

# **APPENDIX 1 - SPECIFICATION FOR BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE TOWN CENTRES BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY**

## **Planning Services**

**DN645422**

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**Version:** v1.00

**Date:** January 2023

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## Executive Summary

BCP Council is inviting Tenders from Consultants to develop and deliver a *Building Heights Strategy* for Bournemouth and Poole Town Centres. The Strategy will form an integral part of the evidence base underpinning the development of the forthcoming BCP Local Plan.

The Council welcomes Tenders from multi-disciplinary teams and encourages collaborative approaches between consultants. The project will involve consultation with Council Officers and Historic England, Future Places and Bournemouth Development Company.

## 01 | Background and Policy Context

### Background Context

With a population approaching 400,000, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) is the tenth biggest urban authority in England and has the scale, ambition, and the opportunity to deliver a world-class offer. BCP boasts Blue Flag beaches, a vast natural, deep-water harbour and is surrounded by 22 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, with easy access to the New Forest and beautiful Dorset countryside. It is internationally connected by air, sea, and rail, with strong economic sectors in the finance, insurance, digital, creative, tourism and engineering industries, and has three universities.

We are now in the process of preparing a Local Plan for the BCP area. This will set out our strategy for development across the BCP area addressing how we will plan for our significant housing and economic needs while enhancing the quality of the environment, helping to mitigate climate change and delivering on our placemaking ambitions. A key challenge of our geography is how to deliver sustainable growth across a highly constrained and multi centred area while balancing competing goals.

The BCP area is largely constrained by Green Belt to the north and the coast to the south meaning that the growth options are largely focused in the existing urban area. As a result there are continued pressures for increasingly taller buildings especially within the town centres of Bournemouth and Poole. Many of the existing tall buildings proposals come forward as isolated applications for individual towers on relatively small plots. While we acknowledge that well designed tall buildings in the right place can be a positive part of the townscape, but by virtue of their size and visibility they also have the potential for adverse effects. We want to make sure we get the right development in the right place. Therefore, as part of the Local Plan evidence base, we are looking to commission a suitably qualified consultant or team of consultants to prepare a study to examine a suitable building heights within Bournemouth and Poole Town Centres to support the forthcoming BCP Local Plan.

The study will focus on reviewing our existing evidence and providing a robust view of how buildings height should be managed in Bournemouth and Poole town centres. This will consider the suitable locations of both individual and clusters of tall buildings and where blocks of development could be intensified through increased scale as a mid rise solution. It should provide us with evidenced recommendations about a strategy for building heights including advice about criteria to ensure tall buildings are well designed.

The successful team are likely to be able to draw upon planning and design expertise with a proven track record of delivering similar projects. The team will need to have experience of engaging with stakeholders and an understanding of the issues affecting tall building placement.

## **Policy Context**

### ***BCP Local Plan***

A new Local Plan for the BCP area is currently being produced, with an Issues and Options consultation having taken place between January and March 2022. We are working on producing a draft of the Local Plan for autumn 2023 with adoption currently expected in late 2024.

A key part of the BCP Local Plan will be to set out a strategy to deliver a significant increase in the supply of housing. The Government's standard housing method identifies a minimum need of around 2,800 homes to be delivered each year, which is significantly higher than the number of homes currently delivered at approximately 1,300 homes a year. The Local Plan is responding to this challenge by reviewing its urban potential in the most sustainable parts of the area. The work required for this brief will form an integral part of the Local Plan evidence base, testing where there are new opportunities may exist to increase urban densities to help deliver an increase in the supply of housing.

