

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2178

Title: Residents' experience of high-density London housing

Executive Summary:

For London to meet its housing needs while protecting the Green Belt and other open space will require new developments to be built at higher densities. The Mayor has set out how a design-led approach is essential to ensure that new high-density developments provide high-quality homes and contribute positively to their local area.

This form seeks approval of expenditure to commission specialist research into high-density living in London to inform the development of GLA design guidance for high-density housing or mixed-use developments.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Housing approves:

1. expenditure of up to £40,000 on research services (from the London School of Economics) to support the GLA's work to develop guidance on high-density residential development; and
2. a related exemption from the requirement of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code to procure such services competitively.

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: Jamie Ratcliff

Position: Assistant Director of Housing

Signature:



Date:

20.12.17

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Mayor's draft new London Plan sets out an ambitious target for 65,000 new homes a year in London over the next decade, considerably above current levels of supply. While developments at a range of densities will contribute towards meeting this target, the Mayor has been clear that meeting this target will often require building at high densities.
- 1.2. The Mayor intends to produce a single guidance document which clearly sets out the standards which need to be met in order to implement London Plan policies on housing quality and standards, as well as wider qualitative aspects of housing developments. This will build on the guidance set out in the 2016 Housing SPG and the previous London Housing Design Guide.
- 1.3. To inform this work, the GLA wishes to commission research into existing high-density housing schemes in London, to understand what factors make for a successful scheme and what issues may need to be addressed in new guidance.
- 1.4. Officers acknowledge that section 9 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code requires, where the expected value of a contract for services is between £10,000 and £150,000, that the services required should be procured competitively. Section 10 provides however, that an exemption from this requirement may be approved where there the proposed contractor has had previous involvement in a specific current project or the work is continuation of existing work that cannot be separated from the new project/work.
- 1.5. The proposed research builds upon a pilot research project that was jointly carried out by two teams from the London School of Economics (LSE Cities and LSE Housing) without GLA funding. The project team developed a research methodology that combined quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the successes and failures of eight high-density housing schemes in London, including gathering the views of residents themselves.
- 1.6. The proposed research would build on this pilot project to inform the development of GLA guidance on high-density housing schemes. It would:
 - Expand the number of case study schemes to 14, including at least one pre-Second World War scheme and at least one that meets the recent London housing design standards, and achieving a representative geographical spread across London;
 - Include more intensive qualitative and site-specific research to derive additional insights into the successes and failures of specific developments from building managers and residents, including workshops and 'walking interviews' around sites;
 - Draw on the expertise of a selection of Mayor's Design Advocates;
 - Focus the analysis on common issues with high density and how GLA guidance could help address them in future.
- 1.7. By applying a mix of methods including survey analysis and intensive qualitative research to a representative range of schemes, the research would generate valuable insights for important GLA policy work and therefore deliver significant value for money.
- 1.8. The Assistant Director's approval of an exemption from the requirement of section 10 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding to seek competitive bids for the services required is sought accordingly.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objective of the research is to significantly improve our understanding of what contributes to successful high-density residential developments and what needs to be improved. The outcome will be a robust evidence base to inform the development of GLA guidance on residential design.
- 2.2. The research will examine a diverse range of high-density housing developments, drawing on and delving deeper into the findings from the pilot project. The research will analyse internal dwelling issues such as noise, overheating and lack of storage, as well as external issues such as layout and how schemes connect to the wider neighbourhood. It will gather the views of residents through quantitative surveys, workshops and walking tours, and the views of scheme managers, architects and developers through workshops. It will also draw on the expertise of a selection of the Mayor's design advocates.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The purpose of the research is to improve our understanding of how to increase both the quantity and the quality of new homes in London, including affordable housing. The Integrated Impact Assessment of the London Housing Strategy states that delivering new housing, including affordable housing, is likely to have broadly positive benefits in relation to social and economic sustainability objectives such as improving health, reducing inequalities, increasing accessibility, and economic development.
- 3.2. These benefits would particularly accrue to those groups that are currently more likely to be in housing need, including low-income households, lone parent families and several BME sub-groups. The Integrated Impact Assessment into the Mayor's draft London Housing Strategy provides further detail on the disproportionate impact of London's housing shortage of different groups with protected characteristics, and on the benefits of addressing this shortage.
- 3.3. The impacts of new housing development for those who move into new homes and for nearby communities would be significantly increased if the quality of new high-density developments and their links to surrounding areas can be improved.
- 3.4. Any new supplementary planning guidance that takes into account the findings of this research will itself be subject to public consultation.

