**Uttlesford District Council**

**Request for Quotation (RFQ)**

**Quality Questions & Specification**

**Uttlesford District Council**

**LOCAL PLAN**

**UDC LOCAL PLAN VERIFICATION STUDY:**

 **ACHIEVING OUR CARBON TARGETS**

 **RFQ for the supply of consultancy services**

**Ref LP VERIFICATION 1021**

**21st October 2021**

To be completed in full and returned by

**12 noon on 8th November 2021** to

Rula Dymond, Procurement Graduate (Rula.Dymond@essex.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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| **Summary** **Uttlesford District Council invites consultancies to submit a proposal to work with the Council on a ‘Verification Study’ to test the degree to which the emerging and final version of the Local Plan policies and Spatial Strategy achieves its stated Vision and Objectives, in particular the Climate Change agenda, carbon emissions reduction and mitigation targets. The Council has commissioned several studies of direct relevance in order provide a sound evidence base on which to build the Spatial Strategy and Local Plan policies. Studies include the Sustainability Appraisal, Biodiversity, Water Cycle Management, Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation as well as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), transportation and Viability Appraisal. Consultants will work with these recommendations as well as the Council’s local plan team in order to test the robustness of the emerging draft of the plan including its Spatial Strategy and Site Allocations.** **Consultants will act as an impartial and critical friend, drawing on their experience of other local plans, garden communities and proposed new settlement master plans and planning policies as well as climate change strategies and action plans to benchmark and to strengthen our approach. All consultants are working to the Council’s corporate objective to address climate change and this commission should evaluate the extent to which this is being achieved. The criterion of deliverability of the Local Plan proposals is critical, along with the Council’s strategy of working with promoters to ensure achievability of the predicted growth over the Local Plan period to 2040. Consultants should identify opportunities and make recommendations to address any deficiencies or areas for strengthening through the local plan process, reflected in the policies, design guidance and options/proposed sites in the spatial strategy.** **They may be required to defend this Verification Review at the Examination in Public as additional evidence to support the Local Plan.** **Background**Uttlesford District Council has been preparing a new Local Plan following the withdrawal of its 2019 Submission in January 2020. The Local Plan will be a comprehensive Development Plan Document (DPD) with a viable and deliverable spatial strategy that helps the council achieve its objectives for climate change. It will allocate sites for infrastructure, residential and other development, and apply strategic and non-strategic policies working towards net zero carbon development over its life to 2040. We are currently reviewing the Call for Sites submissions of over 300 including 17 larger sites or clusters of sites. This follows from an extensive engagement with the community on issues and options through the establishment of a Community Stakeholder Forum (CSF) that met to discuss nine different themes.Uttlesford is a prosperous, high value rural district in north-west Essex. It has heritage market towns at Saffron Walden, Thaxted and Great Dunmow and over sixty villages set within rolling countryside, dominated by historic landholding estates, woodland, and agriculture. Settlements are connected by a myriad of rural lanes together with two principal north-south roads and the east-west A120/Takeley corridor between Great Dunmow and Stansted Airport. Amid strong pressures for development the District occupies a strategic location astride the M11, with the transport and employment hub of Stansted Airport in the south and the high growth area of Cambridge, including the Chesterford Research Park, part of the collection of science parks, to the north. It benefits from the London-Stansted Innovation Corridor and spin-off from the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, new transport proposals and skilled employment growth from Cambridge effecting a strong demand for housing in the District. The District’s dominant environmental characteristic is its rural character and relatively dispersed settlement pattern that challenges growth policies for travel reduction, infrastructure provision, absorption of new development and carbon emissions from agricultural and transport land uses; around 17,000 new dwellings are required to be provided for with the Local Plan period including a buffer of circa 3,000.The Local Plan Objectives Consultants are required to assess the efficacy of the emerging Local Plan deriving from its baseline Vision and Objectives that are summarised below; key elements that consultants will address are highlighted:1. Our vision reflects the ambition required to achieve net-zero carbon status by 2030 and to protect and enhance Uttlesford’s rich natural environment and built heritage. 2. Residents will know their views have been listened to and will have the opportunity to influence decision making. Town and Parish Councils will play an increasing role in this. Local people will be involved in making Uttlesford ‘the best place to live, work and play’. **Uttlesford will embrace the changes required to be net zero carbon, enabling us to live, work and play within the limits of the environment whilst protecting our natural** **environment** 3. The essential landscape value of Uttlesford’s countryside will be enhanced promoting biodiversity and increased woodland, contributing to the region's prosperous rural and agricultural economy. The rivers and watercourses of Uttlesford will be protected and enhanced, and together with green infrastructure, contribute to a network of blue and green corridors for the benefit of wildlife and people. Hatfield Forest will be part of this network; however, it will also be protected from overuse. Access to the countryside for recreation and tourism will be promoted in a managed way, supporting agricultural diversification, the creation of jobs and the healthy lifestyles of residents and visitors alike. The network of footpaths, safe cycle routes and bridleways will be expanded and improved resulting in Uttlesford residents having the highest levels of active travel and health in Essex[[1]](#footnote-1). **Uttlesford’s rich natural and historical heritage will be protected and enhanced, for the health and enjoyment of people now and in the future** 4. Uttlesford will be known for its beautiful rolling countryside, its market towns and villages with a rich heritage, and a strong cultural offer and economy that operates at a local, national and international scale. The needs of local people, as well as generations after will be met and the people of the District will be healthier, happier and able to meet most of their day-to-day needs locally within a community that is good for their health and wellbeing. **Uttlesford will have a diverse, resilient and thriving sustainable economy** 5. Uttlesford will have a diverse range of businesses and a tourism offer which supports the attractive towns and villages acting as employment and service centres for the surrounding rural hinterland. The District will work with its partners to ensure business growth will be ambitious, innovative, future focused and benefit the whole district. Small businesses, creative start-ups and a growing number of people working from home will be positively supported. The local benefits of Stansted Airport will be maximised, while its environmental impacts are managed and minimised. Links to other sources of prosperity will also benefit the district. The north of the District will benefit from appropriate improved links into the high-skilled ‘Cambridge phenomenon’, supporting high-value job growth at Chesterford Research Park and elsewhere. The south of the District will benefit from appropriate improved links to Harlow, Chelmsford, Bishop’s Stortford and Braintree. 