

# Berkswell and Balsall Parish Councils

Working together for Balsall Common

## Invitation to tender for the Balsall Common centre project



Centre looking east



Centre looking west

**All correspondence to:**

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**Balsall and Berkswell Parish Councils are issuing this invitation to tender for the following scope of works that are being procured.**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. Balsall Common (BC) is a large village/small town of about 3,200 homes situated within the parishes of Berkswell and Balsall. The two parishes combined have about 4,000 homes and a population of around 10,000. It is situated within the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull. The population is orientated more towards families and retired people than the national average.
- 1.2. The boundary between the two parishes is probably 1,000 years old and based on the ecclesiastical boundary for the Diocese of Coventry. Eastern Balsall Common is within the parish of Berkswell and the last 6 “shops” on the eastern end of the station Road shopping parade are in Berkswell parish with the large majority within Balsall parish.
- 1.3. Balsall Common has a primary school, a secondary school and two other primary schools in surrounding villages. It has 3 (physical) churches, 5 public houses a wealth of community organisations and a shopping centre.
- 1.4. It is mainly a commuter town which is served by the west coast mainline and its station (Berkswell) connects with Birmingham and Coventry. Berkswell station is on the eastern edge of Balsall Common about ½ mile from the centre. BC is poorly served by buses and there is no public transport to the nearest town (Kenilworth). 70% of daily journeys are made by car compared with a borough average of 50%.
- 1.5. The draft local plan provides for a significant expansion of Balsall Common with about 2,000 new homes over 15 years. The plan identifies that Balsall Common centre requires updating to modern standards to meet the needs of the expanding settlement.
- 1.6. Currently, the main A452 runs through the centre of Balsall Common with most of the shopping centre to the east of the road but some businesses are situated on the west side. A bypass is to be built which will remove much through traffic from the centre.
- 1.7. The centre comprises a range of retail outlets including a supermarket, two convenience stores, several estate agents and hairdressers, a butcher, off licence, two cafes, post office, several takeaways including a fish and chip shop, 3 Indian restaurants and a hotel/restaurant but no banks. There are two home improvement showrooms and other miscellaneous businesses and a public library. There are several office-based businesses in the centre plus some flats. There is only one charity shop and only one empty premises at the time of writing. Comprising around 40 businesses, it is an economically functioning centre of mixed architectural merit based on converted houses and additional speculative building over the years.
- 1.8. There is no church, green or other focal point in the centre.
- 1.9. The public realm in the centre, including the library car park is owned by Solihull Council. The parish councils own no land in the centre.
- 1.10. The NDPs (Neighbourhood Development Plans) of both parishes committed to an updating of the centre as part of an overall improvement of infrastructure within Balsall Common. An online survey of residents in January 2020 resulted in 17% return showing an active resident interest in the future of the community. A paper questionnaire by Balsall PC and a series of public consultations by Berkswell PC for their respective NDPs also showed very high levels of engagement.
- 1.11. Berkswell and Balsall Parish Councils have established a working group of about 10 councillors and residents to lead the creation of a vision for the future of the centre of Balsall Common and create a design of the public realm to support it plus necessary planning policies. This is supported with practical help by Solihull Council who have committed within the draft local plan to work with the two PCs for an improvement in the centre. Funding is

from the two parish councils and support from the GBSLEP Strategic Economic Plan enabling Fund.

- 1.12. The project is being led by the Chairs of Balsall and Berkswell PCs who have a history of working well together. The Balsall PC clerk will provide the necessary legal and contractual basis. The project is
- 1.13. HS2 will run on the eastern edge of Balsall Common and it is likely that there will be considerable local disruption to roads during its construction. It is likely that the main construction traffic will avoid the centre with a draft proposal by HS2 Ltd to route 80% of such traffic down Hallmeadow Road rather than the A452 through Balsall Common.
- 1.14 Indicative map defining the centre:



## 2. The objective

- 2.1 To create a vision and layout design for improved public spaces to modernise the centre of Balsall Common which together with any additional local planning policies, can ensure that the centre is fit for the expanded Balsall Common of the future.

