**Uttlesford District Council**

**Request for Quotation (RFQ)**

**Quality Questions & Specification**

**Review of Local Wildlife Sites RFQ to support the preparation of Uttlesford Local Plan**

**26th May 2021**

**To be completed in full and returned by 12 noon on 18/06/2021 to**

[**snicholas@uttlesford.gov.uk**](mailto:localplan@uttlesford.gov.uk)

1. **Specification**

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| **Executive summary**  Uttlesford District Council (New Communities and Local Plan Team and Climate Change Project Officer) is seeking to appoint consultants to undertake a District wide review of the Local Wildlife Sites. The review will support the preparation of the Uttlesford Local Plan by informing the strategic planning of the district and determination of planning applications as well as being available for other uses by Uttlesford District Council (UDC), partners, stakeholders and communities.  We require a review of all 281 sites and the 17 listed Potential Wildlife sites in the district, and identification of any new sites. In light of the results of the survey you are also asked for advice on appropriate local plan policies and on developing a biodiversity strategy.  The Review is required to be completed by end of Spring 2022.  **Background**  Following withdrawal of the 2018 Submission Local Plan from the examination process in early 2020, the Council is preparing a new Local Plan.  The Council concluded community engagement on the Issues and Options stage in mid-April 2021. The Council is aiming to consult on the draft Plan (Preferred Options) in March 2022 and Pre-Submission in March 2023 and submit the plan for examination in August 2023.  The Strategy of the withdrawn local plan centred on the allocation of three garden communities. One of the recommendations from the Inspectors was that the Council would need to allocate more small and medium sized sites to bolster supply and provide flexibility and choice.  The council is therefore commissioning a series of evidence base documents to help develop its vision, strategy, policies and allocations. There is a strong likelihood that this will include allocations in the towns and villages. The council is committed to delivering developments of the highest quality and in the most sustainable locations, and taking the climate change and biodiversity agenda, one of its principal corporate aims, fully on board.  Therefore, the Council is seeking evidence on the distribution and condition of its Local Wildlife Sites and identification of new sites.  In Essex, non-statutory areas of significant wildlife interest were originally called Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and were identified during a series of studies between 1987 and 1994. Uttlesford was surveyed in 1993-4. In 2007 a review of sites located in the corridors of the West Anglian railway route between Bishop’s Stortford and Great Chesterford and the A120 corridor between Bishop’s Stortford and the district boundary near Rayne, Braintree was carried out. In 2013 an alert map was made of sites in Uttlesford with nature conservation potential, as predicted by a desk study of aerial photos, but these were not ground-truthed.  **About Uttlesford**  Uttlesford is a large rural District in north west Essex covering approximately 250 square miles. The District includes two market towns that serve extensive rural hinterlands and has 60 parishes.  The distinct rural character of the District with its attractive and historic market towns and villages is widely recognised. The District is also important in terms of biodiversity and nature conservation. It has a significant proportion of ancient woodland including the Hatfield Forest which is an important remnant of a medieval forest. The chalk streams to the north of the district provide an important habitat. The District has two National Nature Reserves, 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), 1 Local Nature Reserve and 281 Local Wildlife Sites as well as more than 100 protected lanes and 47 designated Special Roadside Verges, both of which are important for their ecological value.  The District is also a highly productive arable farming area with most of the agricultural land classified as Grade 2 and the rest forming Grade 3. Pastureland is not extensive but it does exist in the river valleys and is important to the character and biodiversity of the District.  The following context maps are available on our website   * [Land use](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10636/Context-Map-Land-Use/pdf/Call_for_sites_context_map_-_Land_use.pdf?m=637462354049430000) * [Environment](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10635/Context-Map-Environment/pdf/Call_for_sites_context_map_-_Environment.pdf?m=637462353390830000) * [Transport](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10637/Context-Map-Transport/pdf/Call_for_sites_context_map_-_Transport.pdf?m=637462355963200000)   [Constraints Map](https://udc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c0c8399f55f84531800cf9c36944226c)  **Objectives**  To deliver a review of the district’s Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) and identification of any new sites, following the 5 step process set out in the [Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria](https://www.essexwtrecords.org.uk/sites/default/files/LOCALWILDLIFESITESELECTIONCRITERIA2016.pdf) (Essex Local Wildlife Sites Partnership, revised January 2016).  To undertake a detailed study comprising desk and field work to reassess all Local Wildlife Sites in the district and listed potential sites and to search for additional candidate sites and determine whether or not they can be adopted. If they can, to organise review and endorsement of candidate sites by Essex Local Wildlife Sites Partnership.  In identifying candidate sites, the study should include a survey of about 6 special verges which are not currently identified as Local Wildlife Sites.  The resulting document must   1. Provide introduction and context. 2. Explain the study methodology. 3. Set out the selection criteria. 4. Provide an up-to-date register of Local Wildlife Sites and Potential Sites 5. Reference in the site citation any agreed management plan 6. Explain the changes from the existing register (1993-4 and 2007) 7. Appraise the broad habitats found in Uttlesford. 8. Provide specific advice on policies to protect and enhance Local Wildlife Sites. 9. Provide broad advice on how the Council might develop a biodiversity strategy based on the findings of the review in relation to the requirements of the Environment Bill, specifically in relation Nature Recovery Network Maps   **Duty to Cooperate**  Where sites adjoin neighbouring local authorities, consultants must engage with the relevant local planning authority and ensure that the wide context beyond the boundaries of Uttlesford District Council are taken into account where relevant.  The Consultant should have an understanding of the Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy when advising on point I above  **Deliverables**   * Internal Draft reports in Word format * Final report as PDF including executive summary * GIS data as shapefiles * The consultant may be required to attend member briefings and workshops, public meetings and stakeholder engagement events. These are likely to be virtual meeting and be recorded and could include pre-recorded presentations and/or PowerPoint presentations. * The consultant may be required to provide evidence at the Local Plan Examination   For the purposes of this tender please price on the basis of 1 meeting and 1 day’s attendance at Local Plan Examination. |