6. The market towns of the District will have and maintain sustainable, viable and vibrant town centres with a diverse range of stores and other facilities to attract people to shop and visit. Villages with smaller centres will meet the day-to-day needs of their local catchments. **New development will link homes with jobs, be of high-quality design and focus on sustainable construction, materials and travel** 7. New development will be focused on providing the right homes and employment in the right place, in line with policies, to address the challenge of climate change, to strengthen communities and provide greater opportunities to live and work locally and aligning with the Preliminary Outline Spatial Strategyagreed by Members in July 2021.8. How people travel through and around the District will have changed, and the use of public transport and active travel as an alternative to the car will be far greater than it is today. The necessary infrastructure to support this change will be delivered in a timely manner. The District will support car use shifting to zero tailpipe emission vehicles by providing appropriate infrastructure. Furthermore, the level of commuting will be addressed to reduce the need to travel and address congestion and climate change. 9. High quality design will protect and enhance the intrinsic character and built heritage of Uttlesford’s towns, villages, and the wider environment will be balanced with the benefits of proportionate development to provide affordable housing, local jobs or additional community facilities. The quality of new development will be high, and supported by appropriate design guidance, agreed with local communities. 10. New buildings will be designed to low energy standards and renewable energy generation will meet the District’s needs. The Council agreed a **Preliminary Outline Spatial Strategy** (POST) in August 2021 that should support sustainable development and economic growth concentrated on existing town centres, larger villages and in the vicinity of Stansted Airport extending in a broad corridor eastward. Any new settlements should seek opportunities to maximise links to existing infrastructure, best realised in proximity to transport networks that could handle large numbers of trips: the M11, A120, the railway, B1383 but having regard to, for example, blockages at Newport and morning delays at Stansted Mountfitchet. These areas are better provided for by existing infrastructure than more rural parts of the district where new residents could choose modes of transport other than the car for some of their trips. In more sustainable areas, the Plan should also promote the walkable neighbourhood concept, with most facilities within 15-minute walk or cycle of the home. In more rural areas, limited development should support existing services and facilities, promote active travel and rural employment opportunities. Possibly using models such as the ‘Velo Village’, whereby a cluster of villages ‘share’ their services and are linked by high quality active travel infrastructure. The POST identifies more specific areas of focus:* The Local Plan should positively seek to meet the development needs of the area with a buffer to be flexible.
* Addressing climate change and zero carbon should be a key thread running through the Local Plan – spatially, this means (1) planning for development in locations where there are or will be services and facilities so as to enable less car use; (2) planning to reduce the need to travel and provide choices other than the car for some trips, in a rural district public transport is challenging to deliver, and this may mean planning for increased opportunities for walking and cycling; (3) any new settlements should set ambitious goals of reduced car use with 60% of trips made by modes other than the car (whilst recognising the difficulties in achieving this ambitious goal) (4) in rural areas, supporting local services and facilities, planning for active modes, and supporting ‘local employment hubs’.
* The TCPA principles[[2]](#footnote-2) should apply to all new developments in the District, proportionate to the size of the development – spatially this means (1) closely linking homes to local jobs, shops and other facilities in walkable neighbourhoods; and (2) planning for integrated and accessible transport choices other than the car.
* Development should preserve or enhance the considerable number of listed buildings, conservation areas and otherheritage assets, sites of biodiversity importance and green spaces including Hatfield Forest and ancient woodlands, and valued landscapes especially comprising river valleys, farmland plateaux, chalk uplands and the chalk streams.
* Any new settlements or other large development should be well located to existing and proposed infrastructure and facilities.
* The Local Plan should address existing infrastructure deficits and ensure the delivery of new infrastructure when it is needed.
* Homes and jobs should be planned to reduce the need for commuting, where there are more job opportunities or better transport links, with larger developments having a mix of uses to minimise the number and length of journeys, high quality infrastructure, and maximise the potential of mass transport.
* The Local Plan should support working in more flexible ways and support innovation, for example more flexible use of village shops, rural employment hubs, newer methods of ‘green’ construction.
* Smaller villages should accommodate limited development commensurate with their size and to support local services and facilities.
* Employment growth should build on key sectors and strengths, e.g. the visitor economy, the rural economy, life sciences, research and innovation, aviation and related activities, construction and IT.
* Employment growth should also support ‘opportunity sectors’ e.g. advanced manufacturing, Life Sciences and Healthcare associated with Chesterford Research Park; Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics associated with Stansted Airport; and Low Carbon and Renewables.
* Development on the limited number of brownfield sites should be prioritised although there will be a need for development on greenfield.
* Site allocations must have a realistic prospect of being delivered with larger new developments part of a phased programme of delivery and a proportion deliverable within the plan period.
* The Local Plan should avoid altering Green Belt boundaries unless justifiable by exceptional circumstances.
* Development should be avoided where the land is susceptible to flooding.
* Incremental growth over the last 10-15 years has resulted in many sites being developed and with limited brownfield sites new settlements are likely to form part of the strategy but have a less prominent role than previously.
* The Local Plan should create a good supply of small and medium sized sites in the shorter term to maintain a consistent and flexible housing supply.