### Sub objectives include:

- 2.2 Facilitating the ongoing economic vitality of the centre with businesses that are appealing to residents of the Meriden Ward (Berkswell, Balsall and Meriden Parishes).
- 2.3 Making the centre a destination of choice rather than a destination of need.
- 2.4 Creating coherence and a sense of identity and provide a focal point for the settlement and ideally have a focal point for the centre.
- 2.5 Maximising opportunities within a new design for “greening” the centre with trees/vegetation thereby creating a green centre for an already green settlement.
- 2.6 Improved traffic flow, parking layout and improved pedestrian experience.

- 2.7 Logical links to the expanding settlement including the proposed “central park” on Barratts Farm (identified strategic housing site) and the close by Berkswell and Balsall Sports and Community Association providing cricket and tennis facilities.
- 2.8 Enhanced parking provision if practical and economical.
- 2.9 Supporting the Solihull strategy of cycling and walking around the settlement to minimise traffic flows given the limited parking opportunity.
- 2.10 Alignment with the Solihull Local Plan and the parish NDPs.

### 3. What we need from a consultant (Key activities and Deliverables)

- 3.1 To deliver a **masterplan** for the future of the centre based on the evidence of residents and businesses, wishes, desires and needs and the evidence of the requirements for the ongoing economic vitality of the centre. The master plan to include a **vision** and visualisations for the centre plus layout drawings for the public realm together with additional evidence-based planning policies/SPDs to support the vision for inclusion in an update of the parishes NDPs.

3.1.1 The masterplan to be modular for **phased delivery with estimated costs per phase** together with the **identification of potential funding sources**. The costings to be based on a recognised system including appropriate contingencies.

3.1.2 You must ensure that the masterplan has the **support of the key stakeholders**, including Solihull Council and meets the objectives in section 2 above.

- 3.2 To provide a **process/project plan** that will actively manage the project through a series of steps with milestones to yield a deliverable masterplan. The project plan to include public/business consultation and an issues and options phase. The quotation should make the process/project plan clear including the support expected from and ongoing engagement with the working group.

- 3.3 The indicative timetable is to produce a masterplan by 31 October 2021 from a start date of 27 November 2020 which is when the selected consultant will be informed.

It is acknowledged that the actual completion date will be subject to variation based on the tender responses received. An **indicative work programme** is requested.

Task	Date
Invitation to Tender	16 October 2020
Tender return	9 November 2020
Interviews of those selected	w/c 16 November 2020
Confirmation of Appointment	27 November 2020
Inception Meeting	Start of December 2020
Anticipated project completion	September / October 2021

- 3.4 In the creation of the above we expect you to demonstrate:

- 3.4.1 Appropriate expertise and a **fact-based approach** to ensuring the long-term economic viability of the centre and to suggest suitable planning policies to achieve a viable

centre that is attractive in its economic offering to business and physical attributes to residents.

- 3.4.2 The proposal of **new and creative ideas** that will suit our community.
- 3.4.3 Provision of **highways and parking expertise** and provide recommendations that will satisfy local need and SMBC policy.
- 3.4.4 Assurance that the proposed solution is both compatible with, and maximises the benefits from, the Solihull Local Plan.