1. **Timetable**

Recognising that optimum times for survey work are spring and summer, the project should therefore be completed by the end of Spring 2022.

Should you be required to appear at the Local Plan examination, this is currently estimated to commence September 2023.

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| Publish RFQ | 26th May 2021 |
| Clarifications | 31/05/2021 – 07/06/2021 |
| RFQ Submission deadline | 18/06/2021 no later than 12 noon |
| RFQ Evaluations | 21/06/2021 – 23/06/2021 |
| Award notification | 24/06/21 |
| Inception meeting | By 02/07/2021 |
| Contract start | 01/07/2021 |
| draft report | 1 March 2022 |
| Project completion | 1 June 2022 |
| Local Plan Examination – estimated commencement | September 2023 |

Consultants will be expected to respond to the Timetable milestones in their submission. Consultants will be paid against achievement of milestones as submitted within the ‘Timetable Milestones’ within the Pricing Matrix. The details completed will not be scored but should be submitted for information purposes which will then form the payment terms of the contract

1. **Project Milestones**

The timetable for production of the Review of Local Wildlife:

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| --- | --- |
| Draft report | 1st March 2022 |
| Project completion | 1st June 2022 |
| Local Plan Examination | Summer 2024 |

**Conflicts of Interest**

The Bidder is required to disclose any potential conflict of interest to the Local Authority stating the nature and extent of the conflict of interest as soon as it becomes known to that organisation. In particular any connections of the consultants with landowners or developers promoting development in Uttlesford should be declared together with any proposed arrangements for avoiding any conflict of interest.

**Resources**

[Uttlesford District Council Selected Wildlife Sites Review 2007](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/1799/Local-Wildlife-Site-Review-2007/pdf/Local_Wildlife_Site_Review_Oct07_PDFA.pdf?m=636989606384370000)

[Protected Lanes Assessment 2012](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/1727/Uttlesford-Protected-Lanes-Assessment/pdf/Uttlesford_Protected_Lanes_Assessment_March_2012.pdf?m=635110388378300000) and background papers

Special Verges data

2013 Alert map

The Council will be undertaking a Citizen science survey which may identify potential sites to survey.

Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy <https://www.essex.gov.uk/protecting-environment>

1. **Requirement Specific Questions**

The following questions are based on what Uttlesford District Council requires Bidders to provide to meet the requirements set out above and to allow Uttlesford to understand their relevant experience.

The answers will demonstrate how the bidder is able to deliver against the specification.

**4.1 Confirm how your service will meet the requirements of the specification. Describe the methodology you would use for the assessment of Wildlife sites to include legal and policy requirements and an understanding of the character of Uttlesford**

Evaluation criteria

Pass:A clear understanding of what is required by undertaking the works including description of the methodology demonstrating a knowledge of the 5 step process set out in Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria in relation to A-F above, requirements of the Environment Bill, specifically in relation Nature Recovery, Guidance and an understanding of the character of Uttlesford in relation to G-I above.

