

North Somerset Council Decision

Decision of: Councillor James Tonkin. The Executive Member for Planning, Building Control, Highways & Transport



With advice from: The Director of Development and Environment and Head of Strategic Procurement

Decision No: 20/21 DE 185

Subject: Approval of the Commissioning & Procurement Plan for the Local Plan Transport Workstream

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: The Commission is likely to be in excess of £500,000.

Background:

The current North Somerset Core Strategy (Local Plan) and its associated Site Allocations and Development Management Policies have a horizon to 2026. Local Planning Authorities are required by the Town & Country Planning Regulations to have adopted Local Plans in place. Therefore, the Council has embarked upon developing a new Local Plan with a horizon to 2038. The Local Plan anticipates the need to allocating land for around 20,535 homes and 28.5ha for new jobs. In order to make progress towards the Council's declaration of meeting carbon neutrality by 2030 transport considerations have a significant role to play in identifying housing and employment allocations – the need to travel less; the need to travel shorter distances; the ability to travel by walking, cycling and by public transport.

To ensure all transport matters are given due consideration through the plan making process, Officers have developed a methodology that seeks to provide proportionate evidence at each stage of the process, culminating in the appropriate and robust evidence base required for the Local Plan to be found sound. This methodology requires specialist consultant support.

Decision:

It is requested that this commissioning and procurement plan be approved to proceed.

Reasons:

The process of developing the Local Plan starts by exploring all potential options of where housing and employment might be placed and exploring the transport infrastructure required to deliver the homes and jobs. There are many potential options. It would not be reasonable or proportionate to examine each potential option detail. It is proportionate to assess potential options at a high level – to understand in general terms the pros & cons of each option and then reject those that are unlikely to serve the residents of North Somerset well.

It is important that the methodology is proportionate at each stage of the process yet demonstrates the sequential assessments that lead to the proposed allocations. Further,

the methodology must demonstrate that the proposed allocations are appropriate. The methodology must provide a strong and robust evidence base that will be scrutinised by Objectors and the Inspector at the Examination in Public. The methodology must support the Local Plan being found sound. The methodology is summarised at Figure 1.

Fig 1.



The methodology is described in ten stages. Using the experiences of the JSP and professional judgement, Officers have quantified, within lower and upper ranges, the levels of consultant support likely to be required at each stage. Then using the WECA Professional Service Framework schedule of rates have provided, within lower and upper ranges, a budget cost estimate for each stage. The budget cost estimates for each stage are shown at Figure 2.

Fig 2.

Stage	Cost Range, £000s
01 – Existing & Future Transport Conditions	£21 - £29
02 – Transport Assessment of Potential Spatial Strategies	£15 - £20
03 – Transport Assessment of Preferred Spatial Strategy	£60 - £84
04 – Transport Assessment of Candidate Sites	£64 - £89
05 – Transport Assessment of Preferred Sites	£79 - £110
06 – Respond to Local Plan Consultation Draft	£36 - £50
07 – Transport Assessment of Final Site Allocations	£11 - £15
08 – Preparation for Examination in Public	£47 - £78
09 – Examination in Public and Response	£15 - £24
10 - Modification	£11 - £14
TOTAL	£359 - £513

Development of the Local Plan is programmed over four financial years. Using the budget cost estimates it is possible to provide a lower and upper budget cost estimate for each financial year. The budget cost estimate profile is shown at Figure 3.

Fig 3. £000's

Stage	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
1	21 - 29			
2	15 - 20			
3	60 - 84			
4		64 - 89		
5		79 - 110		
6		36 - 50		
7		11 - 15		
8			47 - 78	
9			15 - 24	
10			4 - 5	7 - 9
Financial year total	96 - 133	190 - 264	66 - 107	7 - 9

Whilst the Transport Workstream Methodology seeks to offer a lower and upper range of fees likely to be expected, it must be noted that the extents of the early stages are better understood than the latter stages. The extents of each stage will depend upon, for example, the level of presentations to, and interactions with, Members, Town & Parish Councils, Residents, Opposition Groups, Developers and other stakeholders. To some degree the extents of each stage will depend upon the level of opposition to the Local Plan and the level to which the Inspector wishes to examine the evidence. It will be possible to monitor actual spend against each stage as the commission progresses.

