Questions & responses:

1. Can you confirm that this brief is to cover Phase 1 - stages 1, 2 and 3?

Yes, the brief covers Phase 1, Stages 1, 2 and 3. The current tender does not relate to Phases 2 and 3, which will be covered under separate specifications and separate tender processes.

Remit and approach:

Under Stage 1: Scope a brief for the LCA review we have set out a suggested list of the topic areas to be included (as appropriate) in the brief. We have suggested some methods of qualitative data collection, including interviews, surveys and workshops which may be appropriate for some of the topic areas. For clarity, the topic areas and the suggested data collection methods are to prompt ideas and thought. The approach to each is not limited to what is set out in the specification and we would welcome any ideas tenderers might have on the best approach to the development of the brief for the Phase 2 LCA review. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the LCA and SCA ‘Approach’ documents are updated in a way which makes them fit for purpose for the landscape challenges which lie ahead (Phase 3 of the staged process).

Please note that the process for updating the LCA and SCA ‘Approach’ documents is envisaged as being as collaborative as possible, and we will be seeking and encouraging input from as wide a group as possible (from public, private and third sectors) to ensure the best possible outcomes. At any of the three Phases consortia of tenderers would be welcome.

1. The proposed timescale (end of March) is short – can you confirm the options for further extension and flexibility as indicated in the brief? It is unlikely that the work could be completed within 3 weeks.

We can be flexible on the delivery timescales but need the project to be well under way by the end of March.

1. Is the brief (Phase 1, Stage 1) required for a review of current approaches to existing LCAs or a brief for updating of the LCA Approach guidance?

The brief is for a review of current approaches in existing published LCA documents (LCA only for Phase 1). The analysis of these, and learning from them (in Phase 2), will contribute to a future update of the LCA/SCA (‘Approach’) guidance documents.

1. Can you clarify the purpose of the comprehensive LCA review (Phase 2)?

It is primarily about gathering good practice and approaches to LCA/SCA to inform the future update of the LCA/SCA (‘Approach’) guidance documents, but in the process we envisage lessons to be drawn about the ‘Approach’ documents and for this to fee into their update. Understanding less good practice and approaches to LCA/SCA would also be expected to be considered as part of Phase 2.

1. Could you clarify how the comprehensive review of current approaches to published LCAs (Phase 2) will help inform the update of the 'Approach' documents?  A review of existing documents may not highlight key points needed for an update of the ‘Approach’. Will there be other strands of work informing the brief for Phase 3?

Part of the work undertaken in Phases 2 and 3 will be discussions with those who commission LCA/SCAs. Gathering expert experience from users of current relevant issues that need to be addressed would also be in scope, to ensure that all aspects needed for the update of both LCA and SCA ‘Approach’ documents can be undertaken. All ideas and insights are welcome in preparing your tenders for Phase 1.

1. Phase 1, Stage 2 – Can you confirm the requirements for testing the brief using a sample of LCAs? A review of published information may not provide all the answers to the effectiveness of LCAs in plan-making and decision-taking. Can you clarify the expected output from this task?

The purpose of Phase 1, Stage 2 is to put into action the brief developed in Phase 1, Stage 1 to test its use and identify any missing elements. We accept that the sample of LCAs will only inform part of the picture in relation to management issues, good practice etc. Any contextual material that is deemed to be relevant and any gaps identified should be highlighted in Stage 2. The idea is that Phase 1 will start the thinking and identify the issues, and that in Phase 2 the scope will be widened sufficiently to ensure that the update of the Approach documents is fully evidenced and all aspects are covered.

1. LCAs often provide evidence for more detailed studies such as sensitivity assessments, LVIAs, woodland strategies etc to inform landscape change (including pressures identified in the brief). Our assumption from the brief is that we are concentrating on the baseline LCA rather than application. Although this may be important for Phase 2.

Please focus on the baseline LCA for Phase 1 (Phase 2 will look in more detail at the application of LCA baselines to detailed studies). Brief reference to any guidelines or strategies that are underpinned by the baseline LCA would be beneficial in Phase 1.

NOTE: If there are areas where you feel that LCAs could be improved, which you would like to convey for Phase 1, please include details in your potential proposal.

We can confirm that the anticipated time inputs for the contract as set out above (Phase 1 only) would be expected to be approximately 25/28 person days.

We are aware that the time available to complete the project is not ideal. Given this, we reiterate that we can be flexible on timescales and encourage any tenders to include proposals for what could be achieved, with available resources, by the end of March.

To confirm, the Phase 1 project is to start the process of updating the LCA and SCA ‘Approach’ documents and is focused on:

1. Developing a brief to review the current approaches to (and uses and effectiveness of) LCAs.
2. Testing the brief.

We would welcome any ideas tenderers might have on the best approach to the development of the brief and its testing (and any other feedback tenderers might have), drawing on your experience and knowledge.