

**APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS TO UNDERTAKE
A STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT
(Report by Heads of Planning Services and Environment & Transport)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report advises Cabinet of the need to employ consultants to undertake a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, to underpin the production of the new Local Plan and inform other planning, environmental and engineering decisions. Because of the nature of the work required, approval is sought for a departure from the Council's Code of Procurement so that a select list of consultants may be invited to tender.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The risk of flooding is a major concern in this district. Indicative maps showing areas that may be liable to flooding are made available by the Environment Agency, but give only a broad indication of the extent of risk. Planning Policy Guidance note 25 'Development and Flood Risk' (PPG 25, 2001) indicates that planning authorities should make objective and risk-based judgements about potential land allocations depending upon relative degrees of flood risk.
- 2.2 To do this as part of the work for the new Local Plan we require more detailed and accurate information. PPG 25 states that the responsibility for undertaking such work rests with the local planning authority. Hence a consultants' brief for undertaking a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared. Major outputs will be:
- A detailed assessment of the extent of areas at risk of flooding in Huntingdonshire from a variety of sources including main rivers, local watercourses that are HDC's responsibility and internal drainage board systems.
 - The associated probabilities of flooding occurring in these locations.
 - An assessment of the potential impacts of development both within and outside the floodplain at various key locations.
 - An assessment of the requirements to ensure that any development in specific areas will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
 - Guidance for developers and development control staff on the standards that must be met and procedures to be followed with respect to assessing and mitigating flood risk.
- 2.3 Although required as a foundation for the new Local Plan, the study will also be of considerable use in informing development control decisions, conservation and environmental enhancement work,

emergency planning and maintenance/operational work on waterways for which the Council and other agencies are responsible. Budgetary provision for the study exists within the sums available for Local Plan research, and for the work of the Environment and Transport Division. The project costs will be capped to ensure that the study is undertaken within budget.

3. USE AND APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS

- 3.1 The scale and nature of this study is such that consultants need to be engaged to undertake the work effectively. As well as being able to bring sufficient specialist resources to the task, experienced consultants will be able to utilise expertise gained from similar work for other authorities.
- 3.2 The number of firms with the necessary range of skills and experience to carry out these tasks to a high standard is relatively limited, so a public notice inviting tenders would not be a cost-effective form of procurement. Furthermore, the Council does not have an approved list of firms for work of this type.
- 3.3 Therefore, the Cabinet is requested to authorise the Heads of Planning Services and Environment & Transport to depart from the Code of Procurement in this specific instance, so that tenders may be sought from a selected list of firms (rather than through a public notice). The select list will not exceed ten firms, based upon our knowledge of the companies that could potentially carry out the work.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Cabinet is recommended to authorise the Heads of Planning Services and Environment & Transport to invite a select list of appropriate firms to tender for undertaking a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Huntingdonshire District Council Code of Procurement

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