Route to market

The commission will be tendered via the WECA Professional Service Framework (PSF). The WECA framework is an OJEU compliant route to market. The framework was set up to provide an efficient route for the appointment of Professional Services to support infrastructure projects within the west of England. There are three suppliers on the framework

- AECOM Ltd
- Atkins Ltd
- WSP Ltd

All three companies will be invited to tender for this opportunity through a mini-competition process, in compliance with the PSF process.

All three companies have been issued with draft tender documents which set out the proposed tender process and the structure and requirements of the commission. Bidders were given the opportunity to have discussion and provide feedback on the approach and documentation. Two of the bidders have taken up this opportunity. The outcomes of these meetings have been considered in the final drafting of the commission and tender documents.

Timescales

Commissioning and Procurement Plan approval	Mid October 2020
Procurement process	Mid October to early November 2020
Contract award	Mid November 2020

Governance

The Commissioning and Procurement Plan will be approved by the Executive Member for Planning & Transport advised by the Director of Development & Environment and the Head of Strategic Procurement.

The commission will be managed by the Transport Policy Team, reporting to the Driving Growth Board and the Executive Member for Planning & Transport.

The contract with the successful bidder will be a NEC4 Professional Services contract within the PSF.

Evaluation

Evaluation of tenders will be undertaken on a 50% price and 50% quality assessment.

Social Value

WECA shall advise on appropriate Social Value within the wider PSF.

Price;

At this time only stages one, two and three will be commissioned with an option to commission further stages if required. This is because of the Planning White Paper that is currently being consulted upon by Central Government. If the planning reforms are implemented as the White Paper suggests, the Council will need to change approach to the Local Plan. It should be noted that stages one, two and three are required in the context of the White Paper and there is no abortive work in commissioning stages one, two and three now.

The tender will seek fee proposals for delivering of stages 1-3, plus a schedule of day rates that will be applicable for work commissioned under stages 4-10. Evaluation of price will be based on the fee proposal for stages 1-3 plus an estimation of the days required for delivering stages 4-10.

Quality; Quality will be assessed on the Consultants responses to the following questions;

No	Question	Weighting	Words Max
----	----------	-----------	-----------

Q1	Please confirm your understanding of the ten-stage process set out in the Detailed Scope of Works.	20%	500
Q2	Please provide a narrative and evidence of your organisational, and that of the staff you intend to allocate to the commission, experience of undertaking transport analysis in other Local Plan areas, including the individual you propose to represent the Council at EIP.	20%	1000
Q3	Please describe how you propose to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the forecast year highways models; • Undertake the public transport modelling; • Engage with the WECA SDS and Highways England on modelling matters. 	20%	1000
Q4	Please set out your proposed methodology for undertaking the assessments described in Stages 2 and 3 of the Detailed Scope of Works.	20%	1000
Q5	Please set out how you propose to assess and capture the Cost of Carbon.	10%	500
Q6	Please set out how you propose to assess changing travel behaviours as a result of the Covid pandemic and how you propose to account for the impacts of those changes upon the assessments within the Local Plan.	10%	500
	Total	100%	

Subject to tender the total contractual value is estimated to be between £359,000 and £513,000.

Stages one, two and three will be commissioned initially with an option to commission further stages if required.

The contract is expected to conclude in May 2023.

Subject to tender the annual contract value is estimated to be between;

Financial year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Range £000's	96 - 133	190 - 264	66 - 107	7 - 9

Options Considered:

Deliver the commission in-house; It would be possible for the early stages of the workstream to be undertaken in-house, subject to an expansion of the staff establishment. However, the latter stages require specialist transport modelling that NSC is not capable of undertaking. The commission requires the Consultant to 'take ownership' of the whole process and explained and defend all evidence at the Examination in Public, this includes the early stages. Therefore, it is appropriate for the Consultant to undertake the entire workstream.

Financial Implications:

Costs:

Subject to tender the total contractual value is estimated to be between £359,000 and £513,000.