Fail: Failure to demonstrate a clear understanding of works and/or a vague description of the methodology with little knowledge of the 5 step process, requirements of the Environment Bill, guidance and/or a lack of understanding of the character of Uttlesford

Your answer should not exceed 1000 words

**4.2 Give at least two examples of contracts which demonstrate experience and a working knowledge of the Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria (Essex Local Wildlife Sites Partnership, revised January 2016), its predecessors documents or its equivalents in other Counties (please specify), and your ability to meet successfully the requirements of contracting authorities. Provide evidence of best practice which you have derived from lessons learned.**

Evaluation criteria

**Pass** - Details of 2 or more previous contracts of a similar nature which demonstrate a successful completion including best practice and the implementation of lessons learnt. Full details including length of contract, customer and what was provided  
**Fail** - The Bidder provides little detail of past experience or non-relevant experience that can confirm to the Buyer experience and ability in delivering the specification. The Bidder fails to provide details of 2 or more contracts.

Your answer should not exceed 1000 words

**4.3 To provide an outline of the programme of work, including update meetings with the client and demonstrate how you will adapt to changes (e.g. to national policy / new evidence).**

Evaluation criteria

**Pass:** A programme of working showing the timescale for each stage of the process, and commitment to meeting the client’s timetable. A clear and justified plan to deal with changing circumstances.

**Fail:** Failure to demonstrate meeting the client’s timetable. Failure to demonstrate a plan to deal with changing circumstances.

Your response should be provided as an A4 project plan plus 300 words

**4.4 How will you communicate with UDC to update on progress of the Review? Please include details on how issues will be handled and resolved between parties and recorded for full audit trail and transparency.**

Evaluation criteria

**Pass** - Full details of how the Bidder will communicate progress, meet regularly to ensure the relationship between buyer and supplier is positive throughout the term of the contract. Details on how issues will be handled and resolved between both parties and recorded for full audit trail and transparency.  
**Fail** - The Bidder provides some general detail of communication during the contract period. No specific reference to interaction between the Buyer and the supplier and how different communications will be handled.

Your response should not exceed 500 words.

**4.5 Please provide details of how you keep abreast of future developments within the industry for continuous improvement. Please include how you determine best value for your client and any added value you are proposing to deliver for Uttlesford as part of this project.**

Evaluation criteria

**Pass**: Demonstrates a robust commitment approach to keeping abreast of future developments within the industry and, working with Uttlesford for better services/delivery and added value

**Fail**: Some general detail of future developments within the Industry including benchmarking on prices, working with Uttlesford for better services/delivery and the element of added value

Your response should not exceed 300 words.

1. **Insurance**

Please confirm you hold the required insurance levels below by marking with an ‘X’ if you have the insurance or are willing to obtain prior to the contract start date.

You will be required to provide copies of your insurance policies prior to contract start. If the policies are already in place, please submit copies of these with your RFQ submission.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

This question will be evaluated on a Pass/fail basis. If you cannot answer ‘Yes or willing to obtain’, your quotation may not be accepted. ‘Yes, or willing to obtain’ along with details or a copy of the certificate is provided is a pass, and ‘No’ is a fail.

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| **5.1** | **Employers Liability Insurance** to a value of **£5M** | Yes, or willing to obtain |  |
| No |  |
| **5.2** | **Public Liability Insurance** to a value of **£5M** | Yes, or willing to obtain |  |
| No |  |
| **5.3** | **Professional Indemnity Insurance** to a value of **£500,000** | Yes, or willing to obtain |  |
| No |  |

If responding ‘No’ to any of the above, please provide full details in the box below.

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1. **Equality & Diversity**

**6.1. Equality, Diversity & Equality Challenge**

Please self-certify if you comply and how in the box below.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

This question will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, where ‘Yes’ and brief details of how you comply are provided is a Pass, and ‘No’ is a fail.

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| **Evaluation Criteria;**  **Part I: Yes = Pass; No = Fail**  **Part II: No = Pass; Yes with evidence at III = Pass; Yes with no evidence = Fail**  **Part IV: Yes = Pass; No = Fail** | | | | |
| 1. Does your organisation fully comply with your statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010? | Yes | No | N/A | If stated Yes, please state how |
| 1. Have you ever been challenged under the Equality Act e.g. a discrimination case? | Yes | No | N/A | If stated Yes, please state how |
| 1. If answered yes to the above question, do you have any evidence of changes in practises or working | Yes | No | N/A | If stated Yes, please state how |
| 1. If you are not currently subject to UK legislation, do you comply with equivalent legislation that is designed to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity? | Yes | No | N/A | If stated Yes, please state how |

**6.2 Modern Slavery**

An organisation in any part of a group structure will be required to comply with the provision of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and will need to produce a statement if they:

* Are a corporate body or a partnership (described as an “organisation” within RFQ documents), wherever incorporated;
* Carry on a business, or part of a business, in the UK;
* Supply goods or services; and
* Have an annual turnover of £36m or more

Depending on your annual turnover, please self-certify the following questions in relation to your organisation or supply chain by marking the relevant box below with an ‘X’.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

This question will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis.

