

Invitation to Quote for Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

MARCH 2013

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I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was carried out on behalf of the Oxfordshire local authorities in 2007. The study is now five years old and was prepared before the full effects of the global recession became apparent. Furthermore, whilst the SHMA identified the economy as a key driver, it did not fully explore the relationship between housing and economic growth.
- I.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plans are based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area.
- I.3 With specific regard to housing, local authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs and use evidence to ensure that their Local Plans meet the full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing as far as is consistent with the NPPF. With regard to the economy, local authorities should have a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating in and across their area.
- I.4 Importantly, assessments of and strategies for housing and employment should be integrated and take full account of relevant market and economic signals.
- I.5 Whilst each local authority has been preparing evidence to support their Local Plans, it has been agreed by the Oxfordshire local authorities through the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) that a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) should be prepared to inform the ongoing and longer-term development of housing, planning and economic policy within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area.
- I.6 The assessment will be commissioned by West Oxfordshire District Council on behalf of the following local authorities:
 - Oxford City Council
 - South Oxfordshire District Council
 - Vale of White Horse District Council
 - Cherwell District Council
- I.7 A steering group of planning and housing officers from each authority will be established to oversee the study and Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will also be involved as key partners. The appointed consultants will be expected to work closely with the steering group throughout the project.



- 1.8 This brief sets out the overall scope of the study and the process by which tender submissions will be assessed. The study should be completed as quickly as practicable, but must be robust and able to withstand independent scrutiny. As such, whilst an indication of the expected timetable is provided, bidders are expected to advise on what they consider to be the most appropriate timetable given their proposed approach and the extent to which it may be dependent on the release of Census information throughout 2013.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Having been identified as one of four pathfinders by the Regional Housing Board and in order to provide a better understanding of the local housing market, the Oxfordshire local authorities commissioned the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was published in December 2007 by Tribal Group.
- 2.2 The overall objectives of the SHMA were as follows:
- to identify and clearly define the Oxfordshire sub-regional housing market and the housing markets within it;
 - to analyse the Oxfordshire sub-regional housing market, including its characteristics, drivers and other influences;
 - to derive figures for housing need and demand in the Oxfordshire sub-region and determine the requirements for market and affordable housing; and
 - to provide a basis for all partners in the Oxfordshire sub-region to develop and implement sustainable policies that will lead to a balanced housing market.
- 2.3 The SHMA was prepared in accordance with DCLG Practice Guidance¹ and comprised a combination of detailed analysis of secondary data, consultation with stakeholders and scenario modelling.
- 2.4 Whilst fit for purpose, the SHMA was unable to address all recommended core outputs and also highlighted a number of areas that should be addressed through any future update or related work.
- 2.5 For example, no clear conclusions were reached about the size and type of accommodation people will demand and the study was not able to explore the reasons why people move. Furthermore, due to limited availability of data at the time, the SHMA was unable to present a detailed assessment of housing needs in the rural areas of the County.

¹ DCLG Strategic Housing Market Assessments Practice Guidance (March 2007) note: since superseded by Version 2 (August 2007)

3. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES SINCE 2007

- 3.1 There have been a number of wider changes since 2007 that the new SHMA will need to take into account.

Global Recession and the Path to Recovery

- 3.2 Since the original SHMA was published, the global economy has taken a significant downturn and is only now starting to slowly recover. Whilst the SHMA identified economic performance as a key driver of housing need and demand, it did not fully explore the inter-relationship between housing and economic growth including for example the effect on migration and travel patterns.
- 3.3 It is now generally acknowledged that housing and economic growth cannot be considered in isolation. The NPPF requires local authorities to ensure that their housing and employment assessments and strategies are integrated and a number of local authorities such as Aylesbury Vale District Council are choosing to prepare joint studies.
- 3.4 It is therefore expected that the new Oxfordshire SHMA will have a much stronger economic focus, taking account of existing and emerging economic strategies and proposals (see below) and how housing growth may support local economic aspirations. This will allow the relationship between economic and housing growth to be better understood and planned for as the Country continues to move out of recession.