Funding:

Driving Growth Board has approved funding of up to £133,000 to commission Stages one, two and three. This funding is held within the Strategic Projects Reserve.

The Board has approved further funds to commission Stages four to ten if required, the funding for this is also held within the Strategic Projects Reserve and has been allocated to The Local Plan.

Within the latter stages of the commission, when specific sites have been allocated, Developers will be encouraged to work with the Council and its Consultants to jointly develop the transport infrastructure required to deliver the sites. In which case Developers will be encouraged to enter a Planning Performance Agreement whereby financial contributions to the workstream will be made, lessening the cost to the public purse.

Legal Powers and Implications:

In progressing the Local Plan the Council acts under its powers as Local Planning Authority as defined by the Town & Country Planning Regulations.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications:

The ability to provide sustainable transport choices is fundamental to decision-making process that leads to allocation of development sites in the Local Plan. Firstly, development sites need to be allocated in locations where the need to travel is minimised. Secondly, development sites need to be allocated where existing public transport can be enhanced to serve the new developments and existing communities. Thirdly, development sites need to be allocated where new, commercially viable public transport can be provided to serve the new developments and existing communities.

The Local Plan will set the Councils land-use policies for the next fifteen years. The Council has set the target of meeting net zero carbon emissions by 2030 – only ten years away. Consideration of transport matters in the Local Plan is critical in meeting this target. This commissioning and procurement plan allows specialist consultant support to be brought to this process.

Consultation:

The Local Plan itself will have a number of public and stakeholder consultations, culminating in an Examination in Public. The Transport Workstream is integral within these consultations.

The Chair of SPEDR has been consulted.

Risk Management:

The process within this commission sequentially assesses numerous options and distils them down to the proposals that will ultimately be presented as the Local Plan. The first key decision will be to identify the Preferred Spatial Strategy. Once this decision has been made only development sites that fit within that Preferred Spatial Strategy will be

considered. If at a later date the Council wishes to reconsider the Preferred Spatial Strategy, or seeks to include sites that are not compatible with the Preferred Spatial Strategy, or seeks to exclude sites that are compatible with the Preferred Spatial Strategy, additional costs will be incurred. For example, if the Council wishes to backtrack over stages four and five, the additional costs would be in the range of £143,000 to £199,000 (estimated budget ranges for Stage four plus Stage five).

Risk	RAG rating	Mitigation	Mitigated RAG rating
Failure to appoint a Consultant to support the Local Plan – lack of evidence-lead transport decision making could lead to the Local Plan not being found sound	R	Council to allocate appropriate budget. Council to appoint suitably qualified and experienced Consultant.	G
Delay in appointing a Consultant – transport evidence could not be provided in a timely manner to support the Local Plan decision making process – the Local Plan would be delayed or progress without transport evidence	A	Council to allocate appropriate budget in a timely manner. Council to appoint suitably qualified and experienced Consultant in a timely manner.	G
Failure to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced consultant – leading to evidence that fails to be found sound	R	Procure the via the WECA PSF where Consultants are pre-vetted and are proven to be suitable qualified and experienced	G

Equality Implications:

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? **Yes / No**

The Local Plan will have its own EquIA, considering all elements within, including the Transport Workstream.

Corporate Implications:

The Consultant shall offer support to the Transport Policy Team. The Transport Policy Team shall manage the contract reporting to the Driving Growth Board and the Executive Member for Planning & Transport. Ultimately the Local Plan will be approved by Full Council.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

Report to Full Council where the Council withdrew from the JSP and embarked on the new Local Plan; <https://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/Meetings/document/report/NSCPM-38-549>

Signatories

Decision Marker(s)



Signed:
Highways and Transport

Executive Member for Planning, Building Control,

Date: 4th November 2020

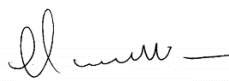
With Advice From:



Signed: .
accordance with 20/21 DE 2

... Assistant Director Placemaking and Growth. In

Date: 2nd November 2020

Signed:  Head of Strategic Procurement

Date: 2 November 2020