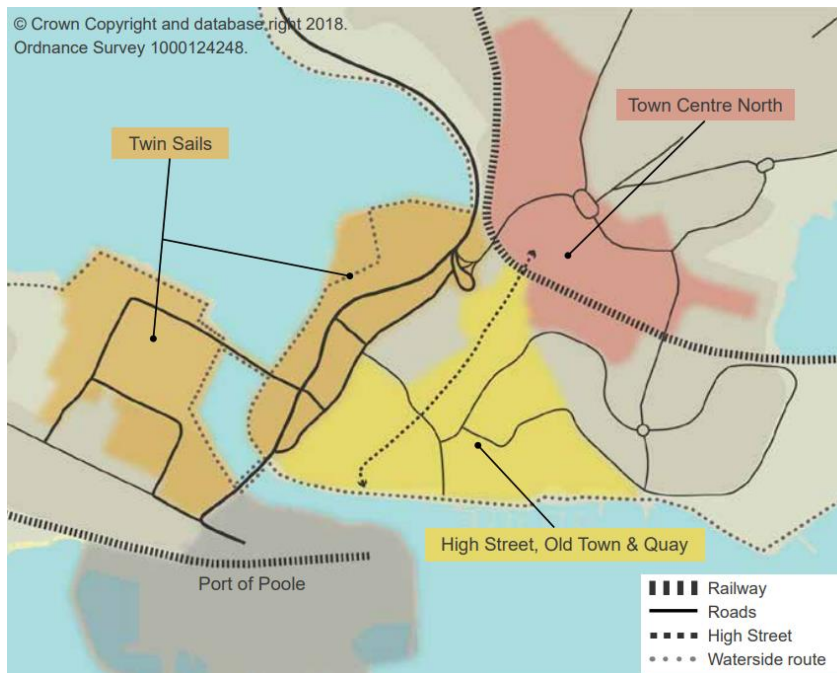
The Issues and Options consultation document identified that the main areas of growth will be within Bournemouth and Poole town centres, which will be the focus of commercial, leisure and cultural activity and will see the most intensive development, with taller buildings and the greatest number of new homes.

See <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/BCP-Local-Plan/BCP-Local-Plan.aspx>

Until the BCP Local Plan is adopted development continues to be assessed against our legacy Local Plans.

### ***Poole Local Plan***

The Poole Local Plan was adopted in 2018 and currently provides the strategic and development management policies for the Poole area of BCP. It includes a tall buildings policy (PP29) which identifies the Town Centre North and the Twin Sails regeneration areas (designated by Policies PP4 and PP5, and defined on the Policies Map) to be the most suitable locations for tall buildings as part of the strategy to direct the highest densities to the town centre. It also sets out the types of location where tall buildings may be acceptable outside of these areas (such as adjacent to main junctions), and criteria that proposals for tall buildings are expected to meet.

