

ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL: OFFICER DECISION RECORD

1. Title / Subject Matter: Procurement for the undertaking of a New Settlements Study, as part of the Spatial Options process for the emerging Ashfield Local Plan.

2. Decision Reference No: FP/01/2020

3. Decision Taken: To go out to procurement for an external consultant to undertake a New Settlements Study, as part of the evidence base for the emerging Ashfield Local Plan.

4. Reasons for the Decision:

Ashfield District Council is preparing a new Local Plan, to shape development across the District between 2018 and 2037. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies that plans must be justified, have an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and to be based on proportionate evidence.

Following a 'Call for Sites' in 2019, the Council is undertaking a technical assessment of those sites as part of the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) as part of the local plan process. In addition, to the sites submitted, the Local Plan Working Group considered the Council should take into account the option of bringing forward new settlements to assist in meeting future growth requirements. Following a high-level assessment of new settlements by officers, the Local Plan Working Group identified two potential sites to be investigated further.

Support is required from an outside specialist consultant to undertake a New Settlements Study. The Study will provide an independent opinion and evidence base to determine whether new settlements are a realistic option for supporting future growth in Ashfield.

5. Alternative Options Considered / Rejected:

To undertake the New Settlements Study in-house through the Forward Planning Team. However an independent review of new settlements was felt beneficial and would provide a suitable alternative.

5. Implications

Legal - The Council has the power to enter into contracts in order discharge its functions (Local Government Act 1972, s111 and the Local Government (contract) Act 1997, s1).

The Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to have regulations for how it enters into contracts. In addition to complying with all relevant UK and EU legislation, every contract entered into on behalf of the Council must also comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Council's Financial Regulations.

Procuring an external consultant as per the report proposal will ensure the Council is compliant with procurement legislation, seeking to obtain value for money, and compliant with the Council's rules within the Constitution.

Finance - Costs to be funded from the additional one-off revenue budget allocated for the Local Plan in 2020/21.

Human Resources - Any appointment for a consultant there will be a requirement to ensure that the Authority is IR35 compliant, this will be determined by utilising the HMRC tool.

Environment / Sustainability – The Study is part of the evidence base to establish strategic policies in the Local Plan in relation to the pattern, scale and type of development. Consequently, it contributes towards achieving the requirement for sustainable development set out in Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Name / Title of the officer taking the Decision:

The  and Communities.

Date: 12.02.2020

Name / Title of the relevant Lead Cabinet Member consulted (if appropriate)

(This decision is not subject to call-in and is circulated for information only). **If a Cabinet Member has a conflict of interest relating to this decision, then this should be declared and a request for dispensation will be considered.**

Date:

Name / Title of the relevant Committee Chairman consulted (if appropriate)

(for non Executive/Council side function decisions)

Date:

Procurement for the undertaking of a New Settlements Study, as part of the Spatial Options process for the emerging Ashfield Local Plan.

Ashfield District Council is preparing a new Local Plan, to shape development across the District between 2018 and 2037. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies that plans must be justified, have an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and to be based on proportionate evidence. Therefore, the Local Plan has to be supported by a relevant and up-to-date evidence base. The Inspector at the Local Plan Examination will consider the strategy and evidence base for the Local Plan.

Following a 'Call for Sites' in 2019, the Council is undertaking a technical assessment of those sites as part of the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) as part of the local plan process. In addition, to the sites submitted, the Local Plan Working Group considered the Council should take into account the option of bringing forward new settlements to assist in meeting future growth requirements.

Support is required from an outside specialist consultant to undertake a New Settlements Study and provide an independent opinion and evidence base to determine whether new settlements are a realistic option for supporting future growth in Ashfield.

It is the Council's aspiration that, should the option of developing new settlements be taken forward, it must be development that is high quality in design, energy efficient, with natural green spaces integrated into its layout and support a range of services.

The Council will need to determine whether new settlements are a realistic option for supporting future growth. The aims of this feasibility study include identification of:

- Potential economic, social and environmental benefits/impacts associated with the development of each site
- Potential constraints to development
- The on and off-site infrastructure required to support delivery
- Mitigation required
- Site viability and potential developer interest in the sites
- Key stakeholders to be involved in the delivery process
- Timescales for delivery of the villages

It is understood from other local authorities and consultants experience that the cost of undertaking the Study externally may range from £50,000 to £100,000. Under the Council's Contractual Procedural Rules, the value of the work is anticipate to be above £50,000 but below the EU threshold and it will be necessary for the Procurement Unit to obtain at least three tenders in writing.