

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development
2. Date:	02 September 2013
3. Title:	Sustainability Appraisal of Final Draft Sites and Policies Document
4. Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

An exemption from Standing Orders is sought to allow orders to be placed with Jacobs UK Ltd to continue the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan Sites and Policies document. Essential further work will be required by the consultants to enable the adoption of the Sites and Policies document following its Examination in Public.

6. Recommendations

1. That Cabinet Member approves the exempting of the proposed appointment of Jacobs UK Ltd to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal of the Sites and Policies Document to enable its adoption from Standing Orders 47.6.2 (requirement to invite at least two oral or written quotations for contracts with an estimated value of £5,000 but less than £20,000) and 47.6.3 (requirement to invite at least three written quotations for contracts with an estimated value of between £20,000 and £50,000).

7. Proposals and Details

At each stage in the preparation of the Local Plan the Council is required by national and European Law (EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC) to undertake Sustainability Appraisal of the proposals.

Jacobs UK Ltd were appointed by the Council in March 2013 to undertake the Integrated Impact Assessment of the Draft Sites and Policies Document (May 2013), following a competitive tendering procedure using the Homes and Communities Agency Panel and Framework to appoint the successful consultants. Further Sustainability Appraisal is required for the following reasons:

- to accompany the Final Draft of the Sites and Policies Document during its next consultation stage to ensure that it is robust and fit for purpose;
- to prepare a further update to the Sustainability Appraisal / Integrated Impact Assessment to accompany the Publication Version of the Sites and Policies Document ;
- to prepare a further update to the Sustainability Appraisal / Integrated Impact Assessment to support the Submission of the Sites and Policies Document;
- to provide essential further work as required, to enable the adoption of the Rotherham Sites and Policies Document following its Examination in Public.

At each of the above stages of Plan preparation a review of the Integrated Impact Assessment will be required. The following key tasks are essential to progressing the Sites and Policies Document to its next stage:

1. Sustainability Appraisal of the proposed Schedule of Changes to policies arising from the consultation undertaken between May and July 2013; and the incorporation of changes to the emerging Sites and Policies Document promoted through the Integrated Impact Assessment May 2013.
2. Update the Sustainability Appraisal of all sites incorporating anticipated further work on archaeology; landscape sensitivity and protected species and habitats.
3. Undertake the Sustainability Appraisal of the changes to sites proposed for allocation in the Final Draft Sites and Policies Document and arising from the consultation undertaken May to July 2013 and the further work identified under item 2.
4. Review the comments received to the Draft Sites and Policies Document (May 2013) Sustainability Appraisal and Integrated Impact Assessment and amend the IIA as necessary.
5. Review the comments received from Natural England on the Habitat Regulation Screening undertaken as part of the Sites and Policies Document May 2013, Integrated Impact Assessment and advise on any changes necessary to the emerging Sites and Policies Document.

6. Provide advice on the need for a further Habitat Regulation Screening Assessment and if necessary undertake the HRA Screening Assessment.
7. Review and confirm that the Equalities Impact Assessment is fit for purpose.
8. Review and confirm that the Health Impact Assessment is fit for purpose.

Given the extensive Integrated Impact Assessment completed by Jacobs UK Ltd in May 2013, there will be significant economies for the same consultancy to undertake this work particularly given the tight timeframe for completion of the Sustainability Appraisal.

The consultants have extensive and detailed knowledge of the earlier work undertaken (in preparing the Core Strategy and Sites and Policies documents and the Sustainability Appraisal work completed to accompany the various stages of Local Plan preparation) and direct access to relevant information within their own records.

Due to the technical nature of this work, the appointment of a different consultancy to undertake this work would incur additional time and costs derived from reviewing and incorporating previous sustainability work undertaken by others and reading and understanding our emerging Local Plan.

8. Finance

The total cost of services required from Jacobs UK Ltd is currently being negotiated. An indicative figure of £8,000 to £12,000 is likely to be achieved for the first commission; the sustainability appraisal of the Final Draft Sites & Policies document. Costs for the remaining stages will be dependent on the amount of changes required to the Sites & Policies document following consultation so are difficult to quantify at this stage. However, based on experience with sustainability appraisal of the Core Strategy, indicative figures for subsequent stages could be £10,000 for sustainability appraisal of the Publication Sites and Policies document; £2,000 for “expert witness” support at the Sites & Policies document EIP; and, £8,000 to £10,000 for sustainability appraisal of any modifications required at EIP and completing the adoption process. These fees are considered reasonable and competitive based on quotes received from other consultancies when this work was subject to tender earlier in the Local Plan preparation process. The cost of this project will be met from the Planning Policy Team budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Seeking tenders for this work would significantly delay the commencement of this Sustainability Appraisal and potentially impact on the timing and subsequent publication and submission of the Sites and Policies Document.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The appointment of consultants with previous detailed knowledge of the project will enable the Council to adhere to its timetable for publication of the Sites and Policies Document in late 2014.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation on this report has been undertaken with the Council's legal and financial programme areas. The Director, Legal and Electoral Services, supports the recommendation for the reasons outlined in the report.

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