

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

7 February 2007

WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – SUSTAINABILITY
APPRAISAL

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 1328 Winchester District Local Development Framework – Core Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment are now a formal requirement in the preparation of the Local Development Framework for the Winchester District. Due to the skills and resources required to undertake this very specific project the Council has acknowledged the need to appoint consultants (see report CAB1328, 11 Oct 2006).

Four consultancies were interviewed on 14th December 2006 and this report sets out the findings of that process and recommends appointment of a consultancy to undertake this key task. The work will not only address the requirements of the Local Development Framework, but will also provide the Council with a set of corporate procedures to apply to a range of documents and policy statements, to demonstrate that there is a meaningful commitment to the delivery of sustainable development and sustainable working practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the report be noted.

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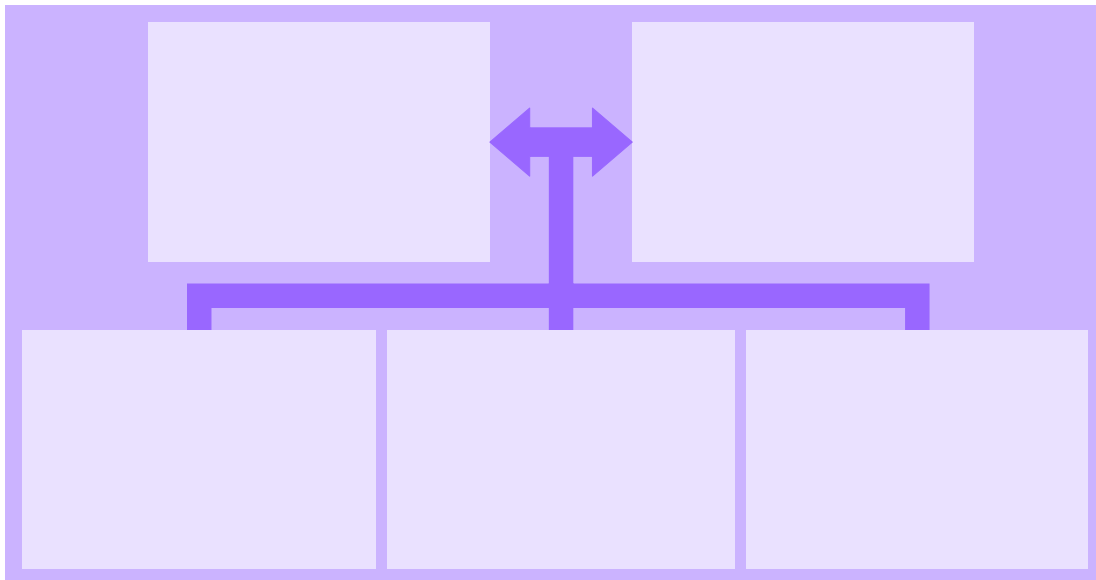
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WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Sustainable development is central to the reformed planning system. Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, specifically requires local development documents to be prepared with a view to contributing towards the achievement of sustainable development. The Government identified five principles in “Securing the Future – UK Sustainable Development Strategy”, published in 2005:-



- 1.2 Consequently all plans and policies prepared under the Local Development Framework must comply not only with this but also European Directive 2001/42/EC, which requires formal strategic environmental assessment of plans and programmes that will have a significant effect on the environment. In addition, there is also a need to comply with the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- 1.3 In CAB1328, reported on 11th October 2006, Members were given an outline of the processes needed to prepare the Local Development Framework (LDF). The report identified the need for the LDF to undergo a strategic environmental assessment in addition to ongoing sustainability appraisal of the development plan documents. Appendix 2 of that report recognised that sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment is one of the key pieces of the LDF evidence base. In addition it is one of the procedural soundness tests that must be passed for a development plan document to be determined as ‘sound’.

- 1.4 CAB1328 further commented that as the Strategic Planning Team was small with a broad range of responsibilities in addition to LDF production, it would not have the time or the skills to undertake all the key elements of work including the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment. Significant additional funds would be required to deliver the LDF on time and in compliance with both the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC and the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. The report went on to acknowledge that the use of consultants would be required to undertake this particular project.
 - 1.5 This report is being made under Contract Procedure Rule 3.1Ciii which requires, for work of this value, that approval is sought from the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Cabinet to accept anything other than the lowest quote, with a report to Cabinet (in this case, the Committee) for information.
- 2 Appointment of Consultants
- 2.1 Eight consultants were forwarded a copy of the Council's requirements on 13th November 2006, with a submission deadline of Friday 1st December. The consultants brief is set out in full at Appendix 1. As a result 6 consultancies made submissions. After a shortlisting process 4 consultancies were invited to interview on 14th December. The outcome of that process is set out in exempt Appendix 2.
 - 2.2 After detailed consideration, officers (in consultation with the Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Cabinet have offered Enfusion consultancy the project. Enfusion is a multi-disciplinary company providing consultancy and research services in sustainability and environmental planning. This consultancy has been offered the contract on the basis that they responded the most thoroughly to the Council's brief and demonstrated both in written submission and the interview process the importance of working with the Council to strengthen and capacity build the skills within the organisation. Their quote was the second cheapest. Officers were concerned that the consultancy providing the cheapest quote would not fulfil the requirements of the brief. Appendix 2 sets out the scoring process and financial proposals involved.
 - 2.3 A meeting was held in January with the consultants to clarify some aspects of the proposal, particularly with regard to the amount of work required to undertake the Appropriate Assessment and whether the level of detail required had been included within the original costings. Whilst the consultants had included an element for the appropriate assessment research, officers felt that clarification was required as to how much a full assessment would be, as it may be necessary through the LDF to explore a range of strategic options for additional growth and such an approach would be guided by the outcome of the appropriate assessment. The consultants have confirmed that for undertaking this detailed work there would be an additional charge of £5010 (ex VAT).
 - 2.4 The consultancy has also provided officers with a quote of £3130 (ex VAT) to undertake a stakeholder workshop. This amount is in addition to the sustainability appraisal work. Use of this consultancy to assist with the consultation event being programmed was one of the factors that lead officers to favourably consider this organisation, as they have expertise at facilitating stakeholder events. Members will be aware from the Core Strategy update report considered elsewhere on this agenda that officers have arranged an extensive community consultation programme to explore the issues affecting the district and its residents. It is also necessary for the

more formal organisations to be included, and consequently a stakeholder event has been arranged for 22nd March 2007 in the Guildhall and invitations will be issued to businesses, organisations and partners of the Council. The quote provided by the consultancy will cover the following:-

- to undertake the workshop including preparing the agenda and engagement activities,
- to undertake core facilitation at the event with council officers,
- analysis and preparation of a workshop report based on the outputs produced.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

3 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 3.1 The use of consultants on this key project will contribute to the Council's priority of 'making our working practices fit for the 21st Century'. One outcome of the project is for the development of a corporate sustainability appraisal methodology that can be applied across the Council on a range of document and policy statements to demonstrate that there is a meaningful commitment to the delivery of sustainable development and sustainable working practices.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 The appointment of consultants to undertake this project can be funded from existing budgets, committed for the current and next financial years. However, other aspects of the LDF's production will require additional funding, especially other work on the evidence base and public examinations of the various LDF documents. This matter is being progressed through the budget review process (see also CAB1328).

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Consultants Brief

Appendix 2 Results of Interview Assessment (exempt)