Emerging Economic Plans and Priorities

- 3.5 There is currently a national drive to stimulate economic recovery through growth and the direction in which the Oxfordshire economy is moving is becoming clearer. Whilst there is no up to date overarching economic strategy for the county, there are a variety of existing and emerging studies some of which are briefly summarised below. A key role of the new SHMA will be to draw these together in order to present a coherent analysis of the current and likely future relationship between jobs and homes within the housing market area.
- 3.6 The Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan (LIP) was published in March 2010 and sought to outline and integrate the housing, economic development and infrastructure plans of the Oxfordshire authorities in the period up to 2030. The LIP has recently been updated.

- 3.7 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership² (LEP) was formally launched in March 2011 as a catalyst for the realisation of Oxfordshire's economic and commercial potential. The LEP Business Plan for Growth 2013 identifies the key sectors with greatest potential for growth and global competitiveness and the key issues to be addressed including infrastructure and skills. The priority localities are Bicester, Oxford and Science Vale UK.
- 3.8 To support the work of the LEP and in accordance with legislative requirements, Oxfordshire County Council produced a Local Economic Assessment (LEA) for Oxfordshire in 2010 which has recently been updated. The assessment provides an overview of economic conditions countywide and highlights the concerns of businesses that high house prices are a problem in recruiting and retaining staff.
- 3.9 Work is also underway on a new study which will focus on Oxfordshire's high-tech cluster and should be made available in draft within the timescale of the new SHMA commission.
- 3.10 A number of studies have also been prepared by or on behalf of the Oxfordshire local authorities. The Oxford Economic Growth Strategy was agreed and adopted by the Oxford Strategic Partnership in January 2013. The Strategy together with an Economic Narrative can be downloaded from www.oxford.gov.uk/osp
- 3.11 Most recently the Oxfordshire local authorities and key partners came together to submit a successful expression of interest to the Government's second wave of 'City Deals'.
- Regional Economic Strategy (2006 – 2016)*
- 3.12 Although published some time ago, the Regional Economic Strategy remains of relevance to economic growth in Oxfordshire and the South East, aiming to achieve global competitiveness, smart growth and sustainable prosperity.
- South East Plan*
- 3.13 The South East Plan was adopted in 2009 and confirmed the level of housing to be provided in Oxfordshire over the period 2006 – 2026 including the Central Oxfordshire sub-region (40,680) and the rest of Oxfordshire (14,520).
- 3.14 Oxford City Council and South Oxford District Council have both now adopted their Core Strategies on the basis of the housing requirement of the South East Plan. West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and Cherwell District Council are currently preparing their emerging plans in line with the South East Plan albeit rolled forward on a pro-rata basis.

² <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/>



- 3.15 The Government has however made clear its intention to abolish regional planning with cross boundary issues such as housing, employment and infrastructure provision to be addressed instead through the new 'duty to co-operate'.
- 3.16 Whilst the South East Plan remains part of the statutory Development Plan at the present time, it will be partially revoked on 25th March 2012.
- 3.17 As a result, the new SHMA should not use the South East Plan findings as its starting point as was the case with the 2007 study. Instead it should start again, using an appropriate methodology to assess the amount and type of new market and affordable housing needed by local authority.

National Census 2011

- 3.18 In July 2012, the initial high-level results of the national Census 2011 were made available including resident population by age and sex at national, regional and local authority level, number of households at national, regional and local authority level and the number of short term migrants at local authority level.
- 3.19 Notably the early Census releases indicate a number of changes since the previous Census in 2001. For example whilst the overall population increased by around 8% there is a significant difference between Oxford city and rural Oxfordshire districts in the changes to the older and younger populations.
- 3.20 Furthermore, the initial Census data suggests that the number of households across Oxfordshire is lower than was expected to be the case through earlier projections. The population in West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District was also lower than predicted.
- 3.21 Further Census releases were made in September, October and December 2012 with more information expected in March – June 2013 (Local Characteristics) and July – October 2013 (Detailed Characteristics, Detailed Theme and Armed Forces).
- 3.22 It is expected that the new SHMA will make full use of relevant Census data. Key dependencies on the timing of future Census releases should be highlighted in any tender submission.

