

Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan
The Parish Office, Hurst Green Village Hall
Station Road
Hurst Green
TN19 7PL

24th May 2018

INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT) for NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SUPPORT

Dear Sir/Madam,

Hurst Green is currently undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and was designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area by Rother District Council in April 2017.

Recently the process has started in earnest with, in particular, a well attended public launch in March 2018, where we were thrilled that over a hundred local residents turned out to take part in our launch events. These events included an initial public consultation of concerns, issues and ideas for the parish to be considered in any future plan. You can view the output of these events on our website at:

http://www.hurstgreen-pc.org.uk/neighbourhood_plan_documents.asp

The Parish Council consider the Neighbourhood Plan is necessary to enable full consideration to be given to the significant opportunities and challenges facing our Parish. The Neighbourhood Area we are seeking to define is the whole of the Parish of Hurst Green.

Recognising the complexity of the task ahead, we are keen to appoint suitably qualified consultants to help us with the preparation of our Neighbourhood Plan, in particular with the various statutory requirements and the complex aspects of the plan's production and approval. Your organisation along with others is therefore invited to offer a tender for provision of the above.

We are keen to be thorough, but this does not mean we do not want to move at pace. At this stage it is anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process will take no more than 12- 15 months to the production of a submission draft.

In addition to funds allocated for the neighbourhood plan process by Hurst Green parish council, we have also initiated the grant application process, and will need assistance on how best to manage any funding requests.

As some time has passed since your original work proposal to provide us with assistance, we would like to warmly invite you to submit an updated proposal and costs for our consideration.

We would ask that you kindly provide us with information that: **1)** sets out your approach, methodology and timetable for your assistance in producing our neighbourhood plan, and **2)** provides us with an indicative fee proposal for this. Please provide various options and outline where there may be opportunities to reduce this fee, where for example, work could be undertaken by our volunteers, were they deemed suitably qualified.

In addition, we would invite you to **3)** consider and respond to the following questions covering:

1. Your experience and ability to work with and to influence Rother District Council, developers and other relevant organisations? [350 words or less]
2. Your experience and ability to produce neighbourhood plans for rural areas such as Hurst Green? [350 words or less]
3. Why you believe you are best placed to assist with the Hurst Green neighbourhood plan, and given our desire to accelerate progress, your capacity to support us in the coming months and going forward? [350 words or less]
4. Please provide details of the specific resources to be used including staff costs and other resources. For individual members of staff, the day rate and rate per day should be specified. An estimate for travel expenses, if these are not included in the day rate, should also be provided.
5. Please provide confirmation that no conflict of interest would arise in the event of being appointed.

Anticipated scope of the requirement:

1. Validate the draft project plan and amend accordingly, identifying key processes, activities and timescales to enable production of an effective and valid NP.
2. Provide targeted support to the Steering Group (SG) on NP issues and emerging themes and provide call off advice when requested
3. Guide the SG through the detailed assessments process for assessing potential development sites and allocations within and around Hurst Green to ensure that the outcome meets the required evidence standards
4. Support and advise the SG and our task groups on gathering and interpreting data and assessing the robustness of the evidence base to develop policies
5. Assist with drafting tender specifications for any specialist and technical external appointments
6. Support the SG in the development and the drafting of policies and of the NP through the provision of advice and guidance and examples of good practice, ensuring these meet the required standards and conform with NP requirements
7. Provide continuity of support throughout the NP development process including the statutory process

In summary, the appointed consultant(s) will also be required to:

1. Act as a core member of the project team, reporting progress to the Steering Committee and attending meetings as required
2. Be proactive in assessing risks to the NP and report potential areas of conflict to the project team
3. Assist in resolving problems and issues in a creative and positive manner
4. Work with other agencies and organisations as required to support the development of the NP

We have highlighted below what we believe to be the requirements of the assistance we require and skillset we believe may be required.

The appointed consultant(s) will have:

1. Significant demonstrable knowledge and experience of neighbourhood plans and how they are developed
2. Recent and current knowledge of planning legislation and legislative frameworks in relation to neighbourhood plans
3. Experience of supporting and guiding communities in the development of NPs
4. Detailed understanding of success criteria for achieving an NP that is in conformity with legislation
5. Clear understanding of the route map to develop a coherent and successful NP

Skills

1. Ability to meet the requirements above
2. Excellent interpersonal, facilitation and communication skills
3. Ability to work positively with a broad range of volunteers and stakeholders
4. Clarity of thought and expression, enabling Steering Group members to understand the core elements of the task at hand
5. Data analysis and interpretation
6. Strong report writing and policy development skills

Whilst every endeavour has been made to give tenderers an accurate description of our requirement, tenderers should make their own assessment about the methods and resources needed to meet those requirements.

Responses should be submitted by e-mail to Andrew Brown and Steve Wright, % Janet Ellis, Parish Clerk at Hurst Green Parish Council using the following email address: hqpcouncil@yahoo.co.uk or by post to: Janet Ellis, The Parish Office, Hurst Green Village Hall, Station Road, Hurst Green, East Sussex, TN19 7PL.

We would be grateful for your early indication of your desire to respond to this request, and that your submission response be with us no later than **5pm on the 11th of June 2018**. Late submission and missing information may impact on the consideration of your proposal.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will invite consultants for interview as part of the selection process. The tender will be judged on previous experience and track record, quality of the engagement and project plan and cost/value for money.

The Council is not bound to accept the lowest tender nor does it undertake to make an appointment from this exercise. The Council reserves the right to accept a portion of any tender, unless the tenderer expressly stipulates otherwise in their tender. Before a contract is signed, the Consultant to be appointed will be expected to submit their Environmental & Ethical Policies and safe working practices which will be followed during the project.

Freedom Of Information

The Parish Council is committed to open government and to meeting our responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Accordingly, all information submitted may need to be disclosed in response to a request under the Act. If you consider that any of the information included in your tender is commercially sensitive, please identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity. You should be aware that, even where you have indicated that information is commercially sensitive, we may still be required to disclose it under the Act if a request is received. Please also note that the receipt of any material marked 'confidential' or equivalent by us should not be taken to mean that we accept any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking. If a request is received, we may also be required to disclose details of unsuccessful tenders.

Yours faithfully,

Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group