Where the bidder marks ‘We confirm that we are taking steps to ensure there is no Modern Slavery or Human Trafficking within our organisation or supply chain’ or ‘We are not currently taking steps but will do going forward if successful in this RFQ’ or ‘N/A due to not having an annual turnover of £36m or more’ with an ‘X’ as a pass. If the question is left blank or ‘We are not taking any steps’ is marked with an ‘X’ is a fail.

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| --- | --- |
| We confirm that we are taking steps to ensure there is no Modern Slavery or Human Trafficking within our organisation or our supply chain |  |
| We are not currently taking steps but will do going forward if successful in this RFQ |  |
| We are not taking any steps |  |
| N/A due to not having an annual turnover of £36m or more |  |

1. **Health and Safety**

**7.1 Health & Safety**

It is a legislative requirement for organisations with 5 or more permanent employees to have a Health & Safety Policy. If you have 5 or more permanent employees, please confirm if you have a Health & Safety Policy. If you have less than 5 please provide details of how you ensure your workplace is safe.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

This question will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis.

Where ‘Our organisation has less than 5 employees’ or ‘Our organisation has 5 or more employees and does have a Health & Safety policy’ and details are provided is a pass and ‘Our organisation has 5 or more employees and does not have a Health & Safety Policy’ or no details is a fail.

Please detail if you comply and how in the box below.

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1. **Environment**

Uttlesford District Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019 and are acting now to prevent a climate and ecological catastrophe. Councillors pledged to take local action to contribute to prevent a climate and ecological catastrophe through the development of practices and policies, with an aim to achieving net-zero carbon status by 2030 and to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district.

For further information please visit <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5768/The-council-and-climate-change>’

1. **E-procurement**

**9.1 Electronic Orders**

Please can you confirm that as a minimum, your organisation will accept orders sent electronically (via P2P) to a central e-mail address.

If you are unable to answer 'Yes', please contact the named contact on page one for further advice before submitting your RFQ response.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

This question will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, where ‘Yes’ is a pass and ‘No’ is a fail.

Please confirm that your organisation can fully meet this requirement by marking the relevant box below with an ‘X’?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes |  |
| No |  |

**9.2 Electronic Invoicing**

Please can you confirm that as a minimum, your organisation will submit invoices electronically (via P2P) by utilising the PO Flip method.

If you are unable to answer 'Yes', please contact the named contact on page one for further advice before submitting your RFQ response.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

This question will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, where ‘Yes’ is a pass and ‘No’ is a fail.

Please can you confirm that your organisation can fully meet this requirement by marking the relevant box below with an ‘X’?

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| --- | --- |
| Yes |  |
| No |  |

1. **Pricing**

A pricing spreadsheet has been included as part of the RFQ documentation issued.

Please complete the spreadsheet as per the instructions stated within the document and return the completed spreadsheet as part of your RFQ submission.

The lowest total priced response that passes all pass/fail quality elements will be awarded the contract

All prices should be exempt of VAT and include any expenses

**Evaluation Criteria:**

The lowest price will be awarded 100% and then each price afterwards will be 10% lower (90%, 80% etc).

1. **Freedom of information (FOI)**

**11.1 FOI**

If you consider that any information supplied for the purposes of this RFQ is either confidential in nature or commercially sensitive (please refer to the bidder guidance for more information) this should be highlighted in the table below. Please add more rows if required.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

This question is not scored and is for information only.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location and description of commercially sensitive or confidential information** | **Reason for Exemption** |
|  |  |
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1. **Declaration**

Please confirm that you have read, understood and accept the contents of this RFQ process, which includes:

* The Terms and Conditions
* The RFQ Specification and Quality Questions document
* The Pricing spreadsheet
* The contents of the Bidder’s Guidance

These documents will form the final contract if the Bidder is successful.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

This question is not scored and is for information only.

Please confirm by marking the relevant box below with an ‘X’ and provide contact details as requested below for the person confirming Yes/No.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes |  | No |  |
| Name:  E-Signature:  Job Title:  E-mail Address:  Contact Number:  Main Office Number:  Full Postal Address:  Please confirm who will be the main contact for this contract if successful and provide the following full contact details below if they do not match the above: | | | |

**13. Evaluation spreadsheet**

See attachment – Price Evaluation Spreadsheet

1. **Terms and conditions (T&Cs)**

See attachment - UDC Terms and Conditions

1. **Bidder Feedback**

We are continuing to work to update and improve the standard of our RFQ documentation and would welcome feedback and comments from bidders. Please use the box below for any feedback and comments.

It may not be possible to respond to bidders on specific points that may be raised, but we will review all responses and take these into account, where possible, when considering future updates and improvements.

All constructive comments and feedback are very gratefully received.

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