**Uttlesford District Council**

**Request for Quotation (RFQ)**

**Quality Questions & Specification**

**Habitats Regulations Assessment & Scoping Report RFQ**

**19.04.2021**

**To be completed in full and returned by 12 noon on 30.04.21 to**

**JHill@uttlesford.gov.uk**

Please ensure that your response is submitted via a secure e-mail service and is sent as official sensitive

1. **Specification**

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| **Executive summary** Uttlesford District Council is at the project initiation stage of preparing a new Local Plan, following the withdrawal of its 2019 Submission Local Plan from Examination. The new Local Plan will be a comprehensive Development Plan Document (DPD), containing both strategic and non-strategic policies for development for the period 2020 to 2040.The Council is seeking to appoint consultants to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Scoping Report to support the preparation of the Uttlesford Local Plan. The overall objective is to complete all stages of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Scoping Report work in accordance with legal and policy requirements.**The timetable for production of the new Local Plan:**

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| Issues & Options stage of Local Plan development  | Autumn 2020 to Spring 2021 |
| Publish Preferred Options Local Plan | Early 2022 |
| Proposed Submission Plan | Early 2023 |
| Adoption | Summer 2024 |

The ‘Issues & Options’ consultation and call for sites closes on 21 April 2021**.****Background**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 characterised by more than twenty distinct and often sensitive landscapes punctuated by historic settlements, protected lanes, and historic parks and gardens. The quality of the cultural heritage in the District is high with around 3,700 Listed Buildings, 36 Conservation Areas and seven Registered Parks and Gardens, as well as 73 Scheduled Monuments and more than 4,000 records of archaeological sites and finds in the District. 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 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 designated Special Roadside Verges 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 (very good) with the rest forming Grade 3 (good to moderate). Pastureland is not extensive, but it does exist in the river valleys and although not the best and most versatile land it is important to the character and biodiversity of the District.**Requirements for Proposal**The HRA and Scoping Report work **MUST:*** Identify which sites protected under The Habitats Directive (1992) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, have potential to be affected by the Uttlesford Local Plan; evidence key information on these sites and outline pathways by which they could be affected; and set out the scope of subsequent HRA Screening and Appropriate Assessment stages in agreement with Natural England
* Meet all legal and policy requirements, including:
* Amendments to the Habitats Regulations published for England and Wales in 2007; the currently applicable version is the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
* All required tests e.g. ‘Significance test and ‘Integrity Test’
* Any recent case law changes
* The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, Equality Act, National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance
* Outline HRA requirements at different stages of the new Local Plan
* Assess the potential effects of a development plan on one or more protected habitats sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs):
* SACs designated under The Habitats Directive targeting particular habitat types (Annex 1) and species (Annex II). The listed habitat types and species (excluding birds) are those considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level.
* SPAs classified in accordance with Article 4(1) of the European Union Birds Directive3 for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed in Annex I of the Directive), and under Article 4(2) for regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I.
* Potential SPAs (pSPAs) 4, candidate SACs (cSACs) 5, Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) 6 and Ramsar sites.
* Ramsar sites supporting internationally important wetland habitats listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention, 1971).
* Outline the implications of withdrawal from the European Union on HRA.
* Build upon HRA work produced for the previous stages of Local Plan work (Regulation 18 HRA in 2017 and subsequent Natural England consultation)
* The proposal **MUST** outline the work required and should include the following:
* Introduction: outlining the requirement to undertake HRA; HRA previously carried out; structure of the scoping report
* Habitats sites
* Approach to the HRA: screening methodology and assumptions; appropriate assessment methodology
* Consultation and next steps
* The work **MUST** be completed to Planning Practice Guidance, :
* Internal draft reports should be prepared in word format
* The Final report should be prepared in PDF format and needs to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/publishing-accessible-documents>* In addition, the consultant may be required to attend member briefings and workshops, public meetings, and stakeholder engagement events, as well as, provide evidence at the Local Plan Examination and will be charged at day rate
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1. **Timetable**

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| Publish RFQ | 19/04/2021 |
| Clarifications  | 19/04/2021 – 23/04/2021 |
| RFQ Submission deadline | 30/04/2021 no later than 12 noon |
| RFQ Evaluations | 30/04/2021 – 07/05/2021 |
| Award notification | 13/05/2021 |
| Contract start  | 03/06/2021  |
| Inception meeting | TBC 07/06/2021 |
| Draft Scoping Report | No later than 15/07/2021 |
| Scoping Report | TBC 12/08/2021 |
| HRA of draft Preferred Options Local Plan  | December 2021 |
| HRA of draft Reg 19 Submission Local Plan | Summer 2023 |
| HRA of updated plan following submission stage and main modifications | Summer 2024 |