Localism and Welfare Reform Acts

- 3.23 The Localism Act was introduced in November 2011 with the central aim of devolving more decision making powers from central Government back into the hands of individuals, communities and local authorities. The act covers a wide range of issues related to local public services, with a particular focus on the general power



of competence, community rights, neighbourhood planning and housing.

- 3.24 It was through the Localism Act that the Government formalised its intention to abolish regional strategies (see above). It also introduced the duty to co-operate, requiring local authorities to work together on cross boundary strategic issues including housing provision.
- 3.25 The Welfare Reform Act received royal assent in March 2012 and introduces a wide range of reforms to make the benefits and tax credits systems fairer and simpler. The Act includes a fairer approach to housing benefit designed to bring greater stability to the market and improve incentives to work. The implications of the various measures will need to be explored in relation to any assessment of affordable housing tenure requirements (see below).

Changes to the HCA Funding Regime and Introduction of Affordable Rent

- 3.26 In 2011 the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) published details of its new Affordable Homes Programme of investment. The framework document outlines the changes in affordable housing provision being introduced for 2011-15, and how this new approach will meet the Government's ambition to deliver up to 150,000 new homes.
- 3.27 The new arrangements introduced the concept of 'affordable rent' which has since been formalised through the NPPF.
- 3.28 Significantly, the way in which funding will now be allocated has changed. Unlike the previous funding model, providers are now being invited to submit proposals for delivery of affordable housing to the HCA for the entire four year period which will be managed through a flexible approach.

Other Sources of Information

- 3.29 A range of other relevant information has been made available since the 2007 SHMA was published. Much of the secondary data used in the study has now been updated and importantly, Strategic Housing Market Assessments have been carried out for adjoining housing market areas including Gloucestershire (2009) Berkshire (2007, updated 2012) South Warwickshire (2006, updated 2009) West Northamptonshire (2009, updated 2010) and Buckinghamshire (2008).
- 3.30 Consideration of these studies as well as any other relevant studies not identified, will allow for a greater understanding of the relationship between the Oxfordshire HMA and adjoining areas including whether there have been any significant changes since 2007 and whether there is any unmet need from these areas being met by Oxfordshire.

- 3.31 With the exception of Oxford City, Housing Needs Assessments have also been prepared by each of the Oxfordshire Districts since the 2007 SHMA was published including:
- West Oxfordshire (2011)
 - South Oxfordshire (2011)
 - Cherwell (2008, 2009 and pending 2012)
 - Vale of White Horse (2011)
- 3.32 In relation to Oxford City, although there is no recent formal housing needs assessment in place, relevant data can be derived from the Council's Housing Strategy 2012 – 2015 and other sources of in-house information.
- 3.33 Tender submissions should identify whether the lack of an up to date Housing Needs Survey for Oxford City and the differing methodologies used for other Districts, is a problem and if so, what can reasonably be done to ensure the review is robust and fit for purpose.

Progress of Local Development Plans

- 3.34 The local authorities have also made varying degrees of progress with their development plans since 2007 with Oxford City and South Oxfordshire District Council having adopted their Core Strategies in March 2011 and December 2012 respectively. Oxford City also has two Area Action Plans already adopted as well as an adopted Sites and Housing Plan.
- 3.35 West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council have recently published their draft Local Plans both of which are based on the South East Plan rolled forward on a pro-rata basis to 2029 and 2031 respectively. The Vale of White Horse District Council started consultation on their emerging plan in March 2013.
- 3.36 The new SHMA will therefore need to take account of these adopted and emerging strategies and any other development plan documents of relevance.

4. PROJECT SPECIFICATION

- 4.1 The overarching purpose of the project is to prepare a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) on behalf of the Oxfordshire local authorities. This will replace the previous SHMA published in 2007 and have a much stronger economic dimension.
- 4.2 With regard to approach and methodology, the partner authorities invite suggestions and whilst maintaining the ability to make meaningful comparisons with the previous SHMA will be important, the local authorities are not tied to the previous methodology. The Government has recently announced that national planning guidance will be overhauled and this is likely to include the SHMA guidance, however the timescale for this is unknown at the present time.
- 4.3 As such it is considered that the study should, as a minimum, aim to meet the core outputs and process checklist set out in the 2007 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Practice Guidance (Version 2). Should further guidance be issued within the timeframe of the SHMA commission, the appointed consultant would be expected to take it on board as far as is reasonably possible.
- 4.4 Having regard to the 2007 SHMA and the requirements of the practice guidance, set out below are a number of key outputs that are expected to be delivered through the study.

