

Slough, RBWM, South Bucks and Chiltern Councils

A Wider Area Growth Study: Part 1: Defining the Study Area

Expression of Interest for Consultants

July 2018

www.rbwm.gov.uk



Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

www.slough.gov.uk
Slough
Borough Council



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This study is being commissioned by Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM), in conjunction with Slough Borough Council (SBC), South Bucks District Council (SBDC) and Chiltern District Council (CDC). The four councils successfully bid to the MCLG Joint Working Fund to undertake a joint Growth Study to jointly address issues arising from growth that is anticipated across the area, and potentially, more widely. The functional geographies in the four districts and the wider sub region are complex and an important component of the study is the definition of the geographies that apply. This Expression of Interest relates to the geography definition part of the project which forms the first component of the Wider Area Growth Study work.
- 1.2 All four authorities are experiencing growth pressures but this is particularly notable in Slough. As a result of the response to the consultation on the Issues and Options for the Local Plan for Slough, Slough Borough Council has concluded that there may not be a reasonable option which can accommodate all of its needs for housing and employment land within the Borough. As a result, it is anticipating having significant unmet needs. However, SBC recognise that this has yet to be demonstrated in published documents.
- 1.3 All four Councils also need a sound basis on which to undertake Duty to Co-operate discussions with all relevant parties to identify, test and explore the scope for bringing forward the right options to meet their full needs, and the needs of other relevant authorities in a sustainable way. SBC, RBWM, SBDC & CDC will need to do this in the context of different Local Plan timetables, conflicting local plan evidence base conclusions on such matters as the most appropriate Strategic Housing Market Area(s) to use; local plans which are also not meeting or struggling to meet their development needs; and the uncertainty of implications or timing of the Third Runway proposal at Heathrow.
- 1.4 The Wider Area Growth Study is divided into two parts, Part 1 being to make recommendations on the definition of the geographic area for the Study, which is the subject of this Expression of Interest and which will soon be prepared as a Tender Brief.
- 1.5 Part 2 of the Study, once the geographical area is determined, will assess the development needs and potential unmet needs within this Study area and generate a series of strategic spatial options, test these options and make recommendations for consideration in relevant Local Plans and for use in Duty to Co-operate discussions. This Expression of Interest does not need to cover the Part 2 of the

Study, however views can also be expressed on this which can be considered in due course.

- 1.6 More information is provided in Appendix 1 which is the joint local authorities bid for funding (with financial figures redacted).

2. Anticipated Brief Outline

Project Outcome

- 2.1 The Councils are expecting that in Part 1 of the Study the successful consultants would have engaged appropriately with all relevant authorities, reviewed all relevant documents and data sources, undertaken all necessary research and carried out any other stages agreed with the Councils in order to arrive at a sound geographical area to form the basis for Part 2 of the Study. This will include:

- a) Defining the “functional” Strategic Housing Market Area/s applying across the area of the 4 authorities, but particularly that centred upon Slough;
- b) Defining the Functional Economic Market Area, or Areas, applying across the 4 authorities, particularly that centred upon Slough;
- c) A recommended Study Area taking account of the above but also all other relevant considerations in order to form a sound basis for local plan making for Slough and all of the other authorities in and adjacent to the Study Area. Such considerations to include:
 - i) The NPPF and NPPS related considerations as a whole and, if the revised NPPF is not published in time, to future proof by taking account of the Draft NPPF, Housing White Paper and any other related policy documents;
 - ii) The Evidence Base of the Councils relating to HMAs and FEMA geography through a desk top review of documents, consideration of their evidence (relevance and whether up to date) and the relevant evidence of other bodies and organisations;
 - iii) Have a clear understanding on London, the differences in planning procedures for plan-making and the implications for defining the Study area;
 - iv) Scope to be able to consider all relevant options to meet all relevant development needs (predominantly housing and employment);
 - v) To take account of existing, pipeline and, where relevant, planned strategic infrastructure (e.g. Elizabeth Line, Third Runway at Heathrow,

- including the work of the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group on producing a joint spatial planning framework);
- vi) To identify and consider all relevant strategic planning constraints and policy areas and be clear on their influence or otherwise on the recommended Study Area;
 - vii) The views of all other relevant bodies.
- d) Evidence and a reasoned case setting out how the above has been determined;
- e) A Duty to Co-operate document setting out the reasons for engagement with each body, summarising the engagement, capturing their view and summarising responses to points they raised. The report to also set out each authorities willingness or otherwise to be part of the Study Part 2 commission.
- 2.2 Please note as part of 2.1 c) ii) above the Councils are requiring an independent review of existing evidence base documents and so consultants involved in any of these documents will not be eligible to take up this commission. Any eligible consultant interested in bidding for this study is required to draw to the attention of the Councils any activity which may constitute a conflict of interest.**