**Scope of Commission***The overall scope is the appraisal of the local plan preparation, spatial strategy, major site allocations and policies in the plan with regard to stated Local Plan objectives and in particular the extent to which it helps achieve Uttlesford District Council’s carbon and climate change objectives*. It should address the fundamental question and is an overall requirement of the Study**: Is the Spatial Strategy the optimum to address the climate change issues across the District, and what other opportunities might there be to strengthen its approach?** Members declared a climate and ecological emergency in late 2019 and set up a Climate Change Working Group with interim climate change guidance agreed by the Council in early 2021. Consultants should note that responses to climate change and the need to work towards net zero carbon set the context for the Local Plan policy and will also underly viability assessment of options for site allocation and the spatial strategy overall. The Verification Consultants should understand the possibility that the Council may need to challenge promoters in their dealings with landowners in order to deliver the decarbonisation, Net Zero Carbon and renewable energy requirements, as well as the TCPA and building for health life principles, to avoid these being squeezed on viability grounds. The aim is to meet the Council’s objective towards achieving net zero development by the end of the Plan period in 2040 recognising that the plan itself will be the critical component in a programme of projects, strategies, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), and Master Plans prepared by the Council to achieve this aim. Planning appropriately for new build is a critical part of the sustainable development process and achieving major advances in biodiversity, water cycle management, renewable energy, greenhouse gas/carbon emissions through a robust and viable plan is a key part in the climate change suite of tools within a strong local planning framework. The Council seeks a consultancy with a high level of technical, evaluative, and planning expertise to complete a robust, sound, and comprehensive review of the work leading to the Regulation 18 stage and up to the Regulation 19 version of the plan. Essentially, from the perspectives of local plan deliverability and net zero carbon, the commission should assess whether the plan will achieve its overall objectives and specifically on carbon, and whether and how it could be improved. The scope of the required commission therefore covers:1. The extent to which the plan achieves its objectives relating to climate change having regard to the viability of bringing forward developments
2. High level appraisal of the studies and recommendations, the evidence used, and consistency of recommendations between studies to ensure that the Plan will ultimately present as a coherent whole
3. Evaluation of the evolving key policies regarding their robustness in helping to meet the objectives, with benchmarking against other adopted local plan policies across the country acknowledged as leaders in this field
4. Appraise the Reg 18 Local Plan regarding requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), government guidance, and relevant environmental legislation on carbon and greenhouse gas emissions
5. Identify and re-appraise alongside the Viability consultants any parts of the plan and policies where viability might be at risk or marginal due to environmental requirements.