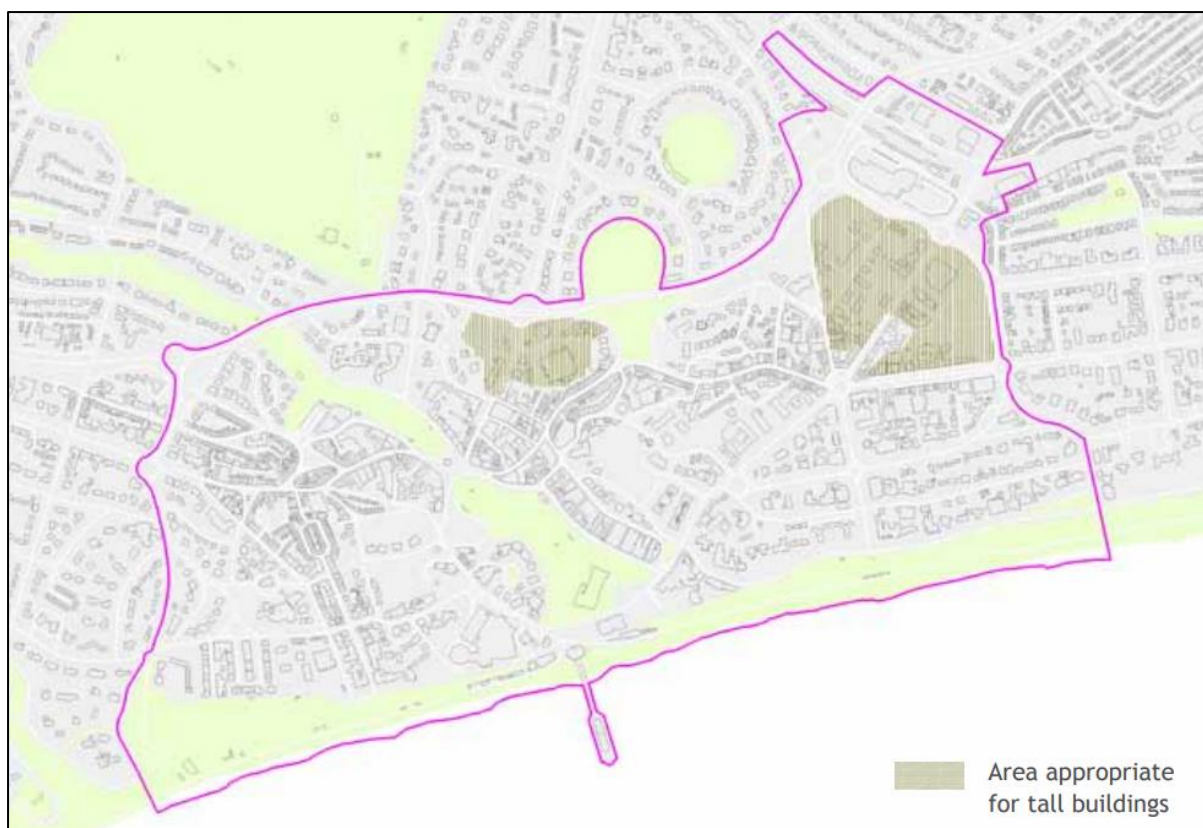


*Extract from Poole Local Plan*

See <https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/Current-Local-Plans/Poole/Docs/Final-version-28.11.18.pdf-for-web.pdf>

### ***Bournemouth Town Centre Area Action Plan***

The Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP), adopted in 2013, provides policies for Bournemouth Town Centre. Its tall buildings policy (D5) identifies areas in Bournemouth Town Centre where tall buildings are encouraged and supported (Lansdowne and part of Richmond Hill, as defined on the Policies Map). It also sets out criteria that proposals for tall buildings are expected to meet, and states that there is a presumption against proposals for tall buildings outside these locations unless fully justified.



Extract from TCAAP

See <https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/Current-Local-Plans/Bournemouth/Docs/AAP-final-adopted-2.pdf>

### **Heritage Assets**

Bournemouth and Poole Town Centre contain a wide variety of heritage assets. Both areas contain conservation areas<sup>1</sup> and a range of Listed and Locally Listed Buildings<sup>2</sup>.

### **Bournemouth Town Centre Development Design Guide SPD (2015)**

The Guide includes advice on built form, responding to topography and urban grain in Bournemouth Town Centre. It identifies suitable locations for new landmarks, sets out and design cues for each character area and provides advice on shopfronts.

See part 1 - <https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Urban-design-trees-and-conservation/urban-design/Docs/Town-Centre-Development-Design-Guide-part-1-med-res.pdf>

and

part 2 - <https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Urban-design-trees-and-conservation/urban-design/Docs/Town-Centre-Development-Design-Guide-part-2-med-res.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> Conservation areas in BCP: <https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Urban-design-trees-and-conservation/conservation-areas/Conservation-areas.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Locally listed buildings in BCP: <https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Urban-design-trees-and-conservation/listed-buildings/Listed-buildings.aspx>

### ***Poole Town Centre SPD (2015)***

This SPD provides guidance for the regeneration of Poole Town Centre, identifying the key strengths of areas within the town centre along with the key issues which need to be addressed. It identifies seven character areas, urban design principles and a town centre masterplan.

See [https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/Current-Local-Plans/Poole/Docs/Poole-Town-Centre-Supplementary-Planning-Documents-adopted.pdf](https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/Current-Local-Plans/Poole/Docs/Poole-Town-Centre-Supplementary-Planning-Documents/adopted.pdf)

### ***Poole and Bournemouth Tall Buildings Studies***

The former Bournemouth and Poole Councils produced Tall Buildings Studies in 2011 and 2016 respectively to inform approaches to tall buildings in the aforementioned development plan documents. Although they are not available online, the Council will provide a copy to the consultant(s).

### ***The Big Plan***

The Big Plan sets out the Council's corporate ambitions, including:

- to invest in an iconic cityscape with quality clean and green urban and natural environments;
- to aim to deliver more than 15,000 new homes;
- to develop our vibrant communities, with an outstanding quality of life, where everyone plays an active role; and
- to redefine and promote our culture and our leisure and entertainment offer, based both on our heritage and on our positive, modern outlook

See <https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/About-the-council/Our-Big-Plan/Our-Big-Plan.aspx>

## 02 | Project Brief

### Purpose

To set out a strategy for building heights within Bournemouth and Poole town centres to support the production of the forthcoming local plan, and to advise on the policy criteria needed to ensure any proposals for tall buildings are well designed.

