

# Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Green Belt Review (2014)

## Tender Brief July 2014



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The establishment and maintenance of Green Belts around many of England's main urban areas has long been a part of national planning policy designed to strictly control development. The Green Belt within Coventry and Warwickshire is part of the larger West Midlands Green Belt and essentially prevents urban sprawl, restricts the expansion of villages and protects the open countryside from the pressure for development.
- 1.2 A suitably qualified and experienced consultant is required to produce a report evidencing a review of the Green Belt in Coventry and Warwickshire, which is to be undertaken in two stages. Stage 1 will consider the existing Green Belt designations in the Local Authority areas of Rugby Borough, Warwick District, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough and Coventry City. Stage 2 will then consider the existing Green Belt areas within North Warwickshire Borough and Stratford on Avon District Councils. For the avoidance of doubt the 6 local authorities within Coventry and Warwickshire will comprise the "study area" and "commissioning group".
- 1.3 This project brief outlines what the Councils expect of the Green Belt Review and details the requirements of tender proposals.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 A joint Green Belt review was produced in January 2009 by SSR Planning for a sub-regional group that included Coventry City, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, Rugby Borough and Warwick District. The need for this Green Belt Review came from the housing requirements proposed within the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy and primarily considered the Green Belt that is located at the urban edge of Coventry. Since that study, there have been a number of significant changes, which include the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies and the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 2.2 The Councils are each at varying stages of the plan making process. They share a joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which reported in November 2013. The primary purpose of the SHMA was to guide, inform and support the development of planning and housing policies. Its preparation responded to the requirements of the NPPF and the 'duty to cooperate' for progressing strategic planning issues across local authority boundaries. The findings of the SHMA contribute towards the evidence base for the development of local plans and core strategies; the authorities must now address how the sub regional housing need will be accommodated and the Green Belt Review will be relied upon as part of this process.
- 2.3 On-going work is being undertaken within the Birmingham Housing Market Area to identify housing need and address shortfalls in its capacity to accommodate it. As a neighbouring sub-region, it is likely that this will have direct implications on the

Coventry and Warwickshire area, whereby some overspill of the housing may need to be accommodated through the duty to cooperate.

- 2.4 Given the changes referred to above, a need has arisen to undertake a strategic update of the 2009 sub-regional Green Belt review and to provide a comprehensive review of the Green Belt across the whole study area.

### **3. The Purpose of the Study**

- 3.1 The purpose of the Green Belt Review is to see whether all of the land designated as Green Belt within the study area fulfils the essential characteristics as set out in paragraph 79 of the NPPF and serves the five purposes. These are:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

- 3.2 In doing the above, the degree of significance that should be attached to various parts of the Green Belt will be assessed. This will allow the authorities to consider the extent to which some development in the Green Belt could promote sustainable development. This review should consider the whole of the Green Belt across the study area, and assess the land with a 'policy off' approach.

- 3.3 The consultancy exercise should be credible; represent value for money; and provide a report that supports the progress of each authority's Local Plan.

### **4. Scope of Work**

- 4.1 The study should provide a robust, transparent and clear understanding of the Green Belt across the study area.

- 4.2 Throughout the undertaking of the Review, steps should be taken to ensure the obligations of the commissioning group under the duty to co-operate are met. A process for this should be put forward by consultants in a tender proposal and will be confirmed at inception.

- 4.3 In undertaking the review consideration should also be given to the Green Belt evidence base that has been developed in neighbouring authorities to ensure, as much as possible, that conclusions about sensitivity of parcels, particularly those on boundaries between authorities are consistent. Where conclusions are not consistent it may be necessary for an explanation to be provided.

- 4.4 The review should not itself determine whether or not land should remain or be included in the Green Belt. It is the role of the emerging plans within the sub-region to

formally revise Green Belt boundaries and to allocate land for development, having taken into account all relevant planning considerations. This includes whether there are, in the first instance, exceptional circumstances for altering existing boundaries. It is not the role of this review to establish whether or not such exceptional circumstances exist, but should there be a need to alter Green Belt boundaries, the review is intended to inform where this might best be done. This review is therefore a technical document that will be used to aid decisions on where the Green Belt may be amended to accommodate future development requirements.

- 4.5 It should also be noted that this review will be considered to be a snapshot in time and changing policy circumstances, together with future development patterns, may lead to different conclusions on the importance of particular parts of the Green Belt when assessed against the five purposes of including land within it in the future.

