

Decision by Portfolio Holder



Report reference: PAG-005-2017/18

Date of report: 21 September 2017

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Planning Policy

Author: Alison Blom-Cooper (x 4066)

Democratic Services: J Leither

Subject: **Garden Town** – appointment of consultants to undertake a Sustainable Transport Corridor Study for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

Decision: In accordance with the Procurement Rules 2016, authorisation is sought to award a contract to appoint Systra in the sum of £71,975 plus VAT to undertake a Sustainable Transport Corridor Study. This follows on from a tendering process for the project, advertised on *contracts finder* and using the list of consultants on the multidisciplinary panel of the HCA (Homes and Communities Agency) framework. The contract value falls within Contract Category 2 contained within Appendix 1 of the Council's Procurement Rules.

ADVISORY NOTICE:

*A Portfolio Holder may not take a decision on a matter on which he/she has declared a Pecuniary interest.
A Portfolio Holder with a non-pecuniary interest must declare that interest when exercising delegated powers.*

I have read and approve/~~do not approve~~ (delete as appropriate) the above decision:

Comments/further action required:

Signed: Councillor J Philip

Date: 22nd September 2017

Non-pecuniary interest declared by Portfolio Holder/ conflict of non-pecuniary interest declared by any other consulted Cabinet Member:

None

*Dispensation granted by Standards Committee:
Yes/No or n/a*

N/A

Office use only:

Call-in period begins: 29th September 2017

Expiry of Call-in period: 5th October 2017

**After completion, one copy of this pro forma should be returned to
Democratic Services IMMEDIATELY**

**Initialed as original copy by
Portfolio Holder:**

Reason for decision:

The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Project (Epping Forest District Council, East Herts District Council and Harlow District Councils) has been awarded funding through the Government's locally-led Garden Towns programme. The Sustainable Transport Corridor Study has been agreed by the three authorities, following the successful funding bid, to be a key piece of evidence to progress the project. Epping Forest District is acting as the lead authority and will procure this commission on behalf of the three authorities. A Director / Assistant Director decision would typically be required for a contract of this value (between 50,001 and £250,000). However, in order to ensure transparency for the Garden Town project, a Portfolio Holder decision is sought.

Options considered and rejected:

To outsource this piece of work to Essex County Council; Essex County Highways team advised that they could undertake this piece of work on behalf of the three authorities. However this would be through their consultants - Jacobs Ringway. Given that this would be the equivalent of outsourcing the work, the proper tender process was followed. Essex County Council did not bid for the work and the price quoted by them initially was significantly higher than all of the tender submissions received.

Background Report:

1. Harlow Council (HC), East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Essex County Council (ECC) ('the Councils') are working in partnership together with Hertfordshire LEP (HLEP), South East LEP, and site promoters to bring forward transformational growth in and around Harlow. The Councils share a bold vision and set of objectives, recognising that areas in and around Harlow present a number of opportunities to deliver growth of considerable scale and significance. Such growth is key, not only to meet growing pressures of housing need locally, but also to the delivery of broader regeneration and change for Harlow Town.

Harlow & Gilston Garden Town

2. On 2 January 2017, the Government announced its support for the Expression of Interest submitted to the Government's locally-led Garden Towns Prospectus on behalf of East Herts Council, Epping Forest District Council and Harlow Council. This set out the level of ambition and work to develop a full work programme. Two pieces of work have already been commissioned in line with the expression of interest, as follows:
 - i. Consultancy services to provide project management for the Garden Town project
 - ii. Consultancy support to develop a spatial vision and design charter for the Garden Town.
3. The work was tendered using *contracts finder* and, in addition, a link was sent to all consultancies on the Homes and Communities Agency multidisciplinary framework. A notification/publication of tender was placed on *contracts finder* on 26 July 2017 with a closing date of 16 August 2017 for receipt of tenders.
4. A total of seven responses were received and four consultancies were invited for interview on 6 September, by representatives from the three LPAs and two highway authorities, along with a member of the Garden Town team. The successful consultancy

was Systra, who scored the highest in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the tender documentation. Their fee proposal was for £71,975 + VAT. Systra impressed with their knowledge of garden town principles, the linkages with the spatial vision and design charter study and the importance of the work in place making for the Garden Town. . The work is programmed over a four month period. The appointed consultants will be expected to work collaboratively alongside officers and members from the three District Councils and two County Councils together with other relevant authorities and organisations.

5. The project incorporates a number of stages. The first stage is the baseline information gathering and assessment stage, the second is an assessment of committed and planned sustainable travel improvements, the third is the generation of options for the sustainable transport corridors, which will include production of an interim report. The next stage will be the development of a strategy, involving a more detailed appraisal of the options identified; a preferred option will be identified; a business case will be set out; and an implementation strategy will be developed. The final report is due for issue in late December 2017.
6. It is envisaged that the formal outputs of this work will be considered by the local planning authorities as well as the two county councils, and will be jointly endorsed by the Garden Town Member Board.

Resource Implications:

The resource for this area of work was included in the original bid for Garden Town funding and is covered by the funding of £675,000 awarded to the three authorities.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Approval is requested to authorise the appointment in accordance with Appendix 1 of the Procurement Rules (2016) in order that Systra is appointed to undertake a Sustainable Transport Corridor Study.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The delivery of the Garden Town for Harlow and Gilston will contribute to safer, cleaner, greener objectivity by planning for sustainable development.

Consultation Undertaken:

Procurement Officer
Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board,
Garden Town Officer Steering Group

Background Papers:

Brief and tender documentation for the consultancy work including Systra's fee proposal (August 2017)

Risk Management:

This piece of work is critical in taking forward the Garden Town project and delivery against the funding received. The Study must be taken forward in a timely and robust manner in order to secure further government funding to support the delivery of the Garden Town Project and the delivery of a sound Local Plan.