The study will need to take into account the existing townscape qualities including heritage assets, key views and character whilst considering the aspirations for town centre regeneration and opportunities to help address our challenging housing needs. The recommendations of the strategy should consider what building heights are appropriate in different parts of the town centres seeking to avoid adverse impacts while supporting successful placemaking and regeneration.

As part of its preparation the study should consider different options for our approach to building heights in some areas. Where options exist these should be examined in consultation with key stakeholders before a clear recommendation is reached on the most suitable approach to embed within forthcoming policy.

### Objectives

- Evaluate and review the existing tall building studies for Poole and Bournemouth to establish whether they continue to be relevant within the context of the existing national guidance, the emerging BCP Local Plan, the corporate approach set out in the Big Plan and developments which have taken place since the publication of these documents.
- Review the overarching constraints in Bournemouth and Poole town centres that affect building heights, including (but not necessarily limited to) heritage assets, landscape sensitivity (including key views), microclimate and areas of valuable townscape character.
- Examine different options for managing building heights in each town centre, setting out the impacts and opportunities presented by each of the options. The framing of the options can be discussed with the client team but may consider options such as different degrees of height in different locations.
- Come to a recommended strategy for managing building heights including identifying locations which are suitable for the successful addition of mid- or high-rise buildings, areas which should be protected from changes to building heights.
- Involve key stakeholders in the preparation of the study, including Historic England, agents and developers (including Future Places), the business community, and other relevant organisations.



## 03 | Project Budget and Deliverables

### The Commission

A total Commission of £50,000 excluding VAT is available for the project, to cover the cost of producing the associated Project Deliverables detailed below.

### Project Deliverables

**A single report for both town centres that** addresses the Objectives set out above in the Project Brief and:

1. Provides a brief introduction to the purpose of the study
2. Sets the context for the work referencing national policy, guidance and best practice relating to tall buildings, intensification and placemaking alongside the emerging BCP Local Plan and its objectives and challenges, the Big Plan and the existing local policy context
3. Draws on existing work to set out an overarching baseline analysis of Bournemouth and Poole town centres and their characteristics (including, but not necessarily limited to existing scale, landscape, key views, heritage, townscape, legibility, key nodes/gateways permeability)
4. Defines mid-rise and tall buildings within the context of each town centre (identifying a standard/baseline floor-to-floor storey height for when floor heights are discussed)
5. Examine different options for managing building heights in each town centre, setting out the impacts and opportunities presented by each of the options. The framing of the options can be discussed with the client team but may consider options such as different degrees of height in different locations.
6. Summarises the stakeholder engagement activity
7. Sets recommendations about the preferred approach to managing building heights in each centre considering locations which are suitable for the successful addition of mid- or high-rise buildings, areas which should be protected from increases in building height.
8. Sets recommendations about policy criteria that could be used to ensure proposals for mid-rise and tall buildings are well designed considering the interaction with the public realm, proportions, servicing and sustainability.
9. It is expected that the final report is provided in an A4 format that is visually engaging with a variety of maps, visualisations and diagrams to assist with the analysis and exploration of options.

The successful Consultants will also be expected to provide regular updates to the Project Manager and attend meetings as required.

## **Stakeholder involvement/engagement**

Engagement with Historic England, Agents and developers (including Future Places), Town Centre BID, relevant Councillors, and internal BCP Council departments surrounding the constraints, possible approaches and options

- Insurance: The contractor should provide evidence of: Employer's Liability Insurance (if applicable) of not less than £5,000,000.
- Public Liability Insurance of not less than £5,000,000.

## **Next Steps**

Once the Tenders have been reviewed, the Consultants will be selected and invited to begin the project.

Please note that BCP Council reserves the right not to appoint any of the Tenderers in the event that none of the submissions are considered suitable and may approach others to submit proposals.

## **Indicative Programme and Milestones**

It is anticipated that the work will be completed as soon as possible within 4 months from appointment, to include a period of stakeholder engagement.

It is currently anticipated that the Project will be delivered in accordance with the following milestones:

- STAGE 1: Inception meeting and briefing, information gathering and analysis
- STAGE 2: development of initial draft study report and preparation of stakeholder materials
- STAGE 3: Stakeholder engagement
- STAGE 3: Amendments to the study report based on stakeholder and client feedback client review
- STAGE 4: Preparation of final report

## **Project Review**

Regular Microsoft Teams meetings with Client/Project Managers on progress at a frequency to be agreed at the Stage 1 Inception Meeting.