Key Outputs

i) **Defining the Extent of the Housing Market Area**

- 4.5 The 2007 SHMA considered the extent of the Oxfordshire housing market area having regard to work carried out previously by DTZ and concluded that Oxfordshire is a relatively distinct housing market area, albeit with some blurring at the boundaries (e.g. around Banbury in relation to the East Midlands and Warwickshire) and the Reading/M4 corridor). As such it was recommended that the extent of the HMA should be monitored over time to identify any potential changes.
- 4.6 A key requirement of the new study will therefore be to confirm the current extent of the Oxfordshire HMA and to identify any particular changes that have occurred since 2007. In particular, in line with the duty to co-operate, consideration must be given to the links with adjoining housing market areas and whether they have strengthened to such an extent that the boundary of the HMA should be revised. Particular regard should be had to any SHMAs produced and/or updated for adjoining housing market areas since 2007.

ii) Identification of Sub-Markets

- 4.7 The previous SHMA identified some key trends that helped to define specific sub-areas within the Oxfordshire HMA including the rural areas, Oxford City, the housing market in Cherwell in particular Banbury, Southern Central Oxfordshire and the private rented and buy to let sectors.
- 4.8 The new SHMA should explore whether these sub-markets remain and whether there have been any significant changes since 2007 for example the impact that low interest rates may have had on the private rented and buy to let sectors and how the availability of and access to mortgages has influenced the market. Consideration should also be given to whether any new sub-markets have emerged including for example second home ownership.
- 4.9 Particular regard should be had to the unique characteristics of Oxford City in terms of its buoyant rental sector, large student population and correspondingly low-level of home ownership. Consideration should also be given as to whether continued growth around Oxford including in particular Science Vale UK and Bicester has had any impact on travel patterns and the functional links with adjoining areas. The major growth planned at Bicester including the significance of eco town development will require particular consideration.
- 4.10 Importantly, the 2007 SHMA was not able to fully investigate the relationship between the different sub-areas and the influence they have on need and demand. This is an issue that should be addressed through the new SHMA.
- 4.11 The new SHMA should also aim to improve our understanding of the rural areas which is currently limited due to the availability of secondary data. The Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership has done some work on this and the refresh of the SHMA should have regard to their findings. Consultants will be expected to advise whether any further collation of primary data would be needed and the associated cost and timescale implications of this.

iii) Identification of Key Drivers

- 4.12 The 2007 SHMA identified a number of key drivers underpinning and influencing the Oxfordshire housing market. A number of these including the South East Plan have moved on since 2007 and the new SHMA will need to identify the key drivers of most significance in 2013 and beyond.
- 4.13 A key consideration will be economic performance including recent and planned business growth and the current desire to stimulate economic recovery through housing delivery. Related to this is the potential relationship between housing stock and the profile and future age structure of the labour force as well as the relationship between income and house prices.

iv) **Assessment of the Current Housing Market**

- 4.14 Drawing on a range of secondary data, the 2007 SHMA considered a number of different aspects of the Oxfordshire housing market including total dwelling numbers, tenures, property types, size of the social rented stock and changes in property prices. It also considered overcrowding, vacant dwellings and second home ownership as well as housing condition and housing completions including the delivery of affordable housing.
- 4.15 The new SHMA will be expected to include a detailed assessment of the current Oxfordshire housing market and as part of this, to identify any significant changes since 2007 including for example housing affordability, any increases in rates of homelessness etc.
- 4.16 The most up to date information available should be used and consideration should be given as to whether there are any additional sources of information not used previously that would provide added value, in particular information regarding the rural housing market which was relatively limited in the previous study.
- 4.17 Particular regard should be had to household groups with specific housing requirements including for example families, young people, older people, black and minority ethnic groups and disabled people. To assist, various separate studies have been carried out since the original SHMA was completed including the assessment of the need for extra care housing and the work being done by Oxfordshire County Council to quantify the need for accommodation for people with physical disability and mental health needs.
- 4.18 If possible it would also be useful to disaggregate market demand sectors, for example 'starter' vs. 'family' homes and 'executive' vs. 'later life' homes. In Oxford City, the student population is a key demographic driver that will need to be taken into account and in rural areas, the ageing population is a key demographic driver that will also need to be considered.
- 4.19 Separate work on assessing the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, commissioned by the partner authorities should also be reflected upon.