The consultancy commissions underway to which this commission needs to have regard are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Cultural Strategy | The Cultural Engine  |
| 2 | Employment & Economic Development | ICENI  |
| 3 | Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) | Footprint Ecology |
| 4 | Heritage Assets | ECC Place Services  |
| 5 | Heritage Sensitivity | Oxford Archaeology |
| 6 | Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)  | LUC |
| 7 | Landscape Sensitivity Assessment | LUC |
| 8 | Local Wildlife Sites Review | ECC Place Services  |
| 9 | Master Plans for key sites | We Made That |
| 10 | Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation  | ZebraCarbon |
| 11 | Retail Capacity Study | Nexus Planning |
| 12 | Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) | JBA  |
| 13 | Sustainability Appraisal | AECOM |
| 14 | Transport Strategy | Tetra Tech |
| 15 | Viability  | Dixon Searle |
| 16 | Water Cycle Study  | JBA |

Working in CollaborationThe Local Plan will aim to shape new developments and extensions to existing settlements in a way that contributes to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and improve resilience to climate change. Its policies and proposals towards this, beyond Government planning and building control standards, will only work with the support of stakeholders, developers and communities. The consultants should be aware of the Council’s collaborative approach to working with a range of stakeholders: public agencies, the three tiers of local governance, the community and the landowners, promoters, developers, and builders. To this end the Council is seeking commitments that help to achieve the Plan’s objectives from promoters around:* Community Participation
* Quality Placemaking and Climate Change
* Stewardship
* Programme Specification and Delivery
* Evolving Best Practice and Delivering new healthy, sustainable and exemplar communities.

