

**Committee:** Planning

**Date of Meeting:** 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2010

**Title of Report:** Green Belt Study – appointment of consultants

**Report of:** Andy Wallis  
Planning and Economic Regeneration Director

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<b>This report contains</b>	Yes	No
Confidential information		✓
Exempt information by virtue of paragraph(s) ..... of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. (If information <u>is</u> marked exempt, the Public Interest Test must be applied and favour the exclusion of the information from the press and public).		✓
Is the decision on this report DELEGATED?	✓	

### **Purpose of Report:**

To advise Members of the appointment of consultants to validate the Green Belt Study, and to advise members of the implications that this will have on the Preferred Options stage of preparation of the Core Strategy.

### **Recommendation(s):**

That Members endorse the appointment of Envision as the consultants who will validate the Council's Green Belt Study, which is being undertaken jointly with Knowsley Borough Council.

## Corporate Objective Monitoring

Corporate Objective		Impact		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1	Creating A Learning Community		√	
2	Creating Safe Communities		√	
3	Jobs & Prosperity		√	
4	Improving Health & Well Being		√	
5	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
7	Improving The Quality Of Council Services & Strengthening Local Democracy		√	
8	Children & Young People		√	

## Financial Implications

In December 2009, Members were informed that the estimated costs of this study would be in the region of £30,000. The combined cost of carrying out the Study is now expected to be £39,840 of which Sefton's share is £19,920 with the balance being met by Knowsley Council. This does not include any costs which may be incurred should the consultants be required to attend any relevant sessions of the Examination in Public of the Core Strategy in 2012, which would be charged at the current day rates. Sefton's share of the costs will be met from within existing resources.

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>	<b>2010/ 2011 £</b>		
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources		£30K		
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

## Departments consulted in the preparation of this Report

The Finance and Information Services Director has been consulted and has no comments on the previous reports relating to this Study. (Ref. No. FD 197 & FD 262).

FD 358 – The Finance and Information Services Director has been consulted on the preparation of this report and his comments have been incorporated in this report.

The appointment of consultants has also been approved by the Vacancy Management Panel, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

The Director of Legal & Administrative Services has also been consulted on the preparation of this report.

### **List of Background Papers relied upon in the preparation of this report**

Reports to Planning Committee in October & December 2009, which relate to the need to carry out the Study & the draft methodology.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In October 2009, Planning Committee considered a report which set out what the Council needed to do in order to meet its future housing and employment needs for the whole of the period to be covered by the Core Strategy. The conclusions of the housing and employment land supply studies were that only about half of our future housing requirements would be likely to be met in the urban area, and that there was also a need for a successor site to the Southport Business Park to be provided after about 2018. It is not anticipated that this site could be accommodated in the built up area.
- 1.2 As a result, Members were informed that, having investigated all options in the urban area and in those of our neighbouring authorities, we are required, if we are to produce a 'sound' Core Strategy, to identify 'broad locations' that indicate where development might occur in the latter part of the period covered by our Core Strategy (to 2027).
- 1.3 However, this does not mean releasing land from the Green Belt, apart from minor adjustments around the edge of the built-up area, as this could only be done following a sub-regional Merseyside Green Belt review.
- 1.4 A further report in December 2009 set out the timescale and proposed methodology for carrying out the Study, and the intention to consult on the draft results. This report also noted that Knowsley & West Lancashire would also be carrying out an identical study in the same timescale, but that whilst Knowsley's Study would also be assessed by the consultants validating Sefton's Study, Lancashire County Council would be validating West Lancashire's Study.

## **2. Appointment of consultants**

- 2.1 Following a successful tender process, to which 11 submissions were received, and following interviews with 4 short-listed consultancies, the Planning & Economic Regeneration Director has appointed Envision to validate the Green Belt Study.
- 2.2 Submissions were assessed on cost (40% of the assessment) & quality (60%). The successful consultants were not only cheapest, but submitted the best quality submission, and performed the best at the post-tender interviews. They will act as a 'critical friend' as we prepare the Study 'in house', and ensure that we stick to the project timetable and produce a robust Green Belt Study, thereby ensuring that the next stage of the Core Strategy preparation is not delayed.
- 2.3 A joint Inception meeting was held on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2010. At this meeting the timetable for carrying out the Study was agreed. This will be tabled as a late report to your meeting. The indicative timetable included in the Brief indicated that the draft Study should be completed in August, so that its recommendations can feed into the Preferred Options. These will be the subject of a further report in the September cycle, thereby enabling 6 weeks'

public consultation to take place on the Preferred Options and background studies including the Green Belt Study in October / November 2010.

### **3. Next stages**

- 3.1 One of the first tasks that the consultants have been asked to carry out is to review the draft methodology to ensure that it is fit for purpose. This task will be carried out during the 1<sup>st</sup> 4 weeks of the commission, and is therefore due to be completed by 23<sup>rd</sup> April. As part of this assessment, Envision have suggested that a technical workshop should be held with Knowsley, West Lancashire & Lancashire County Council in week 3 of the commission (week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> April), in order to ensure that all parties agree to the methodology and the proposed scoring system for the subsequent stages.
- 3.2 It is intended that a workshop will be held for Planning Committee members in the early summer to discuss the emerging results of the Study, prior to the completion of the draft report.
- 3.3 Public consultation on the draft report will take place in the autumn, alongside the consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options and other background studies.