**Uttlesford District Council**

**Request for Quotation (RFQ)**

**Quality Questions & Specification**

**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment RFQ for to support the preparation of Uttlesford Local Plan**

**20th April 2021**

**To be completed in full and returned by 23:59 on 09/05/2021 to**

**michael.banahene****@essex.gov.uk**

1. **Specification**

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| **Introduction**Uttlesford District Council (New Communities and Local Plan Team) is seeking to appoint consultants to undertake a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA). The LSA 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 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for (1) the larger settlements identified for potential growth, (2) potential new settlement sites and for (3) a number of additional sites identified for development in the smaller settlements.The study will assess the sensitivity of each of the settlements or areas for potential growth. Specific locations for analysis will need to be agreed with the Council.The LSA is required to be completed by end of October 2021 with a draft report for parts (1) and (2) by end of July and final report by end of August; and completion of part (3) by end of October. **Background**Following withdrawal of the 2018 Submission Local Plan from the examination process in early 2020, the Council is at the early stages of preparing a new Local Plan. The Council commenced work on the Issues and Options stage in October 2020 and community engagement on this stage is ongoing until 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 The Strategy of the withdrawn local plan centred on the allocation of three garden communities.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 agenda, one of its principal corporate aims, fully on board. Therefore, the Council is seeking evidence of the sensitivity of the landscape to development around settlements.About UttlesfordUttlesford 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) and 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.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)

**Specification** The scope of the study is divided into 3 parts. 1. Towns and key villages
2. Potential new settlement location(s)
3. Allocations in other villages
4. Towns and key villages

The Council is seeking to identify development sites in sustainable locations, adjacent to settlements to encourage people to access services and facilities by active modes. A sensitivity assessment is required for the landscape around the following settlements which are the towns and larger villages in the district which provide a range of services and facilities. * 1. Edge of Bishops Stortford within Uttlesford
	2. Elsenham
	3. Great Chesterford
	4. Great Dunmow
	5. Hatfield Heath
	6. Newport
	7. Saffron Walden
	8. Stansted Mountfitchet
	9. Takeley
	10. Thaxted

The assessment is to inform the location of the following development types: -* + - residential,
		- mixed uses of residential and associated services and facilities,
		- employment,
		- sport pitches with associated club buildings, parking and flood lighting, and
		- green infrastructure - natural and semi-natural open space providing a variety of enhanced and newly created natural habitats – new woodland, trees, hedgerows, grassland.

The final extent of the landscape to be assessed and the development scenarios will be subject to discussion and agreement with the District Council at commencement of the project. **Minimum Requirements** Our minimum requirements are as follows:To deliver a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment based on the latest Natural England Guidance (An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management, Natural England, 2019) A detailed study comprising desk and field work to assess sensitivity of the landscape in the 1. wider context of the Landscape Character Assessment (2006) and
2. in identifying locations for development, using the Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (2006) as an evidence baseline.

The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment should1. Provide introduction and context
2. Describe the landscape baseline and relationship to the district wide Landscape Character Assessment
3. Explain the study methodology
4. Identify areas of landscape sensitivity
5. Provide guidance to inform planning policies and allocations in sensitive and non-sensitive areas.

Our additional requirements are as follows:Duty to Cooperate: Where landscape areas 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. Deliverables:* Internal Draft reports in Word format including executive summary
* 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.
* Provide evidence at the Local Plan Examination.
1. New Settlements

Previous iterations of the Local Plan have included the allocation of new settlements. It is anticipated that the Council will receive proposals for new settlements through the Call for Sites. Such sites may have a scale of 3,000-10,000 dwellings, alongside a full mix of other land uses and open space, creating a community designed in accordance with the TCPA Garden City Principles. A sensitivity assessment is required of the landscape of and around proposals for new settlements submitted through the Council’s call for sites. The site promoter’s information provided through the call for sites will be available.You are requested: -* to tender on the basis of assessing 6 separate locations.
1. Allocations in other villages.

