

Public Report

**Advisory Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 18th January, 2016**

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**Summary Sheet**

**Title: Suspension of Standing orders for various commissions supporting work on the Bassingthorpe Farm Delivery project**

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**  
No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Karl Battersby, Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services

**Report Author**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Rotherham West  
Wingfield  
and Rawmarsh

**Executive Summary**

In order to progress the Bassingthorpe Farm site, further detailed information is required to assist with masterplanning and delivery, prior to the site being marketed. The funding for the work majority of the work has been drawn down from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) with the remainder sought from RMBC capital.

The named consultants have already been involved in the production of information required to support the justification, evidence and viability information for the Concept Plan for Bassingthorpe Farm. This information was sufficient to convince the Inspector, at the Core Strategy Examination in Public, to remove the site from the greenbelt and allocate it as a strategic site. It is therefore proposed that the same consultants be asked to build on this initial work, by providing further detail to the original reports and plans, to update and move forward the delivery of the site.

The report seeks an exemption under Standing Order 38 from Standing Order 47 (requirement for contracts valued at less than £50,000 to be tendered) so that commissions can be issued to various consultants to undertake reports, to enable further assessment of the Bassingthorpe Farm development.

## **Recommendation**

### **The Commissioners recommend:-**

**An exemption under Standing Order 38 from Standing Order 47 (requirement for contracts valued at less than £50,000 to be tendered) be granted and the Council commission the companies detailed in the report to carry out further site investigation work and masterplanning.**

**The works to be commissioned total £58,600 to be paid from the Homes and Communities Agency – Large Sites Infrastructure Fund and the ground conditions investigations work to be funded by the council's capital programme, totals £45,000.**

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

## **Council Approval Required**

No

## **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Suspension of Standing Orders for Various commissions supporting work on the Bassingthorpe Farm Delivery project**

### **1. Recommendations**

#### **The Commissioners recommend:-**

- 1.1 An exemption under Standing Order 38 from Standing Order 47 (requirement for contracts valued at less than £50,000 to be tendered) be granted and the Council commission the companies detailed in the report to carry out further site investigation work and masterplanning.
- 1.2 The works to be commissioned total £58,600 to be paid from the Homes and Communities Agency – Large Sites Infrastructure Fund and the ground conditions investigations work, to be funded by the council's capital programme, totals £45,000.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Bassingthorpe Farm is identified as a strategic allocation in the Local Plan Core Strategy and was removed from the green belt on its adoption on 10 September 2014. The whole site extends to approximately 159.3 ha (394 acres) and has a developable area of around 80 ha. The concept plan for the site proposes 2,400 new dwellings, and also includes 11 ha of employment land, a local health centre, a primary school, and a local centre, together with the green and social infrastructure necessary to create facilities to serve the new and existing communities.
- 2.2 The Local Plan policy for the site states that the concept framework will be used as the basis for further comprehensive masterplanning to assist with the delivery of the site. The policy goes on to state that before a planning application can be submitted, a phasing and delivery strategy should be completed; an access and transport strategy produced, together with a green infrastructure strategy to ensure the development of a comprehensive urban extension.
- 2.3 The next stage in the process is to build on the initial work carried out to support the core strategy, and provide more detailed information to understand how the development can effectively be brought forward looking at:- the drainage requirements for the site; the utilities that would be required to open up the site for development; and a ground condition investigation to understand any constraints to development to secure its delivery. The transport modelling required for the site has already been commissioned and the work is underway. Following on from the completion of these studies the masterplan, to identify deliverable areas, phasing and strategic layout can be

progressed and full viability appraisals, taking into account these requirements, undertaken.

### 3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The evidence base collated for the strategic site in the Core Strategy was to demonstrate that in principle the site was capable of being delivered, with no major constraints to development. This evidence, to support the strategic allocation, was submitted via the work of a number of consultants and it is proposed that the same consultants build on this preliminary work, to provide more detailed evidence going forward.
- 3.2 As part of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Infrastructure Funding for Large sites funding was made available to bring forward the delivery of sites. RMBC successfully bid for £100k for Bassingthorpe Farm to complete works to enhance its deliverability. Funding is therefore available to commission further work.
- 3.3 The work required from the consultants is detailed below:
  - 3.3.1 Updating the **masterplan framework** plans (including developable areas, appropriate land uses and infrastructure requirements) on the basis of further technical work and setting out a **phasing plan** for development and critical infrastructure.
  - 3.3.2 Updating the masterplan framework with more **detailed drawings** for infrastructure (highway and drainage) requirements, where appropriate.
  - 3.3.3 Providing an **infrastructure delivery plan** that identifies what infrastructure is required, when, at what costs (based on technical work) and recommended funding sources/delivery mechanisms.
  - 3.3.4 Updating the **cost plan** for the development (in terms of development costs, infrastructure requirements, s106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), sales values).
  - 3.3.5 Updating the **Financial Appraisal** that informed the site allocation process of the Core Strategy (including site abnormalities, site opening up costs, infrastructure costs, values and s106/CIL contributions) and scenario testing.
  - 3.3.6 Production of **Infrastructure Funding Strategy**, indicating how the components of infrastructure can be funded.
  - 3.3.7 Understanding the **transport, drainage, utility and education requirements** in more detail, through further assessment/technical work.