The Local Plan has now reached the stage of considering around 300 sites, including seventeen larger sites or clusters, submitted in the ‘Call for Sites’. The baseline and evidence studies are currently underway; the process of assessment is iterative, and all the consultants are liaising and reporting through an informal Local Plan Coordination Group and Shared Issues log to help ensure alignment. The Verification consultants will need to assess that their outputs and recommendations are not contradictory whilst recognising that they will input to the Reg 18 Plan being drafted during the early stages of their commission. **Requirements for the Study** The **purpose** of the Study is to optimise the production of a viable and ambitious Local Plan that accommodates growth in a rural district with minimum negative impacts and meets the council’s objectives around climate change within the context of the planning process, as robustly as possible. The plan must have policies that are deliverable, appropriate in scale, evidenced but ambitious, working within the climate change, healthy towns and garden city/community principles. The commission should assess whether the plan will achieve its objectives on carbon, and how this might be improved. Specifically, and having regard to the scope of the commission, the requirements from consultants are to undertake the following assessments and make recommendations as appropriate:1. To what extent will the plan achieve its objectives, having regards to phasing, and in particular those relating to climate change
2. To appraise the consultancy studies and consultants’ recommendations and as they may evolve over the plan preparation period from Reg 18 to Reg 19 with respect to the requirements of this Brief, the evidence used and consistency across recommendations to ensure that the Plan will ultimately present as a coherent whole
3. To evaluate the evolving policies for their robustness with regard to planning standards and the NPPF, in helping to meet climate objectives, incorporating planning legal advice as necessary and in discussion with the client; benchmark against other adopted local plan polices across the country acknowledged as leaders in this climate change field
4. To comment on the locations and distribution of the site allocations and the spatial strategy regarding impact on emissions and achieving the carbon goals acknowledging the relevant consultancy appraisals
5. To assess generally the feasibility of achieving Net Zero Carbon for different scales and types of development: residential, non-residential, new build, redevelopment of existing, and land use types
6. To assess the overall strength of the deliverability of the plan’s objectives and the development of sites in accordance with policies and stated principles, including the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and carbon targets
7. To assess the use of GIS and online data access including potential interactive technology and how this can be improved to optimise community engagement

The final report should show how the approach has assessed how the relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) are met, as well as the Local Plan and Climate Change objectives emphasised in this brief.Evidently this is a non-standard brief but one which the council feels will add considerable weight to and confidence in the Local Plan. Therefore, consultants should propose their ideas on methodology and approach, recognising the breadth and detail of the appointed consultancy experts in their fields. Consultants must confirm that they would be available to provide written evidence and representation at the Examination in Public, drawing on outside special expertise if required; the RFQ requires day rates to cover this consultancy service towards the end of the contract.Consultants’ submissions will be assessed with respect to their approach to the above requirements for the study and responses in the Method Statement should address the issues and concerns outlined above in this Brief.**Outputs from the Commission**The following documentary outputs will be required:* All Reports to have an Executive Summary[[3]](#footnote-3)
* Initial Power Point/Report on Reg 18, January/February 2021 as outlined in the Table on page 12 in this Brief
* Report on assessment of Reg 18 consultation, summer 2022
* Final draft verification report of Reg 19, January 2023
* Report of draft Local Plan in August 2023
* Maps, graphs, diagrams and infographics as appropriate
* Power Point(s) summary for presentations and as part of the final output, presentations to Members, officers and stakeholders/partners as required
* Electronic versions in Word/appropriate graphic format

The draft Initial Report should be completed by 18th February 2022. Please note that an overview may also be required to be presented to members of the Council’s Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Group (SIDG), date to be agreed. The Final Report in late 2023 will set out the overall assessments and any recommendations. It will encompass updated assessments in the light of Local Plan consultations and stakeholder engagement, and how the conclusions and recommendations have been reached. We require two bound hard copies of the final report, and the completed study at each stage must be made available in digital format with a summary PowerPoint presentation and access to digital material, preferably interactive, and easily accessible to the non-technical reader. Any maps prepared by the consultant must be in a compatible GIS layer to be agreed with the Council. Reports (including Final Report) will be in a clear Word format and will be readily usable in line with Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.[[4]](#footnote-4)Bidders must explain in their submission how they will communicate with the client on progress, how issues will be handled, resolved, and recorded between parties for a full audit trail and transparency.The Bidder is required to disclose any current or potential conflict of interest to the Local Authority stating the nature and extent of the conflict, as well as, providing assurance that this will be handled appropriately as soon as it becomes known to the consultancy. Any connections of the consultants with other consultancies, landowners or developers or other interests promoting development in Uttlesford should be declared. The appointed consultants should make the Council aware of their proposed arrangements for avoiding any conflict of interest and ensuring confidentiality. |