v) **Assessment of the Future Housing Market**

- 4.20 This is perhaps the most important part of the SHMA and as a minimum, proposals should aim to meet the core outputs listed in the practice guidance.
- 4.21 In particular, using the best available information, an assessment should be made of the total number of future households for all Districts, broken down by age and type and covering the period up to 2031. This should take into account economic growth aspirations and the balance between labour and housing markets.



- 4.22 An assessment should also be made of the current number of households in housing need. Here information should be drawn from existing housing needs studies and any other relevant sources. As outlined earlier, consultants will be expected to advise whether the lack of recent housing needs data for Oxford City is a problem and if so, what can reasonably be done to ensure the SHMA is robust and fit for purpose.
- 4.23 Drawing from the estimates of future household growth and current housing need, an estimate should be provided of the total number of future households that will require affordable housing over the period to 2031. This should be supported by an assessment of the different tenures of affordable housing needed in each District (social rent, affordable rent and intermediate housing) recognising that affordable rent may remain out of reach to many of those in housing need. An assessment should also be made of the size of affordable housing needed (an issue that the previous SHMA was unable to address).
- 4.24 In assessing existing and future housing need, regard should be had to the HNA reports already in place with a clear explanation provided for any significant differences in the findings of the new SHMA.
- 4.25 In parallel, an assessment should be made of the total number of future households requiring market housing, again broken down on a District basis. Where possible, an assessment of the size and type of market housing needed should also be provided. Specific advice should also be provided on the future needs of the particular groups identified earlier including families, younger people, older people, disabled people etc.
- 4.26 To summarise, in accordance with the NPPF, a clear, objectively assessed estimate of future housing need and demand across the HMA is needed to support the development of future local housing targets. This information should be broken down to the District level as fully as possible in the period up to 2031 in order to help inform future discussions concerning the location of growth and the relationship to labour markets.

vi) Previous 2007 SHMA recommendations

- 4.27 The 2007 SHMA highlights a number of areas that were not fully explored and recommends that these are addressed through any future update or related work. For example the SHMA did not come to a clear conclusion about the size and type of accommodation people will demand and suggests that soundings with developers and/or consumer research could be used to provide this information.
- 4.28 This might include discussions with niche market providers including those who specialise in housing for older people and



people with disabilities in addition to discussions with volume house builders. This would need to be balanced against consideration of what households at different stages can realistically afford and when. Some information may be able to be taken from local housing needs assessments.

- 4.29 Similarly the 2007 SHMA does not explore why people move e.g. the motives for renting or moving property. Conversely, the reasons people don't move and the subsequent inertia that can occur within the housing market as a result is also an important consideration. Potentially this could be addressed through a survey of local households (questionnaire approach and content to be agreed with and potentially facilitated by the local authorities). Although care would be needed in considering the 'whys' and 'wants' given the potential for response bias in postal surveys.
- 4.30 The new SHMA will need to consider this and also reflect upon any separate work commissioned or undertaken by individual authorities on these areas since the original SHMA was produced, e.g. research on housing mix and type and the needs of older people. It is understood that Oxfordshire County Council may be able to provide survey data from new households including information on previous addresses and reasons for moving³.
- 4.31 As stated previously, secondary data for the rural areas was limited and the 2007 SHMA recommended that more detailed research in one or two rural areas might be considered through a rural research study to include primary data research such as a telephone survey. As stated earlier, the Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership has done some work on this and the new SHMA should consider their findings.
- 4.32 Other areas where additional information could potentially be usefully gathered included improved information on the demand for social rented housing, tenure movement and private renting. Whilst private renting is of particular significance for Oxford City, it is also important for other areas, especially given the ability to discharge homeless duty into the private sector. Private rented market research is considered to be critical to understanding housing markets, with many people priced out of home ownership competing with more traditional renters. There is also the question of how landlords will react to welfare reform including direct payment of the housing benefit and the housing element of universal credit.

vii) Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.33 To ensure effective stakeholder 'buy-in', tender submissions should include an explanation of the type and extent of stakeholder engagement proposed to be undertaken as part of the SHMA process and the timing of when this will take place.