## **5. Methodology**

- 5.1 Although there is no specific statutory guidance on how a Green Belt Review should be undertaken, the study should be prepared in line with national policy guidance, including the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance (2014), and other guidance, including CPRE & Natural England Green Belts: a greener future (2010) and the Housing and Growth Statement (2012).
- 5.2 To achieve a thorough assessment it is considered that the review should take a strategic approach and assess the performance of broad areas of the Green Belt against the five Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF. This assessment could be undertaken through a combination of desk based assessment and visits to relevant areas.
- 5.3 The assessment should divide the area into land parcels that are easily identifiable and suitably defined. Where a local authority has existing evidence that identifies land parcels, existing boundaries should be used to ensure consistency. Where authorities do not already have identified parcels, the criteria used to establish boundaries in other areas should be replicated. Where possible, the commissioning authorities would prefer that more focused parcels are proposed adjacent to settlements.
- 5.4 A proposed detailed methodology that outlines how land parcels will be established, an appraisal criteria and arrangements for stakeholder involvement should be presented by the consultancy. This methodology, which should be built upon best practice, should be mindful of the previous sub regional Green Belt study that was carried out in 2009, whilst reflecting the approach identified above.
- 5.5 The outcomes of this review may lead to further related work being required in individual authority areas. This will be discussed at a later stage.

## **6. Key outputs**

- 6.1 A non-technical spatial summary should accompany the final version, which should be easy to read for non-specialists.
- 6.2 Consultants should be available to attend any examination into documents with evidence based in the Green Belt.
- 6.3 One paper copy of the study should be made available per authority, together with a copy of the study in CD format.
- 6.4 All data and GIS polygons should be made available to each member of the commissioning group and supplied in appropriate format.

## 7. Working Arrangements

- 7.1 The consultants are expected to work closely with the commissioning group. To provide a single point of contact and ensure all communications are recorded, the group have elected a lead officer to represent the group (details highlighted below). The consultant will keep the lead officer informed at all stages of the research and should provide a regular flow of information on the progress of the project against the timetable, any issues or difficulties arising, and proposals for their resolution, including details of their effect on the timetable.
- 7.2 It is acknowledged that the consultants may need to liaise with certain officers at individual authorities should localised matters arise in respect of specific data and as such contact details are provided below. Where such correspondence is undertaken in an electronic format however the lead officer should be copied in.
- 7.3 It is expected that the consultant will meet the commissioning group on at least two occasions at each stage of the commissioning process. Meetings will occur at appropriate stages throughout the study (including the Inception Meeting) and provide regular email updates as to the progress of the project. This close monitoring is aimed at preventing slippage and to identify any issues at an early stage.
- 7.4 The following will act as the primary contacts for the study:

<p><b>LEAD OFFICER:</b> Vicky Chapman, Principal Planning Policy Officer, <b>Council:</b> Rugby Borough Council,  <b>Tel:</b> 01788 533758, <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:victoria.chapman@rugby.gov.uk">victoria.chapman@rugby.gov.uk</a></p>
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<p><b>Officer:</b> Rob Haigh, Planning Policy Officer, <b>Council:</b> Coventry City Council,  <b>Tel:</b> 02476 831431, <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:rob.haigh@coventry.gov.uk">rob.haigh@coventry.gov.uk</a></p>
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<p><b>Officer:</b> Dorothy Barratt, Forward Planning Manager. <b>Council:</b> North Warwickshire Borough Council  <b>Tel:</b> 01827 719250 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:dorothybarratt@northwarks.gov.uk">dorothybarratt@northwarks.gov.uk</a></p>
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<p><b>Officer:</b> Kelly Ford, Planning Policy Manager, <b>Council:</b> Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough</p>
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Council,  
**Tel:** 02476 376335, **Email:** [kelly.ford@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk](mailto:kelly.ford@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk)

**Officer:** Dave Nash, Policy Manager (Planning and Housing), **Council:** Stratford on Avon District Council,  
**Tel:** 01789 260399, **Email:** [dave.nash@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:dave.nash@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

**Officer:** Dave Barber, Planning Policy Manager, **Council:** Warwick District Council  
**Tel:** 01926 456065, **Email:** [Dave.Barber@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:Dave.Barber@warwickdc.gov.uk)

7.5 Contact details for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council will be provided in due course should they form part of the study.