1. **Commission Timetable**

The summary of the Local Plan timetable is:

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| --- | --- |
| Issues & Options, site allocations initial assessments | November 2021 |
| Preferred Options Reg 18 consultation  | May-June 2022 |
| Proposed Submission Plan Reg 19 | September 2023 |
| Possible consultants’ contribution post Reg 19 | TBA and separate contract |
| Adoption | Summer 2024 |

The Contract will be established for the duration of the above timetable; from contract commencement (expected to be 16th November 2021) until the submission draft Local Plan Local Plan at end of August 2023, approximately 22 months. A further contract may be extended to support the Local Plan Examination in Public from September 2023 for which the consultant should provide an average daily rate.

**Please note that the budget for this commission is £35,000.**

1. **Milestones**

The submission dates and study milestones in relation to the RFQ and indicative Local Plan timetable are[[5]](#footnote-5):

| **Activity** | **Timeline** |
| --- | --- |
| Publish RFQ | 21st October 2021 |
| Clarifications | 21—27th October 2021 |
| RFQ Submission Deadline | 8th November 2021 no later than 12:00 (Noon)  |
| RFQ Evaluations | 12th November 2021 |
| Award Notification | 15th November 2021  |
| Contract Start | 16th November 2021 |
| Inception Meeting  | w/c 22nd November 2021 |
| Initial high-level overview/power point presentation  | w/c 17th January 2022  |
| Draft initial Report (presentation TBC) | 14th February 2021 |
| Consultation and Publication on Preferred Options (Reg 18)  | 2nd May – 13th June 2022 |
| Detailed Work to inform Reg 19 Submission Plan - emerging spatial strategy with policy assessment (UDC) | Summer - Autumn 2022 |
| Ongoing assessments of policies/requirements including Consultants’ advice regarding enhancements arising from carbon and climate change considerations to underpin the objectives and deliverability of the plan.  | June - November 2022 |
| Draft report for Reg 19 | W/C 24th January 2023 |
| Publication and Consultation on Pre-Submission draft (Regulation 19).  | 1st May – 12th June 2023 |
| Local Plan Submission preparation | June - August 2023 |
| Final Verification Report on Submission draft | 31st August 2023 |
| Governance on submission to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) | September 2023 |
| Submission to PINS | September 2023 |
| Examination in Public (Consultants may be required to present additional evidence at EIP)  | September 2023 – June 2024 |
| Local Plan Examination & Modifications support  | Summer 2024 |
| Adoption of Local Plan | Summer 2024 |

Consultants will be expected to confirm in their submission that they can meet the project plan milestones as set out in the Table above. The reporting milestones are indicative and will be discussed at the Inception meeting and agreed accordingly; consultants will be paid in stages against achievement of the milestones with details to be agreed at the inception meeting.

The commission will be subject to regular progress reporting throughout its duration with fortnightly client meetings for the first three months until the end of February 2022. The progress meetings are likely to be monthly from March 2022 and the costs of these and any associated administration costs should be incorporated within the total costs submitted. As indicated, some of these progress meetings may involve a presentation to officers, Members and/or key stakeholders.

The total number of meetings/presentations is not expected to be more than 20 over the duration of the contract and most may be virtual via Teams or Zoom.

The Council reserves the right to withdraw from using the services of the consultant without further liability if, in its sole opinion it feels that the project is not progressing as required, the Consultant is not meeting the requirement of the Specification or the milestones are not met.