Anticipated Part 1 Study Milestones

- 2.3 We expect the following key milestones:
- August 2018 - Councils to issue Tender Brief to consultants
 - September 2018 - Appointment of Consultants (this may involve interviews)
 - To be agreed - Completion of initial desk top exercise and agreement with the Steering Group (see below) on outcomes and recommended next steps (could include additional research if needed and/or draft outcomes for agreement for engagement of others)
 - To be agreed - Completion of Duty to Co-operate engagement and other inputs and a draft report for Steering Group scrutiny
 - To be agreed - Final Report with recommendations (which will be published on each Councils websites)
- 2.4 We anticipate this commission being completed by the end of November 2018, subject to the outcome of the tender process.

- 2.5 The Part 1 Study will report to an officer Steering Group comprising officers from each of the four local planning authorities

3. Expression of Interest

- 3.1 This Expression of Interest is published on each authority's website and has been sent to a number of consultants considered potentially suitable for and interested in this commission.
- 3.2 The outcome of the Expression of Interest will inform the Tender Brief and procurement process while all expressions of interest will be followed up with a direct invitation to tender.
- 3.3 As such the Council would welcome your views on this document and an indication of whether your company would be interested in tendering.
- 3.4 The Tender process will need to provide the Councils with confidence that there are no conflicts of interest (actual or perceived) with the appointment for each authority and so if replying please draw any questions or concerns of this nature to our attention.
- 3.5 Expressions of interest should be submitted in electronic form to Helen Murch, Planning Policy Manager, RBWM (Helen.Murch@RBWM.gov.uk) by 3 August 2018. Any submitted documents should be in pdf form.

Appendix 1 – Wider Area Growth Study Joint Working Fund Bid

Classification: OFFICIAL

Joint Working Fund Expression of Interest: Wider Area Growth Study

Lead authority	Royal Borough Of Windsor and Maidenhead	
Partners involved	Slough Borough Council	
	South Bucks District Council	
	Chiltern District Council	
Senior sign-off	Russell O'Keefe, Executive Director, Place, RBWM	
Funding being applied for	2017-18	2018-19
	£ _____	£ _____
<p><u>Summary of proposal</u> (please describe the relevant geographical area, nature of joint working proposed, the strategic planning issues to be addressed, scale of ambition and how this award will help you to achieve it.)</p> <p>This is a bid that follows from Duty to Co-operate discussions between the 4 authorities and discussions with DCLG officers. The geographical area of the lead and partner authorities is shown on map 1. The first part of the work will be to establish the geography for a wider area growth study. The geography will need to have a logic, be evidence based', sound for plan-making purposes and be supported or at the very least understood wider than the 4 authorities.</p> <p>Although the lead and partner authorities have different views on the HMAs which affect them they agree that there is a need to have a shared approach to arrive at an agreed geography for a Sub-Regional Growth Study to provide a shared basis for sound plan making and a strategic planning framework for duty to co-operate.</p> <p>Once the geography evidence is in place the relevant affected authorities will be consulted, views requested and a facilitated process devised to secure agreement on the evidence and conclusions across the geography area. These authorities would then be requested to engage in the Study to agree development needs and opportunities across the area, to define appropriate scenario testing at a strategic level for considering any unmet needs across the area followed by options testing for all appropriate options. This work would then inform the next round of plan making for the relevant authorities.</p> <p>[max 500 words]</p>		
<p><u>Specific activities and timetables</u> (including a breakdown of activities, milestones and profile of expenditure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of facilitator: January 2018 • Engage temporary staff resources to support : January 2018 • Preparation/detailed scoping of project plan/PID: February 2018 		

Classification: OFFICIAL

- Governance arrangements between the four authorities to manage project: February 2018
- Agreement on tender brief, procurement process and commission client steering group, etc: - March 2018
- Procurement of consultancy advice/support to establish the geography for the wider area study as Phase 1 and to undertake Phase 2 (actual Study) following geography agreement and updated steering group arrangements: May 2018
- Draft Phase 1 completed: June 2018
- Agree timetable moving forward and to commence Phase 2 of the Study: ASAP
- Carry out Phase 2 to agree development needs and opportunities across the area, define appropriate scenario testing at a strategic level for considering any unmet needs across the area followed by options testing.
- Receive report and review: Anticipated to be November 2018
- Decision on best spatial option – March 2019
- Incorporation into plan making 2019/20
- Statement of Common Ground/formal agreement as relevant from the local authorities: To commence as soon as possible (potential for twin tracking with above processes)