#### **4. Budget and approach**

- 4.1 Consultants should submit an overall fixed price lump sum price (excluding VAT) for undertaking the work, inclusive of all expenses and disbursements, including a break-down of the lump sum (name, grade of staff, time input proposed and rate) against each task as set out above.
- 4.2 The formal contract will be between the consultant and Balsall Parish Council on behalf of both Balsall and Berkswell Parish Councils.
- 4.2 Balsall Parish Council reserves the right to commission none, some, or all of the project. Furthermore, the right to terminate the study early is reserved.
- 4.3 The fee should include for inception and final review meetings with the partners together with regular progress meetings throughout the commission.
- 4.4 The consultant should propose an invoicing schedule based on milestone payments in relation to the tasks required in this brief.
- 4.5 Variations – consultants are invited to identify any additional services and/or tasks over and above those identified in this document that they feel are necessary or would enhance the masterplan process. Additional support is available to perform one off tasks. If there are further additional services or tasks, these should be priced separately.
- 4.6 Fee proposals within the range £30-45,000 excluding VAT are expected.
- 4.7 Any queries regarding the interpretation of any part of this invitation should be sent by email to Judith Parry-Evans, [clerk@balsallparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@balsallparishcouncil.gov.uk) no later than one week before the closing date.
- 4.7 The commission will be managed by a Client Steering Group of the Balsall Common Village Centre Working Group and include the appointed consultants with meetings on a monthly basis to be agreed.

#### **5. Selection criteria**

The following factors will be used to assess bids:

- 5.1 Technical merit including creativity
- 5.2 Understanding of project requirements
- 5.3 People resources to meet project need
- 5.4 Ability to meet the project timescale
- 5.5 The proposed process/steps recommended as the methodology for the project (the programme)
- 5.6 Cost
- 5.7 Evidence of proposed solutions being delivered on the ground
- 5.8 Experience of working with parish/town councils and working groups appointed by them
- 5.9 Evidence of an effective approach to project and client relationship management
- 5.10 Demonstrated ability at stakeholder engagement and securing commitment
- 5.11 References from councils for who projects have been successfully delivered
- 5.12 Understanding of our requirements and the ethos of a parish council

Following evaluation of the consultant's proposals, there will be a final selection decision made following interview. The provisional date for this is in the week of 16 November 2020.

## **6. Return of fee proposals**

- 6.1 Proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Proposal for Balsall Common centre masterplan" on the outside at the following address by 12 noon on Monday 9 November 2020 to:

Balsall Parish Council, 287/289 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, Solihull CV7 7EL

## **7. Insurance**

- 7.1 Consultants should have a minimum of £10 million public liability insurance and submit copies of current insurance certificates to evidence this or should confirm that if successful they would obtain the required insurance.

## **8. Documents that could inform a bid**

- 8.1 Submission version of Solihull Local Plan (main document and concept plans) Link to Council meeting papers  
<http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=125&MId=8410&Ver=4>
- 8.2 Balsall NDP <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/3-Balsall-Parish-NDP-Referendum-version-with-Appendix.pdf>  
Community Aspirations Annex <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/4-Balsall-Parish-NDP-Annex-1-Community-Aspirations.pdf>
- 8.3 Berkswell NDP <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/BNDP/Berkswell-NDP-plan-made-5-September-2019.pdf>
- 8.4 Solihull Connected Report  
[https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/ParkingTravelRoads/SolihullConnected/Solihull\\_Connected\\_LRP.pdf](https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/ParkingTravelRoads/SolihullConnected/Solihull_Connected_LRP.pdf)
- 8.5 Solihull Cycling and walking strategy  
<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/ParkingTravelRoads/Solihull-Cycling-and-Walking-Engagement-Report.pdf>
- 8.6 An opinion survey of residents' views on the infrastructure that Balsall Common needs as it grows through the Solihull Local Plan period conducted in January 2020 (link)  
<http://www.balsallparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Infrastructure-survey-response-February-2020.pdf>
- 8.7 Map of Balsall Common centre SMBC Highways owned land  
<https://balsallparishcouncil.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/EVsDVNSGFBpLtWqiKs4sE8QBflhWwwX8LmUZPIMnhlbPAw?e=3v4se7>

## **9. Notes to consultants**

- 9.1 The community has two e-newsletters run by residents' associations covering about 1,000 people between them and an active Facebook group with about 3,000 "members". The schools have a parent mail system and these have been used by the PCs in the past to give further communication reach. There are two village halls, with one situated in the Centre that could be used for displays (subject to any Covid 19 restrictions).
- 9.2 The working group comprises 10 people who are dedicated to make the project happen. Additional support is available to perform one off tasks.