1. **Requirement Specific Questions**

## The submission material required is set out in this Brief, the accompanying documentation and with evaluation questions is set out below against the four Method Statements. All completed tenders will be evaluated by the Evaluation Panel set up by the client in accordance with the following price and quality weightings:

* Price 50%
* Quality 50%

**Consultants should note that the budget for this commission is £35,000.**

The bidder should return the completed RFQ and completed pricing matrix. Please complete the matrix as per the instructions and return the completed matrix as part of your RFQ submission. All prices should be exempt of VAT and include any expenses.

Quality Scoring Scale

The following questions reflect the quality requirements which Uttlesford District Council require the bidders to meet. The answers provided will demonstrate how the bidder is able to deliver against the specification in the brief and will be scored. Each of the sections within the Method Statement responses will be assessed on a scale of 0 to 5 points, as detailed in the table below:

| **Score** | **Commentary**  |
| --- | --- |
| **0** | **Unacceptable Response**The response is not relevant to the question or the question has not been answered. Where the question has been answered, the response raises major concerns about understanding or approach which are potentially highly detrimental to satisfactory service delivery or Contract performance. The submission failed to cover any of the areas that should have been addressed within the response |
| **1** | **Poor Response**The response suggests significant shortcomings of understanding or approach which is likely to impact on service delivery or Contract performance. The submission failed to cover a number of the areas that should have been addressed within the response |
| **2** | **Fair Response**The response suggests minor shortcomings of understanding or approach which may impact to a limited extent on service delivery or Contract performance. The submission partially covered all areas that should have been addressed within the response |
| **3** | **Satisfactory Response**The response raises no concerns about understanding or approach to service delivery or Contract performance.The submission covered all areas that should have been addressed within the response.  |
| **4** | **Good Response**The response raises no concerns about understanding or approach to service delivery or Contract performance. The response also demonstrates how relevant added value will be provided.The submission covered all areas that should have been addressed within the response to a high standard.  |
| **5** | **Excellent Response**The response raises no concerns about understanding or approach to service delivery or Contract performance. The response demonstrates how relevant added value will be provided including examples of the application of good practice, demonstration of how the study could explore other perspectives not considered by the client or explores innovative ways to address climate change and net zero targets. The submission covered all areas that should have been addressed within the response to a high standard and demonstrated a commitment to go above and beyond requirements  |

The score for each Method Statement will be weighted.  There are mandatory minimum assessments set out below; failure to reach these scores in any of the responses may result in a Fail mark, resulting in the consultant being excluded before the price evaluation takes place.

| **Method Statement** | **Mandatory Minimum** | **Weighting (50% of assessment)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1 – Methodology** | Score 3 – Satisfactory Response | 20 |
| **2 – Engagement with other Consultancies and Stakeholders and Collaboration over assessments** | Score 3 – Satisfactory Response | 15 |
| **3 – Project Management and Delivery** | Score 2 – Fair Response | 10 |
| **4 – Resourcing and Experience** | Score 2 - Fair Response | 5 |

Bidders must provide responses to the questions within the four Method Statements below. Questions should be answered to describe how consultants will meet the requirements in full and should not refer to other documents or appendices. Please confine responses to the maximum word limit specified in each response box, excluding examples of experience or CV’s. Each section will be assessed in accordance with the scoring and weighting system set out above. If you are unsure about any question, please contact Simon Payne (SPayne@uttlesford.gov.uk).

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| **Method Statement 1 – Methodology (20%) - Maximum 1500 words** |
| Please outline and explain the rationale for adopting the approach you would use to deliver the objectives of this Brief and how you would develop and undertake assessments as the Local Plan progresses over the stages of the commission. As part of your response please provide:1. An indication of how you would create an evaluation system or metrics to help assess the robustness of the local plan policies and spatial strategy against the achievement of net zero carbon over its lifetime.