## 8. Timeframe

8.1 The commissioning group would like to see work on stage 1 of the study completed within three months of inception; however they are willing to be guided by you. A suggested timeframe for stage 1 of the study is set out below:

Publication of Consultants Brief	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2014
Receipt of Consultants Quote	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> August 2014
Appointment of Consultants	By Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2014
Inception Meeting	Week commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2014
Meeting to discuss initial findings	Week commencing 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2014
Submission of draft report for comment	Week commencing 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2014
Submission of final report	Week commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2014

8.2 The timetable for stage 2 of the study is to be agreed between the commissioning group and the consultants at a point in time to be confirmed, but is expected to be completed no later than March 2016.

## 9. Cost of Services

9.1 The consultant should present fixed rates for the work to produce both stages of the Green Belt review retaining a consistent methodology at all times. Costs should be presented separately for each stage. An additional cost should also be presented for works relating to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as such work remain optional at this stage.

9.2 A face to face inception meeting is required as will at least 1 follow up face to face meeting. This will apply to both stages of the study and should be reflected in the quote.

9.3 The quote for stage 2 of the study should reflect the timetable approach in Paragraph 8.2 of this brief. Any alternative time limitation on the quote, as it relates to stage 2 of the study, should be clearly set out in the quote.

9.4 Day rates should be presented for any additional work beyond the Green Belt review, including the attendance at the examination of the commissioning authorities' development plans, and a presentation to Members of the commissioning authorities following completion of the report.

9.5 A copy of the Joint Green Belt study for Coventry City, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, Rugby Borough and Warwick District (2009) is available from [www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/.../joint\\_green\\_belt\\_study\\_2009-final\\_report](http://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/.../joint_green_belt_study_2009-final_report). Copies of the Coventry Green Belt Study 2007, Nuneaton and Bedworth's Land Use Designations Study 2011 and Warwick's Partial Green Belt Review (Rural Settlements) 2013 are available on the local authority's respective websites.

## 10. The Tender Proposal

10.1 The consultants should include in their proposals:

- Details of the methodology to be used and format
- Proposals for including stakeholders
- An outline of the work programme including identification of key stages
- The curriculum vitae of staff that will work on the project
- Example of any previous green belt work
- A schedule of hourly rates for individual staff and the extent of their involvement
- A timetable of work based on meeting the deadlines set out above.
- At least 2 references of relevant work previously undertaken

10.2 Tenders should also include good practice project management including frequent communication on progress towards timescales and any contingencies to deal with unforeseen delays. Elements of this will be agreed at the inception meeting with the successful consultants.

10.3 Where it is proposed to sub contract any elements of the study, the company concerned should be identified, together with the relevant individuals. Information in respect of experience, hourly rates and the role of these individuals within the study should also be identified.

10.4 Tenders must be submitted in a formal sealed written quotation with electronic versions enclosed no later than noon on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2014

10.5 All tenders should be clearly marked:

**“Green Belt Review Sealed Tender not to be opened”.**  
**F.A.O Development Strategy.**  
**Rugby Borough Council - Town Hall,**  
**Evreux Way,**  
**Rugby,**  
**CV21 2RR.**

10.6 No tender received after the time and date specified in the invitation shall be considered unless there is good reason for its late arrival and that it is received before any other tender or quotation was opened.

## 11. Selection of Consultants

11.1 In evaluating quotes the group will seek the best value for money. The group will therefore evaluate the quotes received in the following way:

Issue for Consideration	Proportion in Assessing Quotes
Price – the prices quoted must be competitive but realistic for the task.	40%
Clarity of submission and effectiveness in demonstrating how the requirements of the study will be achieved in accordance with the NPPF and DCLG guidance.	35%
Timescales and resources – these must be realistic in order to undertake this work within the timescale.	15%
Demonstration of the equality/diversity policy.	5%
Quality assurance and project management processes and procedures	5%

11.2 To ensure fairness and transparency the assessment will be undertaken against an appraisal matrix, which will take account of the specific weightings identified above.

11.3 Consultants should have indemnity cover appropriate for the project.

11.4 Consultants will need to demonstrate that there is no potential conflict of interest in their carrying out the project.

11.5 Should it be deemed necessary interviews may be held and/or references taken up to help commission the preferred consultant.

11.6 Unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback to their applications upon request.

## 12. Contract

12.1 The contract will be let on a fixed price contract including all appropriate expenses and costs. The contract will be let in accordance with Rugby Borough Council's terms and conditions, which are available upon request.



12.2 Final payment will be made upon the completion of the project to the satisfaction of the commissioning group.

12.3 The copyright of the final report and any appendices or other supporting information /outputs (including GIS data and associated databases) is to reside with the Commissioning Authorities.