Profile of expenditure:

2017/18 financial year £

2018/19:

- Consultancy work
- Facilitation work £
- Administration/consultation/project support £

2019/20

- Review of representations from consultation & facilitator assistance £

[max 500 words]

Impacts expected from funding (including description of outputs and outcomes you expect to achieve, and how they will be measured)

Outputs to include

- Formal agreement between all relevant authorities to the geography of the study.
- Agreement on level of unmet needs in the study area.
- Generation of series of spatial options as to how need could be met across the study area.
- Duty to Co-operate framework for local plan joint working and Statements of Common Ground / agreements between authorities in the Sub-Regional area

Outcomes:

- Overcoming barriers to joint working in the area on strategic planning issues.
- Identification of how housing and employment need options could be distributed and met across the study area and for testing as part of future local plans and joint local plans.

Classification: OFFICIAL

<p>This will necessitate seeking other authorities to join with the work depending on the outcome of the first stage of the study and we are committed to pursue that as appropriate.</p> <p>Measures of success: Achievement of the outputs within the prescribed timeframe and through a prescribed governance arrangement.</p> <p>[max 500 words]</p>
<p>Assurance that there is strong commitment to joint working, and that any award will be spend in accordance with the award profile (please outline joint working arrangements in place, or envisaged, and confirm how you will ensure the money is spend as outlined)</p> <p>Each authority has confirmed it's written commitment to this expression of interest at senior officer and Member level; these can be supplied on request.</p> <p>Currently there is no formal joint working in place however duty to co-operate discussions have resulted in close joint working between key officers and their Lead Members and draft MofU/SoCGs are being considered amongst the lead and partner authorities. The need for authorities to commitment to joint working was recognised by Jake Berry MP and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in Parliament on 9 January 2018:</p> <p><i>"Slough will have to exhaust all opportunities to meet its own housing need in the first instance before approaching any other local authority. Then, if it can demonstrate that it has exhausted its own opportunities, it will need to agree to work collaboratively to produce a statement of common ground."</i></p> <p>A governance structure would be put in place and each authority would make a formal commitment to the agreed work through the provision of officer, Member and other resource as necessary. This would mean one authority taking the secretariat role and holding the budget ringfenced and be accountable for ensuring that money is spent in accordance with the approved project plan. Agreement will be reached between RBWM and SBC as to which authority would fulfil the secretariat role.</p> <p>[max 250 words]</p>
<p>Assessment of risks to achieving the objectives of the proposal (please list your top three risks and mitigating actions)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political decision making: mitigated by clear and binding governance arrangements including a Joint Member Board these arrangements to be agreed at Project Initiation. 2. Authorities not being able to come to Duty to Co-operate agreement, perpetuating unproductive use of staff and financial resources and having to object to each others plans: mitigated by this proposal and seeking to produce joint evidence base to underpin future plan making. 3. Failure to reach agreement at key milestones on next steps and thus cessation of project: mitigated by involvement of facilitator and potential oversight by MHCLG.

Classification: OFFICIAL

[max 250 words]

Does your bid rely on, or align with, other funding or initiatives from Government?

For example, are you part of housing deal negotiations, or have bid for Housing Infrastructure Fund money?

No other funding support relied upon.

[max 250 words]



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

23 February 2018

Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, South Bucks District Council and Chiltern District Council

Planning Delivery Fund: Joint Working

Thank you for your Planning Delivery Fund proposal to develop a Joint Working initiative in your local area. It has been assessed against the criteria set out in the 4 December prospectus criteria, and I am pleased to confirm that your proposal has been successful in securing funding. Your proposal has secured Joint Working funding of £1.5m for 2017/18, which should already have been paid into your accounts. A further allocation of £1.5m will be paid in 2018/19.

Schemes securing support scored highly on the scale and strength of the proposal, its commitment to effective planning across authority boundaries and the potential to accelerate the delivery of housing growth.

This funding will enable the additional capacity needed to deliver on your ambitions. I and my colleagues look forward to working with you in the future as your joint working develops to see the delivery of your work and the impact it has made.

SIMON GALLAGHER