

**Harpenden Town Council**  
**Appointment of Consultants**  
**Consultants Brief**

**Project Task**

Harpenden Town Council (HTC) is seeking to appoint suitably qualified consultants to drive forward the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the designated area including that covered by Harpenden Rural Parish Council.

We are looking for consultants who are suitably experienced in spatial planning, planning policy preparation, neighbourhood planning and community engagement.

**Introduction and Context**

Harpenden is a thriving commuter town located half way between St Albans and Luton and in easy reach of London. Although it has c30,000 residents and a growing number of small to medium sized businesses, Harpenden still retains a "village" feel with its tree lined High Street, town greens, period cottages, and Common – 96.39 hectares of open space that supports cricket, football and golf clubs whilst boasting a County Wildlife Site designation.

HTC is at the early stages of developing its Neighbourhood Plan and has to date secured an area of designation. It now wishes to push ahead with the task of bringing forward a Neighbourhood Plan for the area.

The Local Planning Authority, St Albans City & District Council, has recently produced a Strategic Local Plan (SLP), which is currently being inspected, and is in the process of developing its Detailed Local Plan (DLP). We expect that the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan development work will both respond to and inform the DLP work.

It is expected that the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process will take no more than 12 - 18 months to get to the stage of submitting it for formal approval and independent inspection.

Consultants are requested to submit a detailed programme of work to demonstrate how this could be achieved and to identify any risks and/or barriers to achieving this timescale.

**Consultancy requirement**

The Town Council is looking to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced consultancy to lead the project from start to finish. There will be some internal staff resource to utilise within the project however the main drive will come from the appointed consultant.

Specifically we expect the consultant to:

1. Carry out the necessary work to build the evidence base to support the Neighbourhood Plan preparation and prepare a Profile of the Town and Physical Appraisal
2. Undertake comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement to inform the evidence base and test the key themes that emerge resulting in the development of a clear vision and set of objectives.
3. Draft a set of robust policies for the key themes and be explicit in how they help achieve the vision and objectives.
4. Draft the intended Neighbourhood Development Plan and the statutory required supporting documents.

It is important that the plan is easy to read and written in plain English. The plan should be a useful and useable document and understood by local residents, businesses and organisations.

The Town Council has drafted a separate proposed specification for consultant submissions. However this proposed specification is only there to guide consultants who may choose to set out a different approach in their submissions if they believe it to be justified on the basis of delivering best practice.

The Town Council will be establishing a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group who will meet on a regular basis for the duration of the project and will be responsible to overseeing the overall direction of the project. The consultant will be expected to service these meetings.

The Town Council as commissioner will be responsible for holding the appointed consultant to account in accordance with the brief and agreed key deliverables.

Consultants will be required to provide a named project manager to lead and act as the point of contact throughout the duration of this project. The project manager should have sufficient and applicable experience to manage this type of project and be available for discussions and work with the client as required.

The appointed consultant may work in partnership with other organisations throughout the commission to bring in the relevant expertise at key points of the project.

### **Commission timetable and selection process**

The deadline for consultant submissions is 12noon on 28 November 2016. Submissions should include the following:

- An outline of your suitability for the commission including your previous experience and examples of other Neighbourhood Plan projects that you have worked on.
- If relevant, details of any proposed sub-contractors that you would use including company and staff names.
- A clear and concise document that sets out what work you will undertake and how you will go about doing it.

- The barriers or issues that you have identified within the brief that may impact on the scope of work.
- A draft project schedule to meet the timescales set out in this document. This should start from the inception meeting in January and end with submission of the Neighbourhood Plan 12-18months later.
- A fee proposal broken down into days and rates.
- The resources to be used including staff costs and other resources. For individual members of staff, the day rate should be specified. An estimate for travel expenses should also be provided.
- Names of two referees.
- Confirmation of any existing connections you have with either the Town Council, neighbouring parishes and/or St Albans City & District Council. Where connections exist provide details of how you would ensure that no conflict of interest would arise in the event of being appointed.
- Copies of relevant insurance documents

Commission submissions should be sent to Carl Cheevers, Town Clerk, both by email and post using the following addresses:

[carl.cheevers@harpenden.gov.uk](mailto:carl.cheevers@harpenden.gov.uk)

Harpenden Town Council  
Town Hall  
Leyton Road  
Harpenden  
Herts  
AL5 2LX

All submissions should be marked Private and Confidential.

Late submissions will not be accepted and submissions received with missing information may impact on your proposal being assessed.

The competitive selection process used for this commission will be led by the Town Clerk and will include the Chairs of HTC's two standing committees. These three individuals will form the selection panel.

The selection panel will invite a shortlisted group of consultants for interview as part of the selection process. The interview will take place on 14 December 2016.

The commission submissions will be assessed based on the following:

- Approach – 40%
- Skills and experience: technical and professional capability of the consultant including the ability to communicate clearly – 30%
- Price – 30%

The Town Council is not bound to accept the lowest tender nor does it undertake to make an appointment from this exercise.

## **Budget**

HTC has set a budget of £55,000 to cover all costs associated with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Consultants are required to submit plans as to how this budget would be spent in order to achieve the aims.

The consultant fee for the project and all management associated with the study will be determined, agreed and fixed.

This fee will be inclusive of all costs associated with staffing, research, printing, despatch, telephone, travel and any other costs incurred by the contracted consultant.

It is proposed that payment will be phased upon completion of key stages of work (to be agreed) in accordance with the main body of the consultant brief.