

Invitation to submit formal written quotation

Brief for the production of additional work to supplement our current Green Belt and Countryside Study

1. Specification

The client team is as follows:

Client: Carol Humphrey, Head of Planning Services

Points of contact for the client for the purposes of the invitation to tender:

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2. Introduction and background

The Council is seeking to commission a Service Provider as its consultant (the 'consultant'). The consultant will prepare an additional piece of work (Volume V) to supplement and build on the existing Green Belt and Countryside Study (GBCS).

This document is the brief for this commission.

Policy context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that our Local Plan should meet our full objectively assessed housing need, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the framework (paragraph 47). One of the key factors likely to affect our ability to meet this is the presence of the Metropolitan Green Belt, which currently covers 89 per cent of the borough.

Paragraph 80 sets out the main purposes of the Green Belt, which are:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and

- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics are their openness and permanence (paragraph 79). It requires we take account of the need to promote sustainable development by channelling development towards urban areas, towns and villages inset in the Green Belt or locations outside of the Green Belt (paragraph 84).

Previous work

A substantial body of work already exists that this commission should seek to build on. In 2009, we commissioned Pegasus to carry out a GBCS. At that time, the key requirement of the study was to:

Provide a robust, independent assessment of Guildford Borough's Green Belt and 'countryside beyond the Green Belt' with a view to potential release for development purposes in the longer term, should this be necessary within the Guildford Local Development Framework Plan Period 2006-2026 (and up to 2030), identifying realistic sustainable location(s) for green field release.

In order to fulfil this requirement, Pegasus assessed all Green Belt and countryside beyond the Green Belt¹ land against the main purposes of the Green Belt. This information informed the subsequent identification of potential development areas (PDAs), alongside other considerations such as sustainability credentials and environmental capacity. Initially the identification of PDAs was restricted to those surrounding the urban areas of Guildford, Ash and Tongham only (Volume II).

In May 2011, we requested additional work to assess PDAs surrounding the villages (Volume III). This would ensure a greater degree of flexibility when refining our spatial strategy during the Local Plan process. The study only assessed villages located outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

In June 2012, following publication of the NPPF, we requested further work to identify whether villages should remain washed over by the Green Belt or whether they should be inset (Volume IV).

Volumes I – IV together with a summary document were finalised in February 2013 and published as part of our suite of evidence base studies in July 2013.

Other studies and background documents that may prove useful and help inform the study are:

- Local Plan 2003

¹ This is a local designation in the current Local Plan (2003) that affords a similar level of protection as the Green Belt.

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- Settlement Hierarchy (2013)
- Landscape Character Assessment (2007)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009)
- transport evidence (various)
- ecology evidence, including phased resurveys of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)
- Annual monitoring report – housing trajectory (2012/13)
- previous submissions to the Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003) examination and emerging Local Plan process to date
- Local Development Scheme - timetable

The emerging Local Plan

We are currently in the process of producing our new Local Plan (to 2031) and expect to publish an Issues and Options consultation in October 2013, alongside a Sustainability Appraisal. This document will set out the key strategic issues for which the Local Plan will need to address, and the options we have going forward. A key issue will be the scale and distribution of housing. Since the publication of the NPPF and revocation of the South East Plan, we are now required to set our own housing number using a robust evidence base. The Issues and Options document will include a number of different housing figure options that we may choose to pursue through the Local Plan process.

Interlinked with this, we will also have a number of choices for how we propose to distribute this development across the borough (our spatial strategy). It is important to note that these sources of supply are not mutually exclusive to each other and we are likely to need to use them in combination in order to meet our eventual housing requirement. The Issues and Options document will, when published, identify the following sources of supply:

- a. redevelop appropriate buildings and spaces in our towns and villages
- b. use land on the edge of villages to provide affordable housing for local need
- c. reuse previously developed land in the countryside
- d. use countryside land in the west of the borough
- e. use countryside in the centre of the borough (by extending Guildford town's boundaries)
- f. use countryside to expand around villages
- g. significantly expand an existing village
- h. create a new village

We have used previous volumes of the GBCS to help quantify the level of supply that we could achieve using options d, e and f insofar as they apply to settlements within Guildford borough. We have not fully explored options g or h. Further work is therefore required in order to investigate whether there is scope for the identification of additional PDAs across the borough. This will ensure that we base our allocations

on a robust and credible evidence base when assessed against all possible alternatives.