³ Survey of New Housing in Oxfordshire



- 4.34 The aim should be to ensure that the views of all key stakeholders are properly taken into account and that there is consensus, as far as possible, regarding the findings of the study.

viii) Ongoing Monitoring and Updating

- 4.35 It will be important that the new SHMA is produced in a format that can be kept up to date easily. The intention with the 2007 study was that regular updates would be undertaken by or on behalf of the local authorities involved, however this has not happened and it is important that the new SHMA is prepared in such a manner that the local authorities can if they so wish continue to maintain it with minimum resource requirements and/or specialist knowledge. This will include the release of electronic spreadsheets, modelling and raw data so as to provide the local authorities with the option of updating the findings on a regular, in-house basis.
- 4.36 Alternatively, if they are able to offer such a service, consultants are invited to provide a fixed-fee proposal for the provision of an annual update to the SHMA on behalf of the partner authorities.

ix) Final Reporting

- 4.37 The full SHMA report should be accompanied by a succinct Executive Summary which clearly sets out the key findings and recommendations, broken down on a District basis where appropriate.
- 4.38 The report should be useable, easy to understand and visually engaging in terms of its legibility and format. Clear outputs should be provided and the use of multiple scenarios, which may be open to interpretation, should be avoided.
- 4.39 Consideration should be given to font and layouts so that the final document is not excessively long for printing purposes. Graphs can be used as visual aids when the issue being discussed relates to comparisons but they should not be overused when data could be more helpful in tables. Maps are welcome providing that the information is clear, relevant and useful.
- 4.40 The full SHMA report and Executive Summary should be provided electronically in Adobe portable document A4 format (.pdf) suitably compressed for website hosting and download, to facilitate circulation.
- 4.41 Where appropriate and applicable, any constituent parts of the SHMA should be provided in other, accessible formats including:
- .doc or .rtf format for text;
 - .xls format for numerical workings and graphs;
 - .jpg, .gif or .tif format for photos or images.

- 4.42 A total of 20 hard copies at standard A4 size should be supplied of both the full SHMA report and Executive Summary (if separate).
- 4.43 The Consultants' name will appear as the authors of the reports and senior officers of the consultancy will sign the report. The reports should be 'open for public use'. The copyright in the completed reports and any annexes will belong to the partner authorities. The partner authorities will retain ownership of the final reports, any data collected and any analysis that is undertaken as part of this study.

5. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 The Council requests that all bidders ensure that they meet the following minimum requirements as outlined below:
- The supplier must provide details of two references from existing clients in the last three years that are relevant to the Council's requirement
 - The supplier must provide details of relevant insurance held. The Contractor must hold the following insurance levels throughout the life of the contract. Minimum cover for any one incident of the following must be held:

Public Liability - £1,000,000.00
- 5.2 Should the Contractor's existing insurance policies not be at the level indicated the Council could require confirmation that the Contractor will be willing to increase the level if awarded the contract and it felt necessary.
- The supplier must have a comprehensive health and safety policy in place, including procedures to be followed by the contractor's employees visiting Council sites.
 - The supplier must provide evidence to demonstrate its commitment to equality of opportunity and approach to service delivery.



6. RESPONSE TO PROJECT SPECIFICATION

6.1 Tender submissions should include the following information.

1. A brief history and outline of your organisation

6.2 In no more than 500 words please provide a brief history and outline of your organisation. This will not form part of the evaluation but will provide useful background information.

2. Financial Standing

6.3 Please provide information regarding the turnover of your company for the last three financial years. This may be presented in the format below or similar.

Financial Year	Total Annual Turnover (£)	Profitability (as a % of turnover before tax)
Registered Address		
Company Registration Number (if applicable)		

6.4 The Council may carry out a credit check on your organisation.

3. Quality Assurance

6.5 Does your organisation hold a recognised quality management certification and/or is a member of a relevant trade/professional body for example BS/EN/ISO9001?

