

**Harpenden Town Council**  
**Appointment of Consultants**  
**Proposed Specification**

This document should be considered alongside the consultant's brief that is available for this commission.

Consultants are invited to submit a proposal that demonstrates the way in which they would deliver the outcomes of this commission. In doing so they should draw on their experience in delivering other similar Neighbourhood Plan projects.

The Town Council anticipates that in order to deliver the project a number of key stages will need to be covered. These key stages are set out within this document and consultants are expected to set out their own approach to neighbourhood plan preparation. In doing so, consultants 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 key stages we would anticipate are:

1. Inception Meeting
2. Prepare a profile of the town
3. Establish Visions and Objectives
4. Production of Draft Neighbourhood Plan and Community Testing
5. Submission to District Council, Independent Examination and Adoption

Throughout each of these stages there will need to be a strong emphasis on community engagement. This engagement should be carried out using best practice and innovative techniques.

The consultant will be required to set out a community engagement and communications strategy at the outset of the commission.

### **Inception Meeting**

Following the formal appointment of the consultants an inception meeting will be held with the Town Council to start the commission. This meeting will cover the following:

- Confirmation of Neighbourhood Plan membership, consultant/client teams role and responsibilities
- Reporting protocols
- Agree a definitive programme schedule for the Neighbourhood Plan project and the key deliverables
- Agree initial and ongoing publicity arrangements
- Agree the methodologies to be used in appraising the plan

### **Prepare a Profile of the Town**

This first stage will see a profile of the town developed which includes the way in which it functions, its role in the wider geographic context and an analysis of its socio-economic characteristics.

A physical analysis will also be undertaken to explain and show the environmental characteristics of the area as well as an appraisal of constraints and opportunities for possible growth.

Information gathered at this stage should be pulled together into a single written and illustrated report (and Executive Summary) for the town, identifying potential future opportunities and challenges to the sustainability of Harpenden.

### **Establish a Vision and Objectives**

A vision for the town for the next 10 - 15 years should be established along with the key objectives which will shape the content of the Neighbourhood Plan. This will include identifying the type and scale of future development and physical infrastructure requirements necessary to achieve this vision.

Separate consideration could also be given to a long term vision for the town looking forward beyond 15 years. This should be broadly defined, appraised and illustrated. Its appraisal should establish its overall benefits and impacts and address its deliverability.

This stage should include comprehensive direct engagement with the community and partners to build a consensus to the priorities, challenges and opportunities for Harpenden.

### **Production of Draft Neighbourhood Plan and Community Testing**

A draft Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared using the information gathered in the earlier stages. The draft will include written statements with policies and justifications alongside detailed proposal maps.

Following Steering Group approval, the draft plan will undergo a further period of public consultation engagement.

The consultants will be required to prepare any associated appraisal documents, as part of the preparation of the Plan. The methodology for these will first be agreed with the Steering Group. These will all be written up (including details of the methodology used) and submitted to the Steering Group with the submission draft plan.

### **Production of Final draft Neighbourhood Plan**

A submission draft of the NDP will be prepared, taking into account the feedback received, together with a summary of the methodology and consultation undertaken to date to demonstrate that the plan had been prepared through an open, rigorous and inclusive process, having proper regard to Government policy.

Consultants should be prepared to provide presentations to audiences of the Steering Group's choosing.

### **Submission to District Council, Independent Examination and Adoption**

Following completion of this final draft of the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan the Town Council will submit the plan to the District Council for consideration and for

subsequent independent examination and thereafter Local Referendum with a view to the plan being adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan.

### **Outputs from the commission**

The appointed consultants must ensure that the following outputs are delivered:

- Servicing of regular meetings with the Steering Group throughout the duration of the project
- Liaison with the Town Clerk and officer team to agree agenda and reports and ensure the project progresses under the Town Councils standing orders
- Production of all necessary materials for community engagement initiatives and consultation stages
- Production of a Harpenden Town Profile
- Production of a Draft Vision and Objectives for the town and associated publicity materials
- Report on feedback from consultation on the draft vision and objectives
- Production of a Draft Neighbourhood Plan
- Report on feedback from consultation on the draft neighbourhood plan
- Production of a Final Draft Neighbourhood Plan, consultation feedback and summary of methodology and consultation undertaken.
- Production of necessary appraisal documents
- Presentations of the final draft Neighbourhood Development plan