3. Scope of Volume V

Use countryside to expand around settlements located in adjoining boroughs

Currently, the GBCS only identifies PDAs surrounding urban areas and villages within Guildford borough outside of the AONB or SPA. One option that we have not yet explored is the extent to which there may be additional PDAs within our borough surrounding settlements that are located in an adjoining borough but about our boundary, for example Bramley, Farncombe and Godalming.

Use countryside to expand around settlements located in the AONB

Although the NPPF continues to apply great weight to conserving the AONB, it is apparent from recent examinations that even these designations must be properly justified. Clearly, its continued protection is of great importance however we need to ensure that we base our Local Plan on up to date evidence. For this reason, we wish to explore the scope for appropriate potential development opportunities within the AONB that would not harm the high landscape quality of this area.

This would apply to existing identified settlements in the AONB (Holmebury St Mary, Peaslake, Gomshall, Shere, Albury, Compton and Puttenham). It would also require additional assessment for those settlements which straddle the AONB such as Shalford and Chilworth.

Assess the potential to inset additional villages depending on the development of PDAs

Currently all villages identified in the Local Plan 2003 plus Peasmarsh have been assessed for insetting. However, these recommendations were assessed depending on the settlement as it currently stands. As part of Volume V, we wish to have a greater understanding on whether the development of these PDAs would alter the recommendations for insetting of villages. In other words, to identify an inset boundary which includes all PDAs necessary for this to be appropriate. This additional work would need to be done for those villages previously assessed outside the AONB, for example West Clandon, and for AONB villages currently being assessed.

Further assessment of Countryside beyond the Green Belt (CBGB)

We wish to have a clearer understanding about land currently designated as CBGB. As part of Volume II, we assessed whether there was merit in re-designating some of this as Green Belt land. We want to ensure that we have robust justification for rolling back the Green Belt elsewhere if there is still CBGB land available. In

particular please could you assess the relative merits of those pieces of land not previously identified as a PDA, mostly in land parcels K3 and K5.

Expansion or redevelopment of previously developed sites

We have a number of previously developed sites in the Green Belt. We wish to have a clearer understanding about whether this land could be redeveloped either for a different use or more intensively for their current use. We also wish to explore whether there is potential to expand any of these sites to enable additional development to help meet future needs. Some sites are within the AONB so similar considerations to those above would apply to ensure that this would not harm the high landscape value of this area.

The sites are:

- Mount Browne (Surrey Police Head Quarters), Sandy Lane, Guildford
- Guildford College of Law, Portsmouth Road, Guildford
- Land around Merrist Wood college, near Worplesdon
- Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Wisley, Wisley
- Bisley Camp, Bisley, Brookwood
- H M Prison, Send
- BTRE Vokes, Normandy
- Research Institute, Pirbright
- Peasmarsh Industrial Estate

Significantly expand a village

An initial assessment based on previous consultation, desk-top research and our settlement hierarchy suggests that areas with greatest potential include the countryside such as land between the villages of Normandy and Flexford or Send and Send Marsh/Burnt Common. Significantly expanding or merging villages would utilise more effectively the services and facilities that are already present there whilst at the same time be of sufficient scale to enable additional supporting infrastructure. The study should assess these and other similar opportunities across the borough.

Create a new village

We have identified Wisley airfield as a potential area that may be capable of accommodating a new village. However, we recognise that in order to ensure that a new settlement is sustainable it must be of a sufficient scale to provide and support a range of services and facilities. The study should assess this and other similar opportunities across the borough.