3.4 The work of four separate consultants is required to provide the comprehensive information needed to produce a detailed masterplan and viability appraisal and the breakdown of the work to be commissioned is detailed below:-

3.4.1 Signet Planning will manage the production of a masterplan for the site based on the updated technical appraisal work to be completed. As part of the masterplanning work they will be required to produce a phasing and infrastructure plan including methods of delivery. The cost for this work is £16,700.

3.4.2 DTZ are to be commissioned to update their initial viability appraisal of the site. The report is to address updates in the market situation and cost analysis together with appraisals of at least two viability scenarios in the final viability report. The cost of this work is £15,000.

3.4.3 JBA consultants are to provide a detailed drainage strategy for the site. The brief is to include on site testing and investigation to produce a surface water management plan and an outline design for a detailed drainage strategy for the site. The cost for this work is £18,850.

3.4.4 WSP will be commissioned to examine the potential constraints and opportunities in relation to delivery of and requirement for on-site utilities. The cost of this work is £8,050.

3.4.5 WSP are also to be commissioned to carry out historical research, to provide greater detail in relation to ground conditions, primarily the nature and extent of shallow and opencast mining. This ground investigation work will identify in detail areas suitable for development where there are no significant or unexpected ground related abnormal costs which will feed into the masterplan. The cost of this work is £45,000.

3.5 As part of the development of the Council's Capital Programme (2016-2021), a funding requirement of £385,000 has been identified in respect of costs that will be incurred in bringing the Bassingthorpe Site forward for disposal. The cost of these ground condition site surveys falls within the scope of this proposed scheme. Therefore it is requested that this £45,000 cost is included in the Capital Programme for 2015/16.

#### **4. Options considered and recommended proposals**

4.1 The alternative option considered is to tender for the work but seeing as the consultants were used to produce the concept plan and evidence base to support Bassingthorpe Farm through the Local Plan process, the continuation

of this work to provide a detailed masterplan is considered the best option. The HCA have been involved in the process and support the proposed engagement of the same consultants to develop this initiative through to the masterplan stage and confirm it is an acceptable use of the funding. The engagement of these four consultants, to build on the initial work already completed, would also reduce costs and the timescale involved, due to their existing knowledge and expertise related to the site.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with officers from the Corporate Property Unit in relation to the detail of the brief to consultants and with the HCA to agree the terms of the funding. The report has been approved by Legal and Financial Services and discussed with the procurement team prior to submission.

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 6.1 Appointment of consultants by the end of January 2016
- 6.2 The consultants will report back to the Bassingthorpe Farm steering group

## **7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 7.1 The majority of the work will be funded from the Homes and Communities Agency's Large Infrastructure Fund, which was secured with the aim of speeding up the delivery of the Bassingthorpe Farm and the ground condition survey from the Councils Capital programme. The HCA have also agreed this proposed approach to the procurement of consultants.
- 7.2 If this business is not tendered across the open market there is a risk of legal challenge from service providers who believe their company could provide this type of service into Rotherham MBC

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications of this decision.

## **9. Human Resources Implications**

- 9.1 There are no human resources implications of this decision

## **10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 10.1 There are no implications for CYPS or Vulnerable Adults.

## **11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

- 11.1 There are no Equalities and Human Rights implications.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

- 12.1 The work will assist with the delivery of this Strategic site, which is to be marketed by Asset Management and will assist in the delivery of new homes, in accordance with the Housing Strategy.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 There is a risk that other service providers in the market place may argue that they could have bid to provide the service.

## **14. Accountable Officer(s)**

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Jonathon Baggley

Director of Legal Services:- Adrian Phillips

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):- Helen Chambers

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