# Town Centre Reset Action Plan Commission – September 2021 to March 2022

### CONTRACT NUMBER

TCR/21/1

## VALUE OF CONTRACT

£100,000

## PROCUREMENT

Open tender

### CONTRACT START DATE

1st September 2021

### CONTRACT END DATE

31 March 2022

#### TEAM:

**Lead:** Hannah Clayton-Peck and Dan Carter

**Key participating departments:** Planning – Placemaking team, Property – Park Mall/Vicarage Lane, Culture – arts and cultural industries.

#### DESCRIPTION

The Recovery Plan and the Town Centre Reset established Ashford’s direction of travel as we emerge from the pandemic.

The Town Centre Reset is a high level strategic document that considers the focus areas for development for Ashford Town Centre. We currently lack resource to dedicate taking this forward to develop an action plan and the Welcome Back Fund has provided an opportunity to complete this work. Officers within the Council have a wealth of knowledge and experience to assist its delivery which will be crucial as the project emerges.

This is strongly supported in strand 6 of the Welcome Back Fund Guidance;

 “Support local authorities to develop plans for responding to the medium term impact of Covid-19 including trialling new ideas particularly where these relate to the high street”.

This commission would work with Ashford Borough Council to consider our short and medium term options, based on data, creating a timeline of quick wins and medium term options for to be taken forward. This would provide the Borough Council with a clear vision for the next steps of the Town Centre Reset in a timely evidence based manner.

This would ensure that Ashford had a clear vision for the next steps of the Town Centre Reset in a timely manner and provides us with a much needed evidence base.

A knowledge or understanding of the planning system would be useful, given that some of the control around what uses may or may not be able to be encouraged (to deliver the aspiration and vision) is clearly relevant.

#### PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of the project is to create an action plan from the strategic objectives for the town centre whilst defining tangible outcomes. This will be used as the evidence base on which to begin to deliver projects. Using the Town Centre Reset the key objectives for the commission will be to;

* Consider work so far in Ashford town centre and the public realm constraints
* Work with the Local Authority to define key stakeholders
* Identify key property and landowners in the town centre to assess areas of opportunity and potential delivery mechanisms
* Deliver a market demand led exercise to consider community facilities, retail, leisure and hospitality in order to assess the need for services and facilities in the town centre
* A viability study to understand Ashford’s opportunities creating outcomes to realise those
* Identify ‘quick wins’ and opportunities defining key council services for delivery
* Identify further funding options and create an action plan for the next 3 years to support regeneration in Ashford town centre, including assessing required resource and identifying potential funding
* Consideration of consultation with key stakeholders to identify their roles in stimulating regeneration
* Evaluate progress and work with the authority to understand how that might be captured and effectively reported.

#### OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS:

By establishing a plan with a solid evidence base, identifying key milestones, stakeholders, opportunities and delivery mechanisms within our capacity with a clear timeline, the town centre will have some much needed direction as the market moves through recovery.

This project delivers against the strategic objectives of the Town Centre Reset and the Ashford Recovery Plan. In the Ashford Recovery Plan this contributes to three of the four priorities of ‘Economic Recovery’, ‘Community Recovery’ and ‘Place making, Regeneration and Infrastructure’.

The impact of this plan will be significant in guiding Ashford’s future town centre regeneration in a rapidly changing market. As a significant investor in the town centre, this work directly contributes to strategic priorities both in the Recovery Plan and the emerging Corporate Plan. By identifying groups, individuals and using evidence to create outcomes, this project will benefit the council as a key stakeholder and investor and the growing community of Ashford as a whole. This joined up approach and strategic document are required to achieve the desired outcomes of regenerating and revitalising Ashford town centre, we believe bringing these people, places and spaces together has the potential to deliver long term change.

This work will be completed by March 2022 with a plan that will span 3 years. This is due to the funding coming from the Welcome Back Fund, the outcomes of which have to be realised by March 2022 as part of the grant funding agreement.

#### PROJECT MEASURES:

This commission will respond to the ERDF outcome measures for the Welcome Back Fund, as well as the Ashford Recovery Plan and the Town Centre Reset, creating a body of work which provides Ashford Borough Council with:

* Demand aggregation assessment to identify current and potential opportunities
* Viability assessment of facilities, services and potential gaps in the market
* Risk analysis considering the interdependencies of identified work streams and prioritisation
* Placemaking recommendations for public realm interventions
* Land ownership and landlord survey considering options for vacancy rate strategy
* Identifying ‘quick wins’ which can be experimented with as part of the project
* A strategy document setting out a 3 year, costed, phased action plan

#### PROCUREMENT ASSESSMENT:

For this contract the assessment will be based on evaluation of a bid submission followed by an invitation of the top three applications to interview for formal presentation, then selection of the successful contractor. Due to the nature of the funding, it is expected that bids that come forward use the full £100,000 budget associated with the project within the contract term.

We will be evaluating your response to the brief and will apply the following scores to the quality criteria listed below, which are weighted accordingly.

Please adhere to the page limit requested, and provide your response in no less than Arial 10 font.

#### SCORING CRITERIA:



#### QUALITY CRITERIA:

Your bid will be evaluated using the following criteria;

Please adhere to the page limit requested, and provide your response in no less than Arial 10 font.

* Quality / impact (= 100% weighting)
	+ Lead partner expertise - 30% - (1No. double side A4)
	+ Rationale & Strategic Fit - 25% - (1No. double side A4)
	+ Use of budget available - 20% - (1No. double side A4)
	+ Likely Economic Impact - 15%- (1No. double side A4)
	+ Expected outcomes - 10% - (1No. double side A4)

#### INTERVIEW:

The top ranked suppliers, maximum of 3, will be invited to present their proposal and will be evaluated by a panel, including Ashford Borough Council officers.

Prior to interview a credit check will be undertaken by Ashford Borough Council using Dunn and Bradstreet data.

#### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Using the budget provided, the Council expects the Contractor to provide a full breakdown of the costs involved on submission of the proposal. This should include an indicative breakdown of the portion of time each individual will contribute to the services, and hourly rate including any sub-contractors costs.

Preferred staged payments should be indicated referring to clause 10 (Payment) but tenderers should note that the final decision regarding stages for payment will be at the absolute discretion of the Council.

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Please refer to the Instructions, Conditions of Tender and Agreement attached.

#### TIMETABLE

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| **Task** | **Date** |
| ITT issue: | 8th July 2021 |
| Clarification Ends | 16th July 2021 17:00hrs |
| ITT return | 23rd July 2021 11:00hrs |
| Evaluation of Tenders: | w/c 26th July 2021 |
| Interviews: | 4th August 2021 |
| Standstill Period | Early August 2021 |
| Contract Award | Mid August 2021 |
| Contract Start: | 1st September 2021 |
| Contract Completion: | 31st March 2022 |