Date: 1st October 2021

Maidstone Borough Council are inviting interested parties to take part in a supplier engagement process with regards to a new Development Plan Document (DPD) focusing on reviewing non-spatial planning policies. It is expected that the company will create the evidence base and support the DPD through to, and including, examination, the Council will coordinate and lead on required consultations.

**Background:**

Maidstone Borough Council is seeking to undertake a comprehensive review of its Design and Sustainability focused Non-Spatial Planning Policies. This review will take the form of a freestanding DPD which will sit alongside the Local Plan (currently under review). The DPD should achieve higher quality and more sustainable design across the Borough, reinforce Development Management decisions, and provide stronger defence to planning appeals.

The DPD will need take account the current Local Plan which was adopted in 2017, the emerging Local Plan Review, recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Design Guide and all other statutory or regulatory guidance as some relate to the component parts of the evidence base which will need to support the document.

The DPD will form part of the Local Development Scheme and will sit alongside the Local Plan (currently under review) to provide the basis for Development Management decision making. Specifically, the DPD will be focussed around matters pertaining to the achievement of high quality development which contributes to sustainability at a number of levels and makes a significant contribution to the biodiversity and climate change agenda. It is anticipated that the DPD will be focussed upon a policy framework which will give it longevity and which is unlikely to become time expired as a result of changes in national planning, environmental or building policy/ legislation/ guidance.

Consideration will need to be given to the cost implications as the DPD will be subject to viability assessment.

**Key Factors** for the DPD to focus on:

* A set of landscape principles drawing from existing landscape character assessment data, acknowledging / responding to differential landscape form / feature in various parts of the borough and providing guidance on what will be required in the future.
* A high-level borough wide biodiversity study which synthesises with existing evidence.
* A high-level borough wide Design Code (in line with national advice) to establish the design principles for the town centre, urban, suburban and rural locations and responding to the protection / enhancement of particular high value landscapes such as the Kent Downs AONB, Low Weald and areas of Local Landscape Value. This will provide the basis for more detailed guidance via Supplementary Planning Documents or other guidance as appropriate. This guidance will need to take into account any large-scale Garden Community or other developments emerging from the Local Plan Review, and be capable of working with them as detailed proposals are developed over the coming years. This will need to take account of existing guidance where this already exists for example High Weald Design Guide.
* Advice on generic design features (Design Code) should include:
  + Materials
  + Densities
  + Building heights
  + The orientation of development
  + The environmental performance of buildings/places to contribute to net zero targets.
  + Building typologies
  + Block types
  + Car parking
  + Architectural features
  + Building separation
  + Building lines
  + Provision of external private space
  + The scope for green roofs/walls
* Standards around the achievement of onsite open space provision with a mix of semi-natural / natural open space and areas of usable play space, allotments and sports pitches. This work will need to consider the merits of open space provision within developments, taking into account the role that multiple developments might have in collectively delivering/achieving a cohesive approach to delivery of shared assets, where this might achieve higher quantums and quality.
* The use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as appropriate to particular locations and scales of development.
* The achievement of the minimum 20% of net biodiversity gain within developments, between developments as shared assets and as a feature to link urban, suburban and rural locations.
* Policies to capture and maximise the principles of sustainable connectivity through the provision of coherent and legible walking and cycling routes, which respond effectively to interaction between settlements and likely desire lines towards specific destinations.
* The use of building heights, orientation, and materials to maximise the capture of solar energy but to also manage effectively issues resulting from solar gain.
* Advice around the suitability of sustainable technologies such as ground source heat, solar, battery storage etc. in particular circumstances or at specific locations.
* Options for the incorporation of increased numbers of trees along new highways, estate roads and as part of public realm and shared space features.
* Provision of appropriate lighting which respects the character of localities and protects areas where “dark skies” are / should be a feature.
* The achievement of parking standards which provide the correct balance between encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport and the realistic levels of car ownership in new developments.
* Building use - including factors such as, mix of uses within area/ type.
* Internal Space Standards- potential to go beyond national requirements.
* Options around the effective capture and reuse of water within various typologies of developments.

**Timeline:**

* Regulation 18a Consultation- April/May 2022
* Regulation 18b Consultation- February/March 2023
* Regulation 19 Consultation- August/September 2023
* Regulation 22 Submission- February/March 2024
* Regulation 24 Examination- May/June 2024
* Main Modification Consultation- August/September 2024
* Documents to Full Council meeting- November/December 2024.

Stage 1- Company Overview and Approach

Interested Parties are invited to submit an overview of their company and proposal outlining how they would approach completing the DPD through to examination whilst taking into account the councils’ requirements as listed above.

We would welcome an outline methodology, project plan and a cost projection as part of the submission.

Our panel will access this information for suitability before inviting a shortlist of suppliers to stage 2 of the engagement process.

**Your expression of interest must be made via the Kent Business Portal, and the information above must be provided by 12.00pm on 15th October 2021 in order to be eligible for assessment.**

Stage 2- Interview

Shortlisted companies will be invited to an interview to discuss and answer questions on their proposal.

**The interview meetings will be held via Skype or Microsoft Teams, and shortlisted parties must book an appointment for October 20th 2021. Shortlisted parties will need to book their timeslot via Kent Business Portal messaging hub. Shortlisted parties will be contacted by Tuesday 19th October. Timeslots will be from 9am to 1pm on October 20th.**

At the conclusion of the engagement process, the Council will determine the most appropriate route to market in order to procure a contract for this service.

If you require any further information at this stage, please contact me.

Many thanks

Kind regards,

A picture containing bottle, photo, food, people

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