1. **Project Milestones**

Draft Scoping Report – 15/07/2021

Scoping Report – to feed into Issues & options Local Plan development – TBC 12/08/2021

HRA of draft Preferred Options Local Plan – Early 2022

HRA of draft Reg 19 Submission Local Plan – Summer 2023

HRA of Local Plan following main modifications and Local Plan examination – Summer 2024

**Payment Terms**

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. **Requirement Specific Questions**

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

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

* 1. **Describe the methodology you would use for the HRA Scoping Report including:**
* Identification of which European sites have potential to be affected by Uttlesford’s new Local Plan
* How the potential different types of impacts will be identified, how assumptions will be defined and how they will be assessed
* How key information will be evidenced
* The scope of subsequent Screening and Appropriate Assessment stages that may be required in agreement with Natural England

Evaluation criteria

Pass:A clear description of the methodology demonstrating a knowledge of the regulations and Natural England Guidance

Fail:A vague description of the methodology, regulations, or limited knowledge of the Natural England guidance

Page limit

Your response should not exceed 1000 words

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* 1. **Describe the methodology you would use for the Screening and Assessment of specific habitats sites required by the HRA Regulations and Natural England guidance**

Evaluation criteria

Pass: A clear description of the methodology demonstrating a knowledge of the regulations and Natural England Guidance

Fail:A vague description of the methodology, regulations, or limited knowledge of the Natural England guidance

Page limit

Your response should not exceed 1000 words

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* 1. **Describe how you will liaise with Natural England, Uttlesford District Council, and other key stakeholders; including how you will communicate with UDC regarding the progress of the HRA work. Please include details on how issues will be handled and resolved between both parties and recorded for full audit trail and transparency**

Evaluation criteria

Pass: A clear demonstration of how you will work with Natural England, the Council and any other key stakeholders identified and how issues will be resolved providing full audit trail and transparency

Fail:A vague demonstration of how you will work with Natural England, the Council and any other key stakeholders identified. A vague or inferior approach to resolving issues, lacking transparency, and an audit trail

Page limit

Your response should not exceed 300 words

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* 1. **Provide an outline of the programme of work, including update meetings with UDC**

Evaluation criteria

Pass: A programme of working showing the timescales for each stage of the process in order to meet UDC deadlines including the plotting of update meetings

Fail:A programme of working showing inconsistencies and failures in the ability to meet the UDC’s deadlines

Page limit

Your response should be provided as a Gantt chart on 1 A4 sheet

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* 1. **Demonstrate how you will meet all the legal and policy requirements for the Scoping Report and HRA of each stage of the Local Plan**

Evaluation criteria

Pass: A clear demonstration of how legal and policy regulations will be met

Fail: A vague demonstration of how legal and policy regulations will be met

Page limit

Your response should not exceed 300 words

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* 1. **Please provide CV/resumes, detailed roles and responsibilities and the relevant experience of the team**

Evaluation criteria

Pass: CVs/resumes provided, clear roles and responsibilities defined, relevant qualifications and relevant experience demonstrated to a good industry standard

Fail: CVs/resumes not provided or vague, poor clarity of roles and responsibilities, and relevant experience not demonstrated

Page limit

No more than one sheet of A4 per person

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* 1. **Please outline details of any HRA experience of the habitats sites which have the potential to be affected by development in Uttlesford**

Evaluation criteria

Pass: A clear summary of previous experience of habitats sites which have the potential to be affected by development in Uttlesford

Fail: A weak summary of previous experience of habitats sites which have the potential to be affected by development in Uttlesford

Page limit

Your response should not exceed 500 words

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* 1. **Provide 2 examples of HRA Scoping Reports and 2 examples of HRA of draft Local Plans conducted within the last 3 years**

Evaluation criteria

Pass: The provided 2 examples of the HRA Scoping Reports and 2 examples of the HRA of draft Local Plans are robust and well presented

Fail:The 2 examples of the HRA Scoping Reports and 2 examples of the HRA of draft Local Plans are either not provided, lack a robust approach or, are poorly presented

Page limit

4 reports should be submitted by listing the individual report names & links

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* 1. **Please provide details of how you keep abreast of future developments within HRA for continuous delivery improvement. Please include how you determine best value and could deliver social value for Uttlesford as part of this project**

Evaluation criteria

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

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

Page limit

Your response should not exceed 300 words

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**Evaluation criteria**

The above questions will have specific reasons on what determines a Pass or Fail on each of the questions set out.

Questions from point 5 onwards are determined by a variety of required answers and failure to evidence compliance to each section will result in a fail. Evaluation criteria has been added to each individual question.

 At any time you are unsure about any question please contact the Uttlesford email address that is stated at the start of this document.

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**

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**

**10.1 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’?

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

**10.2 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.

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)**

**12.1 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.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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: |