6.6 If yes, please detail those certificates held and/or trade/professional membership details.

6.7 If not, does your organisation have a quality management arrangement in place (including processes/procedures that are compliant with legal requirements)? Please provide details.

4. Technical Capacity, Expertise and Experience

- 6.8 Please detail your organisations technical capacity and expertise and experience over the last five years of carrying out similar work to include qualifications and or training of staff that would be involved in the delivery of this contract.

5. Understanding and Addressing the Project Specification

- 6.9 Submissions should include a detailed method statement setting out your understanding of the brief and how you intend to fulfil each of the key outputs.
- 6.10 Submissions should confirm that all outputs specified in this brief can be achieved by the proposal and any elements where this is in doubt should be clearly stated. This should include an assessment of whether additional primary research is required for the purposes of identifying housing need.
- 6.11 Submissions should include a clear project plan with key milestones highlighted as appropriate. Submissions should also explain how the proposed approach will comply with national policy and best practice.

6. Stakeholder Engagement

- 6.12 The successfully appointed consultant will be expected to undertake effective and collaborative stakeholder consultation throughout the project. Submissions should therefore include details of the amount, type and timing of stakeholder engagement envisaged and how it will be used to inform the final report.

7. TIMESCALE AND SUBMISSION OF QUOTATIONS

- 7.1 The Oxfordshire local authorities are all at different stages in the preparation of their local development plan documents with two adopted core strategies and three emerging local plans.
- 7.2 There is a general consensus that it would be beneficial to have the new SHMA in place as soon as possible however this needs to be balanced with the need for a robust study that will stand up to scrutiny and provide genuinely useful information to inform housing, economic and planning policy.

- 7.3 An indication of likely key dates is set out below however tender submissions should clearly set out a timetable based on the proposed study approach. In particular, consideration must be given to the release of Census data throughout 2013 and if it is considered that the key milestones below cannot realistically be achieved, this should be clearly explained in any tender submission with alternative suggested milestones provided as appropriate.

Stage	Anticipated Dates
Invitation to tender	25 th March – 26 th April 2013
Assessment of submitted tenders	26 th April – 3 rd May 2013
Interviews (if necessary)	w/c 13 th May 2013
Appointment	w/c 20 th May 2013
Draft report	w/c 12 th August 2013
Final report	w/c 23 rd September 2013

- 7.4 Tender submissions may be sent by post or electronically.
- 7.5 A clear explanation of the costs relating to the overall project should be provided, apportioned to the key stages within the project plan.
- 7.6 Proposals which allow for joint working between more than one pre-identified consultant on the basis that each has a specific contribution to make to the success of the project will be considered, provided that the proposed framework for joint working is sufficiently robust.
- 7.7 The postal address for hard copy submissions is as follows:
- Planning Policy Team
West Oxfordshire District Council
Elmfield
New Yatt Road
Witney
OX28 1PB
- 7.8 Electronic submissions should be sent to:
- planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk
- 7.9 The deadline for submissions is **5pm on Friday 26th April 2013**.
- 7.10 The Council will not be liable for any expenses incurred by bidders in the preparation of their tender returns and no quotation will be considered if it is not received by the date and time specified.

- 7.11 Following receipt of quotations, they will be arithmetically checked. Any arithmetical errors will be corrected, and a revised quotation price calculated. The bidder(s) concerned will be notified of any errors and amendments and asked either to confirm the revised quotation price or withdraw the quotation.
- 7.12 The Council reserves the right to investigate further any quotation where it believes that the rates and price(s) submitted may be unrealistic, and this will be grounds for rejecting such a quotation and for referring the same to the Office of Fair Trading for further investigation.
- 7.13 The Council does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any quotation that is received, but if it does accept a quotation then all bidders will accordingly be notified of the outcome of the quotation exercise.

8. AWARD AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Introduction

- 8.1 This evaluation methodology is a three stage process comprising the following stages:
- Compliance evaluation
 - Detailed quality and financial evaluation, clarification and moderation
 - Contract award recommendation
- 8.2 All tenders will be evaluated against an agreed evaluation framework and criteria, as described in this document.

