

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD1332

Title: Bexley Opportunity Area Planning Framework

Executive Summary:

The Greater London Authority is working in partnership with the London Borough of Bexley to prepare an Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) for North Bexley.

To assist in document production the GLA has agreed to reimburse the Borough the cost of 50% of the costs of staff and consultants engaged in working on the OAPF, up to a maximum of £120,000 over two years 2014/15 and 2015/16.

This decision seeks:

1. Retrospective approval to reimburse the Borough with funding of £59,931 for its expenditure on staff and consultants in preparing the OAPF in 2014/15; and
2. Approval to reimburse the Borough with funding of up to £60,000 for its expenditure on staff and consultants in preparing the OAPF in 2015/16.

Decision:

The Executive Director approves expenditure of £59,931 in 2014/15 and up to £60,000 in 2015/16 to the London Borough of Bexley as a contribution towards the cost to prepare the North Bexley Opportunity Area Planning Framework.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

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: Fiona Fletcher-Smith

Position: Executive Director Development
Enterprise and Environment

Signature:

Date:

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The GLA Planning unit is working with the London Borough of Bexley to prepare an Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) for North Bexley. This will cover the opportunity areas of Thamesmead and Bexley Riverside, which are identified in the London Plan. In order to ensure that the Framework has sufficient resources to be completed, the GLA has agreed to pay £120,000 over two years 2014/15 and 2015/16 to the Borough as a contribution to fund a planning policy officer and consultancy support. The 2014/15 funding will be from the Planning Call-in budget, and the 2015/16 expenditure will be funded from the OAPF budget for Tottenham, which is no longer required for Tottenham. The first meeting of the Strategic Board was on 19th February 2015, chaired by Bexley's lead member for Regeneration and Growth and was attended by the Deputy Mayor for Planning.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The decision sought is required to ensure efficient delivery of a strategic planning framework for Bexley North, including Thamesmead and Bexley Riverside. Opportunity areas will assist in meeting the Mayor's targets to increase the number of homes and jobs in London. It is estimated that the Bexley Opportunity Areas could deliver 22,000 new homes and over 10,000 new jobs. These totals are a significant increase on the figures in the London Plan. Key milestones for the OAPF are set out below:

Direction of Travel document adopted	May 2015
Draft Growth Strategy (incorporating OAPF)	Oct 2015

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Opportunity Areas are identified in the London Plan, which has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, and is available on the GLA website. The Framework will also be subject to an EqIA, and this will be one of the tasks of the support to be funded by the GLA. As a public body, Bexley is also subject to the duty, and therefore will consider equality impacts in filling the policy officer role.

4. Other considerations

a) key risks and issues

If financial support is not provided to Bexley, there is a risk that the OAPF will not be completed or will not be completed within the required timeframes. This would undermine the Mayor's growth agenda set out in the London Plan 2015 (consolidated with alterations since 2011)

b) links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

The project officer and consultancy support will assist in the production of the OAPF. OAPFs are supplementary to the London Plan and bring together the Mayoral priorities for housing, economic development, development, transport and the environment. Realising the development potential of

Opportunity Areas is a Mayoral Priority, and OAPFs bring together strategic and local stakeholders to deliver an area-wide spatial planning framework in accordance with Government policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

c) impact assessments and consultations.

OAPFs are subject to public consultation, and equality and environmental assessments.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Retrospective approval is being sought for expenditure of up to £59,931 as a contribution to the London Borough of Bexley in preparation of the North Bexley OAPF in 2014-15. Approval is also sought to contribute up to £60,000 in 2015-16 to the borough to fund document production, the costs of staff and consultants engaged in working on the OAPF.
- 5.2 The funding sources over the two financial years are as follows; -
- 2014-15: £59,931 was funded from the Planning Call-In and Takeover budget
 - 2015-16: up to £60,000 to be funded from Planning 2015-16 Tottenham OAPF programme budget that is no longer required for Tottenham work.
- 5.3 As this work relates to grant funding to the London Borough of Bexley, officers have to ensure that the requirements of the Authority's Contracts & Funding Code are adhered to.
- 5.4 Any changes to this proposal including budgetary implications will be subject to further approval via the Authority's Decision Making Process.
- 5.5 The Planning Unit within the Development, Environment and Enterprise will be responsible for managing this contract and work

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The sections above indicate that the decisions requested fall within the statutory power under section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) ("the Act"), in that it will promote the improvement of the environment in Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
- (a) pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
 - (b) consider how the proposals will affect:
 - i. the health of persons in greater London,
 - ii. the health inequalities between persons living in Greater London;
 - iii. the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
 - iv. climate change, and the consequences of climate change; and
 - (c) consult with appropriate bodies
- 6.2 The Authority also has a subsidiary power pursuant to Section 34 of the Act where the decision is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of the statutory functions of the Authority. In this case this project is incidental to the section 30 powers defined above as well as powers under section 334 and 339 of the Act.

- 6.3 Section 334 of the Act requires the Mayor to prepare and publish a spatial development strategy (known as the London Plan). Section 339 of the Act requires the Mayor to keep the London Plan under review, especially matters which may be expected to affect the development of Greater London or the planning of its development. In this case, this Project to produce this OAPF supports the implementation of the London Plan and as such may reasonably be regarded as facilitating, being conducive or incidental to the exercise of the Mayor's powers detailed above.
- 6.4 Officers must ensure that appropriate contract documentation is put in place and executed by the GLA and LB Bexley before the commencement of the proposed arrangements.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1 As noted in section 1 above the GLA is working collaboratively with Bexley to produce an OAPF. The funding will be used to engage a project officer and consultancy support to assist in OAPF production. Accordingly, it has been agreed that the GLA will reimburse the Borough a proportion of the cost for this support. A joint steering group, and strategic delivery board, has been established with the Borough to assist in the efficient production, agreement, adoption and implementation of the OAPF. A project plan has been prepared setting out key milestones in the preparation of the OAPF over the next 2 years. The next step is a 'Direction of Travel' document to be endorsed by the Mayor and Bexley Council in May 2015.

Appendices and supporting papers: None

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? NO**

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

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:

Darren Richards has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Stewart Murray has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

Financial and Legal advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

Date