

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Planning and Development) (Introduced by Executive Member (Planning and Development))	Executive Cabinet	24 February 2022

## Central Lancashire Local Plan Resourcing

Is this report confidential?	No
Is this decision key?	Yes
<b>Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000</b>	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards

### Purpose of the Report

1. This report presents an update on the procurement process to provide additional support to the Central Lancashire Local Plan team and informs members on the reason for change in approach from that approved on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. Approve the revised approach for procurement from the use of Scape Framework (as agreed by Council on 16<sup>th</sup> November), to use existing consultants (via routes to be agreed by procurement based on individual contract details) and use of provision of further support from council planning policy teams.
3. Note that the £300k is to be funded from the Local Plan budget, which is split equally between Chorley, Preston and South Ribble Councils. Agree to the continue to release the additional approved funding of £300,000 to the Local Plan Budget as agreed by Council in November and for detailed approval of individual contracts via EMD.

### Reasons for recommendations

4. To ensure the progression of the Local Plan in a timely manner.

### Other options considered and rejected

5. Alternative option previously approved by Council on 16<sup>th</sup> November was procurement of support via the Scape Framework. Following pursuit of this option, and discussions with each of the three Councils involved in developing the plan, it is felt this option was no longer appropriate.

## Executive summary

6. This report provides an update on the process of procuring additional support to progress the Central Lancashire Local Plan. It sets out the reason why we are no longer progressing support via the Scape framework and the proposed approach going forward to utilise existing consultants working on key evidence base documents alongside resources being deployed from within each Councils Planning Policy teams where available.

## Corporate priorities

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	<b>A strong local economy</b>
<b>Clean, safe and healthy communities</b>	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

## Background to the report

8. A report was presented to Council on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to support the allocation of additional funding for the Central Lancashire Local Plan to procure additional consultant support via the Scape Framework. Support for this approach was granted at that meeting.
9. Following approval, meetings were set up with Scape to identify suitable consultants to assist in this process, only one option was available to us. An initial outline cost proposal was received for this work which was above the level of support approved. In addition, the Councils identified that the consultant suggested was potentially conflicted due to representing landowners in promoting sites through the Local Plan process. As such it was felt we could not continue down this route
10. An alternative approach is now put which seeks to utilise existing consultants already supporting the plan process, along with policy officer support from the 3 councils, to progress the Local Plan to preferred options stage.
11. The previous report presented to Council was seeking support to progress the plan to preferred options in 2022, this is still the aim and the process and options to be considered for achieving this are set out in this report.

## Provision of Support to progress the Local Plan

12. The approach we are now seeking support for proposes to utilise a number of consultants currently contracted to work on specific areas of the plans evidence base. The exact route for procuring each consultant will depend on the existing contract arrangements and value, with extensions to contracts, direct awards based on best value or waiver being considered. The exact route will depend on the existing contract value and the contract rules which will dictate the most appropriate approach.
13. Legal and Procurement teams are supporting this process and have reviewed the existing contract arrangements. Where this route can demonstrate best value to the

Councils it is considered an appropriate approach for securing the additional support required.

14. Due to existing knowledge of the Local Plan evidence work these consultants are working on, it will allow us to progress support on key topic areas quickly, demonstrating this additional support offers best value to the Council. Consultants will only be appointed to assist in developing the Plan in connection with existing areas of work they are already appointed to support the Council's on.
15. A list of the consultants currently supporting the plan who we would look to work with in this way is listed below, along with details on the topics they would be assisting with.

