

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD277

Title: Accommodating Growth in Town Centres: Making it Happen

Executive Summary:

Approval of expenditure of up to £47,000 is sought to procure specialist consultancy services to develop an implementation approach to select recommendations made in the Accommodating Growth in Town Centre report (GLA, 2014). This research will examine: 1. How to deliver quality high-density, housing-led mixed-use development in centres most challenged by changes in consumer behaviour (mainly medium sized centres); and 2. How to prevent the long-term vacancy of non-residential spaces in mixed-use town centre developments. Findings from this study will support the implementation of adopted London Plan policy (as well as preparations for the next full review of the Plan) and inform the on-going work of the Outer London Commission and the GLA regeneration investment programmes.

Decision:

The Assistant Director approves expenditure of up to £47,000 to procure specialist consultancy services to develop an implementation approach to recommendations made in the Accommodating Growth in Town Centres report.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT:

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.
It has my approval.

Name: Debbie Jackson

Position: Assistant Director, Regeneration

Signature:



Date: 23/03/15 .

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Accommodating Growth in Town Centres (AGiTC) report, commissioned and published by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2014, presents several ways in which to achieve successful housing intensification in town centres. The report also recommends approaches to increasing the diverse range of uses that help to ensure the resiliency and adaptability of high streets, particularly in the context of a restructuring retail sector and the pressing need for new homes.
- 1.2 AGiTC informed the Mayor's Outer London Commission¹ (OLC), which investigated town centre responses to changing levels and patterns of consumer expenditure, their potential to realise housing intensification and the scope this provides for wider town centre renewal. AGiTC and the work of the Commission in turn informed the Examination in Public into Further Alterations to the London Plan and, in particular, new Policy 2.15 to proactively manage the roles of town centres, especially those with surplus retail and office floorspace, and to promote diversification and higher density residential-led mixed use redevelopment whilst sustaining and enhancing town centre viability.² The Further Alterations will be adopted formally as strategic policy in a consolidated London Plan in March 2015³. The OLC has been reconvened to advise on the next full review of the Plan, and its work includes providing examples of how Policy 2.15 can be implemented.
- 1.3 In line with the OLC's request, the GLA Regeneration and Planning Teams seek to develop an implementation approach to several of the recommendations made in AGiTC. A two part study will examine: 1. How to deliver quality high-density, housing-led mixed-use development in centres most challenged by changes in consumer behaviour (mainly medium sized centres); and 2. How to prevent the long-term vacancy of non-residential spaces in mixed-use town centre developments.
- 1.4 This research will be complemented by two additional studies (excluded from this approval) researching: 1. How to encourage developers to deliver quality development in town centres; and 2. How to increase high street diversity through Town Centre Investment Management.
- 1.5 The study will be led by the GLA Regeneration Team in the Directorate of Development, Enterprise & Environment in collaboration with the Planning Team.
- 1.6 The estimated total cost of this work is up to £47,000. The costs will be met by a contribution of £27,000 from the 2014/15 London Plan Programme Budget and £20,000 from the Growing Places Fund, approved in principle by the London Enterprise Panel on 16 July 2014 to develop next steps to AGiTC. The full budget of £47,000 will be spent in 2015/16.

¹ Outer London Commission. Third Report. GLA, July 2014.

² Policy 2.15 of the London Plan

³ Mayor of London. The London Plan. The Spatial Development Strategy for London consolidated with alterations since 2011. GLA (March 2015) (forthcoming)

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 The objectives of this study are to:

- Inform the implementation of the London Plan, future reviews of the London Plan and approaches to housing-led regeneration
- Demonstrate how housing intensification in town centres can contribute to the health of the high street
- Better understand how to ensure the provision and long-term activation of non-residential spaces in town centres

2.2 The target audience is:

- Greater London Authority: London Plan Team, Regeneration Team, Housing and Land Team
- Local Authorities: Policy planners and regeneration officers
- Outer London Commission

2.3 The research output will be to produce a concise report that

- summarises the task, research and findings using clear images, infographics and language
- builds on AGiTC to illustrate approaches to housing-led mixed-use intensification for selection of town centres (number tbc)
- identifies the primary causes of long-term non-residential vacancy and recommends tools to address the condition

2.4 This study will support the implementation of adopted London Plan policy (as well as preparations for the next full review of the Plan) and inform the on-going work of the Outer London Commission and the GLA regeneration investment programmes. It will also aim to support local authorities in strategic regeneration decisions and processes, and encourage property developers to adopt good practice in the high street environment.

