



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE LEADER

APPOINTMENT OF TRANSPORT CONSULTANTS EXTENSION OF CONTRACT

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

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SUMMARY

This Decision Notice seeks authorisation for the negotiation of a contract with a consultancy which has been previously appointed to undertake specialist transport advice in preparation of Local Plan Part 2. The proposed contract is for the provision of transport evidence as part of the examination procedure for Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2).

During the preparation of LPP2, it was necessary to seek specialist technical transport advice in relation to emerging issues, firstly on the cumulative impact of the proposed residential development on the B2177/B3354 corridor [CAB2711 \(LP\) Appendix B](#) and secondly on the impact of sites allocated for development in New Alresford. [CAB2721\(LP\) Appendix N](#) refers.

The draft Local Plan includes proposals for a number of residential developments along the B2177/B3354 corridor in Colden Common, Bishops Waltham, Waltham Chase and Wickham, together with sites allocated in New Alresford at Sun Lane and The Dean for housing, employment, open space, etc. Traffic generation and the

impact of development on the existing highway network are key issues frequently raised during local plan consultations. The Council had commissioned various transport studies during the preparation of Local Plan Part 1 which established the development strategy for the District. These, together with more detailed assessments at the site level for draft LPP2, formed a comprehensive [transport evidence base](#). However, given the nature and range of representations received to the draft LPP2, it was considered pertinent to appoint consultants to examine the matters raised in more detail and to provide the Council with a robust response that would ensure that LPP2 could be found 'sound' at examination.

In addition, a group of local residents had formed the 'Alresford Professional Group' (APG) to develop an alternative plan for New Alresford which was published and consulted on during the consultation period on the draft Local Plan (Nov/Dec 2014). The APG submitted the 'alternative plan', and many of the comments made on the Local Plan, therefore, also commented on the 'alternative plan' (or only commented on the alternative plan), either in support or objection.

LPP2 proposes the allocation of Sun Lane, New Alresford for a mixed use development comprising about 10 hectares of residential development, 5 hectares of employment uses and 15 hectares of informal and recreational open space and a burial ground. The implementation of the employment element requires a new access onto Alresford Bypass. As well as general concerns about traffic impact, particular issues were raised regarding the lack of detailed transport assessment / modelling / management, the need for and deliverability of the proposed A31 junction, impacts on specific roads or properties near the site, lack of reference to public transport, or proposals / suggestions for access and traffic management measures.

In order to respond to these transport issues raised, specialist consultants (SYSTRA) were appointed during 2015, to provide a comparison between the draft Local Plan proposals and the 'alternative plan' produced by the Alresford Professional Group and identify the relative transport impacts of each in [New Alresford](#). The resulting New Alresford report included forecast traffic increases on routes and junctions in and around the town and also takes account of transport sustainability in terms of distances to schools, local facilities and bus routes. Some of the representations received queried the feasibility and viability of providing the proposed new A31 junction, so an important strand of the study was also an appraisal of the need for, and feasibility of, building a new junction on to the A31.

SYSTRA Limited were appointed in accordance with Rule 9.2 of the Contracts Procedure Rules, as their proposal fell within the £10,000 limit and the Head of Team appointing – Head of Strategic Planning considered this company was competent for the purpose and could undertake the work necessary in a timely manner, whilst also representing best value for the Council.

Since then, LPP2 has progressed to its examination stage with the Submission version of the document being submitted for examination on 23 March 2016. Prior to this the plan was subject to a six week consultation period into its soundness during

October – December 2015. Further transport representations were received at this stage, in particular, a number relating specifically to the findings expressed in the SYSTRA report in relation to New Alresford.

To ensure that the responses made to these matters do not undermine the overall soundness of LPP2, it is necessary to reappoint SYSTRA to prepare a statement in response to the representations received. The proposed fee for undertaking this additional work is £5000 including expenses, but excluding VAT. It is considered necessary to use the same consultancy as appointed before, due to the need for consistency and to expedite the work, given that the local plan examination will commence in July 2016. In order to do this, it is necessary for a Direction to be made under Rule 2.4 of the Contracts Procedure Rules, as these would normally require at least 3 quotes to be obtained before an appointment could be made (as the cumulative fee exceeds £10,000).

SYSTRA has also provided a day rate for attendance at the local plan examination which equates to £750 per day, at this stage it is not known if SYSTRA will be required to attend and respond to any detailed transport matters in relation to New Alresford at the request of the Planning Inspector. However, authority is sought for this if necessary.

DECISION

That the Head of Strategic Planning be authorised to negotiate a contract with SYSTRA Limited for the provision of further transport evidence as set out in the Decision Notice, and a Direction be made under Rule 2.4 (a) accordingly.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

This PHD is required to ensure that all due processes are followed to allow the further appointment of SYSTRA, a consultancy that has provided the Council with specialist transport advice during the preparation of LPP2.

If the Council had to appoint another organisation this would firstly take additional time and secondly would be likely to end up costing more than the £5000 proposed, due to the need for the new organisation to source data and become familiar with a) LPP2 and b) the representations in relation to New Alresford. Another organisation may not wish to take on this work due to these complexities and tight timescale. It is therefore considered a pragmatic and best value solution to appoint SYSTRA in the circumstances.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The costs associated with this and the examination procedure are already established in the Local Plan budget.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

Consultation with the Leader .

**FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED
FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION
NOTICE**

n/a

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR
OFFICER CONSULTED**

none.

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

None.

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 03.05.16

Councillor Stephen Godfrey – Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and
Corporate