

Report of	Record of	Date
Director (Planning and Development) (Introduced by Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform))	Executive Member Decision	4 April 2022

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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## **Appointment of consultants to provide Local Plan support for Open Spaces and Playing Pitches**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to appoint KKP to undertake an update to the existing Open Space Sports and Recreation assessment (OSSRA) to inform the development of the preferred Options consultation for the new Local Plan and use of Council Open Space officers in support of this work where required.
2. To seek approval to procure additional support from KKP to in assist in the preparation of a Topic Paper and policy support in regard to the OSSRA work.
3. To justify the approach of a direct award to KKP for this work

### **Recommendations**

4. To approve appointment of KKP by direct award to undertake this work at a cost of £13,800 (plus VAT), to be split 3 ways across the three Councils
5. To approve the use of Council Open Space teams in updating the existing open space and playing pitch assessments.

### **Reasons for recommendations**

6. This work is needed to enable the Local Plan work to progress to Preferred Options.

### **Other options considered and rejected**

7. To not undertake this work and rely on the existing evidence only. This option was discounted as the existing OSSRA would not take account of any new developments which would have a direct impact on open space requirements going forward and would leave the plan in a position of not meeting its needs in this area.
8. This assessment is required to be undertaken now so any infrastructure needs can be captured and fed into the work of the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP). If it is not captured at this time it will make obtaining funds for future schemes very difficult.

## Corporate priorities

9. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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

## Background to the report

10. KKP were appointed to prepare the existing Open Space assessment and Playing Pitch strategy completed in 2019. These were prepared to assist with the review of the Local plan which was commencing at that time, the aim of which was to help inform the evidence base for the plan to enable the council to seek developer contributions.
11. In addition, Cabinet agreed on the 24<sup>th</sup> February to secure additional support for the preparation of the Local Plan via direct appointment of targeted support to consultant currently supporting this programme of works, KKP were identified as one of the consultants to be used in this manner to support on policy areas relating to open space needs.

## Appointment of KKP

### Evidence base update

12. As we are progressing the Local Plan, we need to ensure the evidence base supporting it is up to date and compliant with NPPF. The position on the need for provision for of new open space facilities will directly link to locations where new housing is potentially being planned for the next plan period.
13. However, the current evidence base (adopted in 2019) does not account for any change in need going forward linked to this growth, and as such does not identify any shortfalls in requirement going forward.
14. KKP were appointed to undertake this work previously due to the experience in this specialist field and have a history of supporting the three councils going back to 2012 when they supported delivery of evidence for the Core strategy. As such they are ideally placed to undertake this work given their breadth of knowledge of Central Lancashire and established relationships with both officers and external bodies who will feed into this work.
15. As KKP have provided the previous updates, this means reviewing the evidence underpinning this work is a simpler task than appointing a new consultant to review their work and start a new process off. This therefore offers a quicker, more cost-effective approach to this work, presenting best value to the council.
16. In addition to support by KKP, Open Space teams in Chorley and Preston are also being utilised to assist in this work in undertaking the assessment of existing open space areas and play pitches. This will help reduce costs, but also removes a later stage of validation of this work which would be required by those officers.

17. South Ribble do not currently have the staff available to complete this task, so alternative approaches to delivering that aspect of the work are being considered locally by the council and do not form part of this proposal and will be costed for outside of this work.

### **Policy support**

18. Cabinet agreed on the 24<sup>th</sup> February to an approach of contracting existing consultants to support the Local Plan team in preparing the Local plan. This support is targeted to those consultants with specialist knowledge on specific topics who are already preparing key areas of evidence for the Local Plan. This includes open space requirements, and as such KKP are therefore also being proposed for use in providing additional support in preparing a set of draft policies for the local and a topic paper covering these requirements

### **Best value**

19. As noted KKP have experience of working with the 3 councils for several years now, dating back to the last Core strategy, as such they have a good knowledge of the sites and established working relationships with key stakeholders which will aid progression of this work swiftly, the particular issues facing the area which a new contractor may not be aware of. They are also specialist in this field and will be able to provide much needed support in this area of policy development and will enable us to start work quickly to progress the development of the Local Plan, as such, a direct appointment to KKP for this work is considered justified.
20. The total cost of the work is £13,800 plus VAT for all elements and will be shared across the 3 councils.

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

21. 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.

### **Equality and diversity**

22. This report will have no impact on Equality and diversity

### **Risk**

23. Not contracting this work now could lead to policies in the Local plan being developed on out of date evidence raising soundness issues for the Local Plan. It will result in future open space and playing pitch requirements being unaccounted leading to an shortfall in provision of facilities for the plan area.
24. As such it is considered necessary to ensure we understand the requirements associated with the planned growth to enable us to plan accordingly and record the requirements through the IDP.

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

25. The cost of £4,600 can be covered by the existing local plan budgets.

## Comments of the Monitoring Officer

26. Given the low value an executive decision would not generally be required however as this is shared between 3 councils for transparency the decision is appropriate.

### Background documents

There are no background papers to this report

### Appendices

There are no appendices

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Carolyn Williams (Local Plan Coordinator )	Carolyn.Williams@chorley.gov.uk	01257515305	21.3.22

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraphs 4 to 5 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.



Councillor Alistair Bradley  
Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform      Dated 4/4/22

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.