4. Other considerations

a) Key risks

- 4.1. The key risk associated with this decision is that the findings of the research are not delivered within the timeframe specified, which is necessary if they are to inform the development of GLA guidance. This risk will be managed through requiring weekly updates from the research team, regular (six-weekly) meetings between the GLA and research team, staged payments and the early milestone of an interim report in February 2018.

b) Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2. Policy 3.1, Proposal A of the Mayor's draft London Housing Strategy states that "The Mayor will work with councils, Government and others to ensure that London's planning policies support additional housing supply ... [including] protecting the Green Belt and supporting a shift to higher density development through new design-led density policies ...".
- 4.3. Policy 5.1, Proposal A states that the Mayor will "support well-designed, safe, good quality and environmentally sustainable new homes and neighbourhoods ...[including] updating and consolidating London's housing design standards into a single new planning document, including examples of well-designed high density development"

4.4. Policy D4 of the Mayor's draft new London Plan sets out minimum standards on space and design for new homes, while Policy D6 sets out the Mayor's approach to optimising housing density.

c) Impact assessments and consultations

4.5. Any new supplementary planning guidance that takes into account the findings of this research will be subject to public consultation.

5. Financial comments

5.1 This decision seeks approval for expenditure of up to £40,000 to appoint consultants to support the GLA's work on developing guidance on high-density residential development through Single Source procurement to carry out the above work.

5.2 The expenditure will be split equally between H&L Management & Consultancy budget and Planning London Plan budget and will be spent in 2017/18 financial year.

6. Legal Comments

6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that:

6.1.1 The activity in respect of which approval is sought may be considered to be facilitative of and conducive to the exercise of the GLA's powers:

- (a) and discharge of its obligations under part 7A (Housing and Regeneration) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999; and
- (b) under section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to undertake such activity as may be considered to promote economic development and wealth creation, social development and the improvement of the environment in Greater London and have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
 - (i) pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
 - (ii) consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
 - (iii) consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2.1 The GLA must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act");
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2.2 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 6.2.3 The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- 6.2.4 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: tackle prejudice; and promote understanding.
- 6.2.5 Compliance with the above duties may involve treating some persons more favourably than others, but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under the Act.
- 6.2.6 The relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
- 6.2.7 A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act includes a reference to a breach of: an equality clause or rule; or a non-discrimination rule.
- 6.2.8 To this end the Assistant Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.2.9 Section 10.1 of the GLA Contracts and Funding Code (the 'Code') requires the GLA to call off the services required from an accessible framework or conduct a competitive procurement exercise for the same . The Director may however, approve an exemption from this requirement under section 11 of the Code upon certain specified grounds. One of those grounds is exemptions may be approved where the proposed contractor has had previous involvement in a specific current project or the work is continuation of existing work that cannot be separated from the new project/work. Officers have indicated at section 1 of this report that this ground applies, The Assistant Director may therefore, approve the exemption proposed if satisfied with the supporting content of this report.
- 6.2.10 Should approval of the proposals set out as decisions be granted officers must ensure that appropriate contract documentation is put in place and executed by the GLA and LSE before the commencement of the services.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Award of contract	19 Dec 2017
Delivery start date	20 Dec 2017
Interim report	14 Feb 2018
Draft final report	06 Apr 2018
Final report and project closure	27 Apr 2018

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:

James Gleeson has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and -if relevant- Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

Corporate Investment Board:

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on 18 December 2017.

HEAD OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

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

Signature:



Date:

18-12-17