4. Methodology

The submitted tenders must set out clearly the proposed methodology for carrying out the study including:

- identification of existing and emerging best practice
- review of national planning policy and guidance
- establish a transparent and robust system to evaluate potential development areas. This should:
 - take account of and complement the assessment already undertaken in previous volumes
 - consider the opportunities they offer for integration with existing community/communities
 - consider the opportunities for securing infrastructure that could benefit the site, and also the wider existing community/communities to ensure that we are promoting sustainable development
 - consider the locations' contribution to the quality and value of landscape character in the borough
- presentation of information and detailed analysis necessary to identify potential development areas and their capacity for development

5. Requirements

The successful consultant will be required to:

- follow a transparent and robust methodology that is explained in sufficient detail for the reader to understand with a clear audit trail of all decisions made
- identify potential development areas in the remainder of the borough not already assessed in previous volumes to ensure we are able to define a Green Belt boundary that is capable of enduring beyond the plan period
- provide a reasoned justification for all areas considered, both those recommended as potential development areas and those dismissed as part of the assessment
- assess the inter-relationship between Guildford borough and adjoining authorities particularly where potential development areas may impact or indeed rely upon settlements outside the borough. This should include a review of adopted or emerging Local Plans and relevant associated evidence studies.

6. Outputs

The successful consultant will be required to produce a written report that includes a non-technical summary of findings including its relationship with the previous volumes. As a result, the summary document and Volume I will need amending to reflect the findings of Volume V so together they can form part of a single study.

The report must not compromise any confidential or commercially sensitive information, so that it may form a publicly accessible part of the emerging Local Plan evidence base.

The client will require an electronic copy of all documents and materials produced as part of this commission on either CD or DVD. Documents should be provided in PDF, Microsoft Word and Excel formats, as appropriate.

Two hard copies of the report will also be required.

The consultants may be required to present the findings of the study before either the Local Plan Panel or a wider Councillor briefing, as deemed necessary at the time.

7. Appointment

The contract will be based upon the Council's Terms and Conditions (attached at appendix 1).

8. Key Dates

The Council would require the outputs of this study in time to feed into the next stage of Local Plan (consultation on the draft plan), scheduled for May 2014.

9. Instructions for written quotation

The written quotation must contain the information set out below.

- a) Agreement to the Terms and Conditions set out in appendix one.
- b) A fixed fee for the scope of work as set out in this brief. The fee must be exclusive of VAT and inclusive of all expenses and disbursements. Prices must be quoted in pounds sterling.
- c) A per diem fee, whereby the consultant will receive a fixed payment for any additional work provided, if required. Again, the fee must be exclusive of VAT and inclusive of all expenses and disbursements. Prices must be quoted in pounds sterling.
- d) Set out a proposed schedule of payments for services undertaken.
- e) A proposed method statement and work programme for the commission.
- f) Confirmation that, if appointed, this commission will not lead to a conflict of interest for the consultant.
- g) Confirmation that, if appointed, the consultant can undertake the commission to the timescales indicated in this brief.

- h) Details of the consultant's data protection policy and practices, and confirmation that consultant's team members are trained in relation to data protection and confidentiality, and that the consultant recognises that breach of confidentiality is not acceptable.
- i) Copy of certificates or letters setting out current Public Liability Insurance, Employers Liability Insurance and Professional Indemnity Insurance held by the consultant.
- j) Health and safety working policy and practices.
- k) The names, addresses and contact details of two referees, preferably for whom the consultant has carried out similar work, whom the client may contact in advance of appointing a consultant.

The written quotation should be no more than twelve, A4 single side pages excluding appendices in a minimum font size point 11.

There will be the opportunity for consultants to seek clarification of any part of this specification as may be required. All questions should be addressed by email to both Laura Howard and the planning policy team (email addresses given in section one).

10. Delivery of the quotation

Email the written quotation to Laura.Howard@guildford.gov.uk

The information provided in this document regarding the scope and extent of the contract is provided by the Council in good faith to assist those preparing a bid. No guarantee is given that it is exhaustive or that any conclusions whatsoever may be drawn from it. Accordingly, those submitting quotations for the work are required to investigate all matters relating to the preparation of the quotation in order to ensure that his/her quotation takes into account all matters and circumstances and it is therefore fully comprehensive and inclusive.

Appendix 1 – Provision of Services to Guildford Borough Council Terms and Conditions – attached