective is ‘towards low carbon economic growth’ in the East of England and €110.9 million has been allocated to our region.</p> <p>The fund aims to help small and medium size enterprises respond to the challenges of climate change and the huge commercial potential behind a low carbon economy.</p> <p>For more information visit w: http://www.communities.gov.uk/regeneration/regenerationfunding/europeanregionaldevelopment/eastengland/ or tel+44 0303 4446400</p> 