

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2001

Title: : Agreement to procure and commission consultants to review the London Plan network of Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation

Executive Summary:

Agreement to procure and commission a consultancy study to review and update the Sites of Metropolitan Importance of Nature conservation (SMIs) in the London Plan. These are the top tier of nature conservation sites that are identified under the guidance provided by London Plan Policy 7.19. This policy indicates that SMIs are identified jointly by the Mayor and the London Boroughs. These sites have not been reviewed since 2002 and the forthcoming review of the London Plan provides the appropriate opportunity to undertake the update.

Reviewing the network of sites of importance for nature conservation fulfils a requirement of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework. The study will inform the forthcoming review of the London Plan, borough local plans and Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Planning approves expenditure of up to a total of £50,000 to procure specialist environmental services by competitive tender to undertake the review of Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.

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: Stewart Murray

Position: Assistant Director of Planning

Signature:



Date:

03/06/2016

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is a new study, unrelated to any other current approvals, seeking a budget up to £50,000. Central Government issues advice to plan-making authorities, this includes the Mayor of London, via the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The framework sets out policy guidance to not only protect, but improve the network of sites of nature conservation importance. As a first step it is necessary to survey the existing network of metropolitan sites to ensure they still merit protection as sites of London-wide importance (NPPF paragraphs 109, 113 and 114).
- 1.2 There is a hierarchy of nature conservation sites – local, borough and metropolitan sites. Metropolitan sites are the most important in terms of their nature conservation value. When London boroughs update their local plans they are required to update the sites of local and borough importance. As the metropolitan sites are of strategic importance, it is for the Mayor/Greater London Authority to support the boroughs in reviewing and updating this part of the network. The sites have not been reviewed since 2002 when work was undertaken to inform policy for the first London Plan. It is appropriate that for the forthcoming review of the London Plan the network of metropolitan sites is reconsidered.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 Consultants are required to prepare a review of the Sites of Metropolitan Importance for nature conservation, recommending additions/deletions to the network as appropriate. The outcome will be a robust study that can be used to inform protection/enhancement of the network of sites in the forthcoming review of the London Plan and demonstrate that the Mayor's approach is authoritative at an examination in public.

3 Equality comments

- 3.1 This work is not expected to have any direct equality impacts. Ensuring the SMI network is up to date and properly identified in Borough planning frameworks ensures all Londoners have access to open space and high quality natural environments.

4 Other considerations

a) key risks and issues

- 4.1 The contract will be managed in line with standard GLA risk management procedures. If the work is not commissioned it is possible that the forthcoming review of the London Plan will fail to comply with the requirements of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

b) links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2 This study is to provide evidence and direction for a specific land use, which will inform the implementation and review of the London Plan. It will support London boroughs in the preparation of Local Plans and partnership working by the GLA, boroughs and others in developing Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks.

c) impact assessments and consultations

- 4.3 Impact assessments are carried out as part of the preparation of reviews and alterations to the London Plan. Consultation on the project specification has taken place within the GLA between the Environment Team (Urban Greening) and with the Planning Team (London Plan).

5 Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is sought for expenditure of up to £50,000 to procure consultants to undertake a review of Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. The cost will be met from Planning's London Plan 2016-17 Programme Budget.
- 5.2 All the delivery and spend will take place within 2016-17.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	June 2016
Delivery Start Date	July 2016
Delivery End Date	October 2016
Project Closure:	October 2016

Appendices and supporting papers:

- Annex 1 – Consultant's brief

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:

Part 1 of this approval contains information on the financial ceiling for this project. Releasing this information before the contract is awarded could mean that the GLA does not achieve value for money

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring) 30th November 2016

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:**

Peter Heath has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance team has commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

HEAD OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

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

Signature:



Date:

03.06.16