**HDC202410 – RFQ - Clarifications received up until 1st July 2024**

1. Is an accessibility audit to be conducted on the five identified sites for Lot 1?

Hart District Council owns and manages 17 countryside sites and would like to apply an accessibility principle to every site in their ownership. The audit can be undertaken at 1 site, or the 5 sites listed, whichever the applicant feels will demonstrate how to imbed accessibility into the service in the most effective way.

2. Accessibility audit only on outdoor space only or are there any inside spaces?

The accessibility audit is for outdoor sites only.

3. What existing communication channels do you have with your users?

We work with local parish councils and have established partnerships with community organisations such as Parkrun volunteers and Hart Voluntary Action. However, contacts cannot be shared for reasons other than already outlined in data sharing and privacy agreements.

We send out Hart news bi-annually to 43,000 residents and have 10k followers on Facebook.

4. What is your preferred method of communication with your users?

We would argue that it doesn’t matter what our preferred method is. We want to know what the user’s preferred method is so we can reach them.

5. Do you have any existing user insights data that we could have access to?

We have visitor counters on some of our sites that you could use.

6. The brief mentions that the ‘report should be underpinned by spatial data’. Are you referring to pinpointing specific areas of each country park/ nature reserve that visitors currently use and showing areas that we would recommend for development to encourage further usage in reporting? This seems like the obvious meaning, but I’ve learnt to never make assumptions!  
  
Spatial data refers to geographical information. Analysing where our users are visiting from etc.

7. You mention the research should be of the community – does this mean anyone living in the Hart district council area? Or would you want to go broader?  
  
We are focusing on the Hart District Council area only. Unless it is identified through the spacial data that people are coming from further afield. If that was the case, we would want to understand why.

8. Would you be able to put us in touch with parish councilors and community groups? I had a quick look on your website, and it looks like there would be about 14 parish councils and relevant community groups that you have a relationship that would need to be included in the research (assuming countryside/garden/ environmental/volunteering community groups).

We could point you in the right direction, but you would need to gain your own contacts and consents to include them in this survey due to GDPR rules and regulations.

9. To capture a representative sample of residents we would ideally use face to face interviewing using a random sampling approach, but this is quite expensive compared to other fieldwork methods, so we might need to look at a hybrid approach. If you are able to give any indication of the budget, that would help to make sure we get the right balance between robust data and keeping costs down.

You could provide a pricing option for both. We will not be disclosing the budget.

10. Is your preference to work with a provider that can deliver both Lots, or will the two be assessed separately?

There is no preference.

11**.** There are 5 sites, but we are aware that some of them are relatively large with a number of access points. Would you like us to quote only for 5 survey points (i.e. one per site) or should we allow some sites to have two points?  
  
Can you quote for both options please

12. Case studies – should we include client contact details for each project?

Yes, if that is possible and you have their consent

13. Please confirm if you would like Experience and Method Statement responses separately for each Lot, or as a combined proposal.   
   
Separately for each lot please

14. Do you have a proposed maximum budget?

We will not be disclosing the budget. Bidders could provide more than one quote detailing what the additional cost would provide, and why it might be recommended to do additional work.

15. Do you have the desired sample size for the visitor surveys?

No, we would look to you to advise us on this.

16. Please confirm if you would like a fee to be for an Access Audit of all 17 sites, or a fee for 1 audit which could be applied multiple times.   
   
Hart District Council owns and manages 17 countryside sites and would like to apply an accessibility principle to every site in their ownership. The audit can be undertaken at 1 site, or the 5 sites listed, whichever the applicant feels will demonstrate how to imbed accessibility into the service in the most effective way.   
   
In summary we are looking for one document which lists considerations and suggests ways to improve our countryside sites for accessibility.