 1. The assumptions made around availability of information and timeliness, working alongside other consultants, and the identification of any potential issues you foresee.
2. Your identification of input from the Council through a joint project management team and your methods of reporting to Members and the Strategic Infrastructure Development Group, to include communication channels to be used, current remote working practices and how to present complex information with subsequent dialogue and the need to agree on the outcomes.
 |
| Response:  |

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| **Method Statement 2 – Engagement with other Consultancies and Stakeholders and collaboration over assessments. (15%) – Maximum 1000 words** |
| Please identify how you would work with all those engaged in the production of the Plan whether as Consultants, Stakeholders and Members, developers or the community. Explain how you would evaluate their views on how the Plan was meeting the Council’s low carbon objectives through planning policies and spatial strategy, taking account of their anticipated key concerns and how views expressed would be integrated into your recommendations and assessment. |
| Response: |

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| **Method Statement 3 – Project Management and Delivery (10%) – Maximum 750 words** |
| Please outline how you will ensure that this commission will be delivered on time in line with the indicative Local Plan and consultancy timetable and key milestones, ensuring that the required evidence and proposals is sufficient to make a judgement over the degree to which net zero carbon objectives can be met and the Local Plan is sound. In addressing this question please provide:1. An outline of the project management structure and techniques used such as version control, quality control, reporting to the project team ensuring you would accommodate the need for flexibility regarding changes to the overall Local Plan project plan timescales, and the evolution of spatial planning proposals and evidence base.
2. What you perceive to be the main challenges facing this commission and the initial identification of risks and mitigation in the context of the objective to achieve the highest Net Zero Carbon standards within the current and projected planning regime and the evolving local plan.
3. How the ‘evidence’ base will be collated, reviewed and a consensus reached as to the route to achieving net zero and local plan objectives including how information will be presented in a concise and visual format to communicate findings effectively to a wide audience.
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| Response: |

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| **Method Statement 4 – Resourcing and Experience (5%) – Maximum 500 words** |
| Please set out the contract management structure with details of roles and reporting lines. Please provide CVs for the consultants setting out designation, duties, responsibilities, relevant experience, and qualifications. Please also provide 2-3 examples of previous commissions that have relevance to the Brief and draw out the knowledge gained from this. As part of your response please provide:* 1. Your proposals for the team structure setting out roles and responsibilities; reporting lines and anticipated allocation of time for each task within the consultancy; including their daily fee rates and identifying approximate overall cost for principal activities in the project. This will help enable comparison of inputs to the contract.
	2. A brief outline of the extent and nature of experience, knowledge and qualifications of the individual consultants to complement the CVs, and 2-3 examples of relevant previous commissions undertaken by the company with lessons learned that are applicable to this commission.
	3. How consultants ensure that they and the company keep up to date on professional, technical and other relevant matters such as technical advances in energy generation/distribution, decarbonisation techniques, Government or planning requirements, localised climate change events; ensuring that advice represents sound analysis.
 |
| Response: |

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.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

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.

|  |
| --- |
| **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), and whether 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**

**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.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Environment**

Uttlesford District Council declared the 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 approaching/achieving net-zero carbon status by 2030 and to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district. Addressing this is the primary purpose of this commission.

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. The budget for the commission is set as a maximum of **£35,000.**

**Evaluation Criteria:**

Price score will be calculated as the lowest price divided by the bidding price and then that number will be multiplied by 50 as this RFQ is a 50% weighting on price. Both the total cost of the project (80% of the price score) and the additional day rates (20% of the price score) will be scored.

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

**10.1 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** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

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 full contact details below if they do not match the above: |

1. Please note these are aspirations and it will be a challenge to absorb demand for use and access to Hatfield Forest without restriction or the creation of alternative country park-type facility elsewhere. Improving active travel networks is a priority whilst recognising that the county highways authority cannot automatically take on the management of new public routes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. To comply with accessibility regulations an easy read format with non-technical summary that can be read by assistive technology will also be needed. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/publishing-accessible-documents> (accessed April 2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Please note that this is the timetable for the full local plan, [↑](#footnote-ref-5)