

**PAPER NO. 1**

**REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF 9<sup>th</sup> MAY**

---

**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 9th May 2016  
**Subject:** Commissioning of Local Plan Evidence  
**Report of:** Strategic Planning and Housing Manager  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Brodrick, Portfolio Holder for Planning  
**Status:** Information

---

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Executive of the commissioning of several pieces of work to support the Local Plan, where normal procurement process have been waived owing to reasons of urgency and continuity as extensions of previous studies.
- 1.2 The value of each commission is such that the commissioning is reported to Executive for information.

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the Executive notes the commissioning of The Landscape Partnership to undertake further landscape assessment of settlements in the District and areas being considered for Strategic Development and Aspinall Verdi to provide advice on viability of the Local Plan proposals, on the grounds of operational need in order to help assess Local Plan options and inform decision making on the spatial distribution of development to be included in the emerging Local Plan.
- 2.2 The Executive notes the expected commissioning of Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to undertake an update to the retail study which the company carried out in 2013 and MDS Transmodal to advise the Council further on Logistics and Strategic Distribution on the grounds of operational need and meeting the timescale to deliver a draft Plan.

3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure technical assessment of landscape around the proposed rural centre of Houghton on the Hill and areas being assessed further as potential Strategic Development Areas for local planning purposes

- 3.2 To ensure appropriate technical support on viability of Local Plan proposals.
- 3.3 To ensure the Councils Retail Study is updated with new household and retail forecasts to ensure that the Local Plan based on the most reliable data using consistent methodology.
- 3.4 To ensure prompt advice on the need for logistics and strategic distribution

#### 4 Key Facts

- 4.1 Landscape appraisal of parcels of land surrounding settlements in the District has been undertaken at several stages since 2008 to inform the development of the existing Core Strategy. The Council has commissioned assessments of Market Harborough, sites on the edge of the Principal Urban Area, Lutterworth and Broughton Astley and for the rural centre settlements of Billesdon, Fleckney, Great Glen, Husbands Bosworth, Kibworth and Ullesthorpe. There is need for an assessment of the proposed rural centre of Houghton on the Hill and of additional land around the areas being assessed further for potential Strategic Development Areas.
- 4.2 The Landscape Partnership has undertaken such landscape assessment previously for local planning and in order to provide consistency with other assessments in the District (and ensure the work is completed within a prompt timescale to follow examination of housing land availability), an exemption to normal contracting procedures has been agreed with the Head of Planning and Regeneration in conjunction with the Corporate Director. The agreement is in accordance with the exemption set out in the Councils Statement of Required Practice for Procurement at para 6.1.7: “The work to be executed is of such a specialist nature that there would be no genuine competition; or the particular reputation or personal expertise of the contractor is of central importance to the contract (for example, an expert witness or advocate).”
- 4.3 Similarly Aspinall Verdi has been commissioned to carry out a Plan viability assessment of the Local Plan to commence with an assessment of the principal development options. The company are already contracted with the Council to provide viability assessments in association with planning applications. Owing to the urgent need to appoint a consultant on Local Planning Viability the consents of the Head of Planning & Regeneration and Corporate Director have been obtained to appoint Aspinall Verdi. This is in compliance with 6.2 of the Councils Statement of Required Practice which permits such action “where the operational need means that insufficient time exists to use the tendering procedure”. There has been a need for a contract variation in relation to this work, since under the current contract the payment for the service is made by the applicant rather than the Council. The work is currently valued at £18,945 based on the specification of work but it is likely that the company will be requested to carry out amended or additional work

related to the Options prior to the Plan Viability Assessment which is made on the final Plan proposals and thus the total cost may increase.

- 4.4 It is also proposed to seek an update to the Councils Retail Study issued in 2013 to ensure that it contains up to date information with respect to housing growth and reflects the Councils selected option for development in the Local Plan. This will be a minor update and for expediency it is appropriate to ask Nathaniel Lichfield, authors of the current report to carry out this update.
- 4.5 Lastly it is proposed to seek further advice from MDS Transmodal who authored the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Study. This will provide necessary updated advice on the need for future space for Logistics and Distribution to both the District Council for Local Plan purposes and authorities across Leicester and Leicestershire to assist in preparing a Strategic Growth Plan. In both cases, the consents of the Head of Planning & Regeneration and Corporate Director have been obtained to appoint each company.
- 4.6 It is possible that other similar exemptions to procurement practice will be needed in order to support the Local Plan timetable and the Executive will be similarly notified as necessary.

## 5 Legal Issues

- 5.1 The advice of the Service Manager, Commissioning has been sought: he has confirmed that the recommended commissioning actions would be permissible under exemptions from the Council's Statement of Required Practice for Procurement on the grounds identified above.

## 6 Resource Issues

- 6.1 Budgetary provision for the local plan work is contained the General Fund Earmarked Reserves for the Local Plan as detailed in the Executive Report of February 2016

## 7 Equality Analysis Implications/Outcomes

- 7.1 None considered. Not appropriate at this stage. Refers to technical assessment which will inform policy and decision making in due course which will be include full Equality Assessment

## 8 Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 Approval to carry out this work has been carried out in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures following the advice of the Commissioning Manager and approved by the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in

conjunction with the Corporate Director. As we have followed due policy, risk of challenge is minimal. .

9 Consultation

9.1 Approval to carry out this work has been sought following the advice obtained from the Councils Commissioning Manager and the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in conjunction with the Corporate Director.

10 Options Considered

10.1 The report is for information only as the exemption has been exercised..

11 Background Papers

11.1 Executive Report, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016

---

**Previous report(s):**

**Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N**

**Ward Members Notified: N**