The Local Plan wishes to ensure the vitality of the smaller communities and the viability of their facilities and will therefore be seeking to allocate smaller sites in these communities. This also helps to ensure a constant delivery of housing. Following the call for sites and the assessment of the sites, the council will allocate such sites in the draft local plan. A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of these draft allocations is required as part of the evidence to demonstrate that the allocation is sound, and if necessary, to suggest mitigation to be included in the policy. In assessing these sites, you will know the site location, size and development proposed. You are required: -* To tender on the basis of assessing 25 specific sites.

**Resources**Access will be given to data held by the Council, including its Geographical Information Systems (GIS), subject to any legal requirements such as those contained within the General Data Protection Regulation.The following background evidence is available.[Landscape Character Assessment](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4937/Environment)* + Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Assoc, 2006)
	+ [Neighbourhood plans](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans) – Gt and Lt Chesterford; Stebbing; Thaxted
	+ Previous New Settlement allocations (Chris Blandford 2017)

[Historic Landscape Character](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4940/Historic-environment)* + Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project (ECC 2009)
	+ Neighbourhood Plans – Gt and Lt Chesterford; Stebbing; Thaxted
	+ Previous New Settlement allocations – (UDC 2017); (Place Services 2018); (Donald Insall Associates 2018 & 2019).
	+ Protected Lanes (ECC, 2012)
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1. **Timescales**

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| --- | --- |
| RFQ Published | 20/04/2021 |
| Clarifications | 20/04/2021 – 04/05/2021 |
| RFQ submission deadline | 23:59 Sunday 9 May 2021 |
| RFQ Evaluation | 10/04/2021 – 14/04/2021 |
| Project Start | By 1 June 2021 |
| Parts 1 & 2 draft reports | By 30 July 2021 |
| Parts 1 & 2 final reports | By 30 August 2021 |
| Part 3 commencement | 1 September 2021 |
| Part 3 completion  | 31 October 2021 |
|  |  |
| Local Plan Examination (estimated commencement) | September 2023 |

**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 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.

**3.1 Confirm how your service will meet the requirements of the specification. Describe the methodology you would use to identify the extent of the landscape around the part (1) settlements and part (2) new settlement sites to be assessed and method of dividing these areas into parcels as appropriate and what factors you would take into account to understand the character of the existing settlements/new settlements in setting the development scenarios.**

Evaluation criteria

**Pass**:- A clear description of what is required by undertaking the works including description of the methodology demonstrating a knowledge of the Natural England Guidance and an understanding of the character of Uttlesford.

**Fail**:- a vague description what is required by undertaking the works including description of the methodology with little knowledge of the Natural England guidance and a lack of understanding of the character of Uttlesford.

Your answer should not exceed 1000 words.

**3.2 Give at least two examples of contracts which demonstrate experience and a working knowledge of the Natural England guidance (or its predecessors documents) and your ability to successfully meet 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

**3.3** **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 to be entered in the box below

**3.4 How will you communicate with UDC to update on progress of the LSA? 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

* 1. **Ability to present the final assessment to stakeholders and at Local Plan Examination.**

Evaluation criteria

**Pass**: Details of previous experience of working with local authorities and presentation of assessment to working group/ committee. Experience of presenting evidence and Local Plan examinations.

**Fail**: The Bidder provided little detail of past experience of working for local authorities and presenting their assessment to elected members and at Local Plan examinations.

Your response should not exceed 300 words.

* 1. **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 additional social 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 social 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 social value

Your response should not exceed 300 words

**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 4 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.

If 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. **Insurances**

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.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **4.1** | **Employers Liability Insurance** to a value of **£5M** | Yes, or willing to obtain |  |
| No |  |
| **4.2** | **Public Liability Insurance** to a value of **£5M** | Yes, or willing to obtain |  |
| No |  |
| **4.3** | **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**

**5.1 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.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Does your organisation fully comply with your statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010? | Yes | No | N/A | If stated Yes, please state how |
| Have you ever been challenged under the Equality Act e.g. a discrimination case? | Yes | No | N/A | If stated Yes, please state how |
| 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 |
| 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 |

**5.2 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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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 & Safety**

**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’?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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. **Terms and conditions (T&Cs)**

See attached – UDC Terms and Conditions

1. **Freedom of Information**

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** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

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: |