3. Equality comments

3.1 No adverse equalities impacts are identified. The study supports the equalities objectives of the London Plan and will support its implementation. The study could improve accessibility in London by increasing residential density and reducing long-term non-residential vacancy in town centres, making them more convenient and useful.

4. Other considerations

a) key risks and issues

4.1 The contract will be managed in line with standard GLA risk management procedures.

4.2 If the study were not carried out:

- the additional housing capacity in town centres (6,400 dwellings per annum) identified in AGiTC may not be delivered;
- housing-led development that is brought forward in town centres may miss opportunities for greater density and accommodating a mix of suitable uses;
- perpetual non-residential vacancy in town centres may continue or increase, undermining London Plan policies and the health of the city's high streets.

b) links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.3 This study will support the implementation of adopted London Plan policy (as well as preparations for the next full review of the Plan) and inform the on-going work of the Outer London Commission and the GLA regeneration investment programmes. It will also aim to support local authorities in strategic regeneration decisions and processes, and encourage property developers to adopt good practice in the high street environment.

c) impact assessments and consultations

- 4.4 Impact assessments are carried out as part of the preparation of reviews and alterations to the London Plan. A separate impact assessment is not required for this research study. Collaboration with London boroughs will take place during project implementation including sharing draft outputs for verification and presentation of findings.
- 4.5 The commission will be competitively procured in consultation with TfL Procurement.

4 Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is sought for the procurement of specialist consultancy services at a cost of up to £47,000 to develop an implementation approach to recommendations made in the Accommodating Growth in Town Centre report.
- 5.2 It is expected the commission will be wholly undertaken in 2015/16.
- 5.3 The revenue cost of £47,000 will be funded as follows :
- £27,000 2014/15 London Plan Programme Budget
 - £20,000 GPF budget for SAT and Regeneration Programme Support
- 5.4 The use of up to £250,000 of Growing Places Fund (GPF) funds has been approved by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) at its meeting of 16 July 2014. Only £20,000 of this is requested in this decision.
- 5.5 The use of London Plan and GPF funds in 2015/16 will be subject to the approval of budget carry forward requests.
- 5.6 All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.
- 5.7 As this decision relates to a contract, officers have to ensure that the requirements of the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code are adhered to.
- 5.8 As this contract is consultancy based, officers also have to ensure that the requirements relating to consultancy services within the Authority's Financial Regulations and Expenses & Benefits Framework are adhered to.
- 5.9 Any changes to this proposal must be subject to further approval via the Authority's decision-making process.
- 5.10 The Regeneration Team within the Development, Enterprise and Environment Directorate will be responsible for managing this project.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

| Activity | Timeline |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Procurement of contract | April 2015 |
| Delivery Start Date | May 2015 |
| Interim Report Date | July 2015 |
| Delivery End Date | Sept 2015 |
| Final evaluation and Project closure | Oct 2015 |

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1: Accommodating Growth in Town Centres

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Note: This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

If YES, for what reason:

This Assistant Director Decision includes the overall project budget for appointing consultants to prepare the study. It is important that this information is not made public until after the consultants are appointed and a price and scope for works have been agreed and contracts exchanged. If a total project budget is made public in advance of this it could lead to consultants providing inflated prices to complete works. This information should not be made public until after the consultants have been appointed.

Until what date: 31 May 2015

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – No

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer
to confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

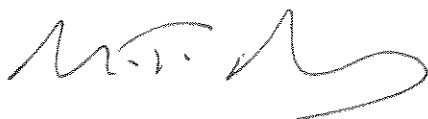
Alison Mayer has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:



Date:

23.03.15