17. Please confirm the name/location of the 17 sites (14 are available via your website however 3 have not been identified).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sites within our management** | | | |
| **Name** | **Parish area** | **Size (ha)** | **Designation** |
| Fleet Pond | Fleet | 56.8 | SSSI, LNR, SINC, Reservoir, Green Flag Winner |
| Hartland Country Park | Fleet | 26.7 | SANGs (Not HDC owned, managed on behalf of developer, St. Edwards) |
| Edenbrook Country Park | Fleet | 43.55 | SANGs, SINC |
|  |  |  |  |
| Bramshot Farm Country Park | Fleet | 33.6 | SANGs, SINC |
| Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve | Elvetham | 26 | SINC, Green Flag Winner |
| Odiham Common | Odiham | 129 | Common, SSSI |
| Broad Oak Common | Odiham | 2.95 | Common, SINC |
| Hazeley Heath | Hartley Wintney / Mattingley | 54 | Common, SSSI, SPA |
| Hartley Wintney Central Commons  Includes:   * Central Common * Cricketers Green * Causeway Green * Hunts Common | Hartley Wintney | 34.26 | Common, SINC, Green Flag Winner, Green Heritage Winner |
| Phoenix Green | Hartley Wintney | 39.77 | Common, SINC, Green Flag Winner, Green Heritage Winner |
| Queen Elizabeth II Fields | Hartley Wintney | 6.5 | SANGs |
| West Green Common | West Green | 17.6 | Common, SINC |
| Stoken Green | Dipley | 0.73 | Common |
| Cricket Hill Pond | Yateley | 0.36 | Public Open Space |
| Royal Oak Valley | Yateley | 4 | SINC |
| Whitewater Meadows | Hook | 13 | SINC, SANGs |
| Ashwell’s Copse | Hook | 0.6 | Public Open Space, Ancient Woodland |

18. We can meet the timelines as set out in the RFQ. However, from experience, participant/visitor research in August is more difficult with summer school holidays, and based on a previous very similar project, a longer time for site surveys for audits is beneficial. We would like to propose a longer period for the site surveys (e.g., to the end of September), with a staggered delivery of reports, while still meeting your sign-off deadline for the project as a whole. Please confirm if this is acceptable or if there is a hard cut-off for site visits in mid-September.

Absolutely, we are looking for a contractor to advise us on the best and most effective way to complete these reports.

19. Do you have an existing access panel we can engage with?

No, but we do have links with local groups and parish councils.

20. Please confirm what spatial data you are expecting from the visitor surveys. Does this just refer to publicly available spatial data, or would you like to collect spatial information (e.g. route mapping) from visitors?   
   
Both – we are interested to know where people are visiting from. This could be as simple as collecting visitors' post codes.

*21. Section 2.2.1, ‘Lot 2, A general accessibility audit for that can be applied on all of Hart’s countryside sites’ . It is understood that the accessibility audit may consist of 1 or up to 5 sites, however would the council be intending to use one audit to apply it to all their sites? An accessibility audit details the accessibility of the site in context and each site is unique so applying one audit that has been undertaken and applying the same principles may not help the council address the fundamental accessibility issues at each site. Can this statement be clarified and what the council want? As applying one accessibility audit report from one site to all the sites may not help the council answer their question.*

Although all our sites are different there are broadbrush management approaches we use that can be reviewed to improve accessibility integration at each of our sites. For example, an audit of our countryside surfacing, benches, gates, car park signage etc would apply across the portfolio. We are asking you to audit one or a few sites in detail to help identify how we can embed accessibility across all our sites in terms of our general management.

*22. Section 2.2.2: Lot 2 Accessibility Audit, will the council be providing the local demographic statistics to help meet paragraph one of the Lot 2 descriptions?*

No

*23. Section 2.2.2: Lot 2 Accessibility Audit, ‘The report should reference different cultural groups in the area and consider barriers to inclusion for these groups’.. to address this the council may need to provide more detail on their policies and practices they are undertaking to include different cultural groups, as the accessibility audit would focus on the physical accessibility of the site primarily, barriers to different cultural groups would need to be understood more from the council and what the barriers are they current face and how this may relate to the site(s).*

Our policies are available on our website. We believe a bottom-up approach would be more effective. We need to find out what cultural groups exist in the area and ask them if they use our greenspaces and if not, why not. That is what this piece of work is about. We would expect our contractor to carry out the work you are asking us to provide.

*24. Section 2.2.2: Lot 2 Accessibility Audit, it is noted ‘the report should detail improvements and management of the site for environmental and wildlife benefit’, elements relating to the environmental and wildlife side would be outside of the scope and liability of advice an accessibility consultant could provide, we would take the assumption that a third party consultant or the council would need to make this decision in terms of the impact of wildlife and the environment from any findings from the accessibility audit report, is this safe to assume?*

We are looking for a contractor with knowledge of the environmental sector so they can set out and balance the needs of country park users and environmental/wildlife needs. This means they will be able to come to a reasoned and realistic solution taking both these, often conflicting elements, into consideration.

*25. Section 2.4 Timetable: It is unclear form the time table when the accessibility audit is desired to be completed by, we would take the assumption that this would be latest November 2024 unless this can be confirmed or more detail provided?*

Yes, November 2024.