Arc4	Gypsy and traveller evidence update and policy support
Aspinall Verdi	Viability, CIL, Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP)
DLP	Housing need, distribution, specialist need, rural housing, housing quality, mix & sustainability
JBA	Flood risk and sustainable water management
KKP	Open space, sports and recreation needs and policy support
LUC	Green belt and open space policies, second stage Green belt study to review sites
Tetra Tec/Jacobs	Transport

16. All the above consultants have agreed in principle that they would be happy to support the plan in this way and have the capacity available to assist us in the timeframe required to progress to Preferred Option consultation this year.
17. As stated above, we are working with legal and procurement to identify the best route to pursue individual contracts, ensuring any extensions to existing work with each supplier does not breach contract rules or exceed the OJEU value. We are confident this can be achieved through either contract extensions or direct appointments based on best value or use of waivers were necessary.
18. Procurement and Legal are working with us to ensure the correct approach is followed for all contracts being considered. Any contracts resulting through this programme of works would be awarded via an EMD.
19. However, for us to pursue this approach further, we need agreement to alter the previous approach approved in November.
20. In addition to the use of consultants, each of the three Councils are now proposing to commit local resources to support the plan, with specific areas agreed by each set out below. In addition to specific officer time, the Councils have also all agreed to commit financial support to progressing the plan as quickly as practicable.

<b>Council/Department</b>	<b>Work area</b>
Chorley Council	Affordable Housing

<b>Council/Department</b>	<b>Work area</b>
Planning Policy	Climate change & the natural environment
	CLLP team hosting support
Preston Council Planning	Duty to Cooperate
	Design (along with the CLLP team)
	Economy
	Retail
	20-minute neighbourhoods
South Ribble Planning policy	Support to CLLP team on Sustainable Energy
	Coordination on Duty to Cooperate work with PCC
	Consultation support – design of materials & event organisation

The Central team will continue to take responsibility for the below areas.

Site assessment
Design (working with PCC)
Sustainable energy (supported by SRBC)
Health & well being
Heritage impact assessment and associated plan policies
Site selection methodology report
Existing Local Plan Policy review and NPPF compliance
Policy context for the local plan
Spatial portrait
Site allocation policies
Monitoring & implementation framework
Managing all consultation work and citizen space
Project management & all administrative tasks
Coordination of preferred options draft document
Management of all consultant contracts including review and coordination of council and external bodies input

### **Plan timetable and LDS update**

21. Following agreement of the procurement and resourcing options set out in this report, work can progress to developing a detailed project plan for delivery of the Local Plan

and subsequent review and update of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). A revised LDS is necessary to inform interested parties of the proposed timetable for plan production and consultation stages therein.

22. It is important to note that as stated above, officer resource from within each of the three Councils will need to be committed to supporting the process of plan preparation over the coming months. Although it has been noted this will impact on other work commitments, it felt it is necessary to utilise this expertise for the knowledge that exists within the teams which would greatly assist the process and reduce the additional financial cost.

### **Climate change and air quality**

23. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place. However, it is important to note that through the Local Plan, new targets will be established which will help to progress the Council's green Agenda.

### **Equality and diversity**

24. There are no impacts or implication for Equality Act provisions

### **Risk**

25. The identified risks with these proposals and mitigation steps taken are
  - a) Consultants are not able to support the councils or are conflicted due to commercial interests. All consultants have been contacted to gain general level of interested and ability to undertake this work. Only those consultants who have been identified as not conflicted are proposed to assist in developing the plan
  - b) Officers from the Councils are not able to support the plan as proposed. Each council has been asked what support they can and want to provide the to the Local Plan and are committing resources to cover the areas set out in this report. It is in the interest of all councils to get a new plan adopted as quickly as possible.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

26. The Local Plan is funded from Chorley, South Ribble and Preston Councils. This procurement will generate costs across multiple financial years and the costs will be split equally as appropriate. Chorley Council's contribution is funded by a mixture of ongoing revenue budget and reserves.

### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

27. The report is necessary to agree a change in approach to the appointment of the expert consultant team to support the preparation of the local plan. At this stage there are no confirmed processes for these appointments and comment is reserved until the executive member decisions are available. The remaining recommendation relates to the budget requirement to support these appointments and is appropriate at this time.

### **Background documents**

Previous report presented to Council on 16<sup>th</sup> November.

<https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s134741/Procurement%20of%20Plan-Making%20Capacity%20for%20the%20Central%20Lancashire%20Local%20Plan%20Report%20Template%20Aug%202021.pdf>

## Appendices

There are no appendices.

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