Overview: Award Criteria

- 8.3 The award of contract will be based on the Most Economically Advantageous (MEA) offer received. The Councils have decided that the split between quality and financial matters will be 60:40 respectively.
- 8.4 The criteria contributing to the quality evaluation (60% of the overall evaluation) comprises the following:

Quality Evaluation Criteria

Question	Criteria	% available
3.	Quality Assurance	5%
4.	Technical Capacity, Expertise, Experience	15%
5.	Understanding and Addressing the Project Specification	35%
6.	Stakeholder engagement	5%
	Total	60%

Financial Evaluation Criteria

- 8.5 The financial evaluation (40% of the overall evaluation) will be carried out against a single criterion:

Criteria	% available
I. Price	40%
Total	40%

Evaluation Methodology

- 8.6 The evaluation methodology will comprise of three evaluation stages:

Stage 1 – Compliance Evaluation

- 8.7 Stage 1 is the Compliance Evaluation stage, which will determine whether the bid has been submitted in accordance with the checks set out in Table 1 below. This is a Pass / Fail evaluation and the Council reserves the right to eliminate Tenders from proceeding to the 2nd Stage evaluation if the compliance requirements are not met.
- 8.8 The first stage Compliance Evaluation process involves assessing each submission against a number of general compliance criteria to ensure that the submission is compliant with the Council's minimum requirements as detailed below.

Table 1: Compliance Checklist - Please tick as appropriate

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Was the submission received at WODC Offices by 5pm on 26 th April 2013?			
Has the bidder submitted a completed Method Statement and all requested info? (section 6.2 and 6.3)			
Has the bidder submitted a completed set of Costs and have all the items been priced?			
Have all the requirements listed under section 5 been met?			



- 8.9 The outcome of Stage 1 shall be at the absolute discretion of the Council.

Stage 2 – Quality and Financial Evaluation

- 8.10 The second stage Quality and Financial Evaluation will entail the evaluation of each submission by the Evaluation Team. Each Evaluation Team member will initially assess the submissions and score them against the scoring system set out below. Following this process, the whole Quality Evaluation Team will meet and will arrive at a consensus as to the score for each element of each submission.
- 8.11 Where this process results in the need for certain issues to be clarified with bidders, such clarification will be sought in writing and scores adjusted accordingly. If necessary, all Tenderers will be invited to a clarification meeting at this stage.

Quality Evaluation (60%)

- 8.12 Each submission will be evaluated using the scoring method detailed below. Method Statements will be evaluated and scored on a range from 0 to 10 points, in accordance with the table shown below. Weightings will then be applied, resulting in a score out of the maximum numbers shown in Table 2. If an individual evaluator requires additional clarification from a bidder, scoring will either be made conditional or postponed until the Evaluation Team moderation meeting(s), following which clarification may be sought and scores revised accordingly.

Table 2: Scoring breakdown

Score	Description
0	Unacceptable
1	Very weak – almost unacceptable
2	Weak – well below expectations
3	Poor – below expectations
4	Marginally below expectations
5	Meets expectations
6	Marginally exceeds expectations
7	Good – well above expectations
8	Very good
9	Outstanding
10	Exceptional

Stage 3 – Contract Award Recommendation

- 8.13 Following the Stage 2 assessment a decision will be made on the award of the contract.

9. THE COUNCIL

- 9.1 West Oxfordshire District Council is the contracting Council for the purposes of this quotation and its headquarters and main offices is located at Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB.
- 9.2 To enable efficient Management of the Contract the Council will appoint a named Contact Officer who will be the main point of contact for the Council.
- 9.3 The Contact Officer for this contract will be Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager) or such other Officer of the Council as the Council may decide and notify to the successful contractor in writing. The contact details for any queries are:

Name: Chris Hargraves
Telephone: 01993 861686
Email: chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk

10. PRICING

- 10.1 There is an identified maximum budget provision for this commission. A cross-authority budget has been set up and will be held by West Oxfordshire District Council as the lead commissioning authority.
- 10.2 Consultants should give a fixed fee quote, including expenses for the SHMA report (including Executive Summary and any other relevant supporting appendices). A statement on costs should be included in the tender, to include time inputs by individual, by task and day rate. VAT should be shown separately.
- 10.3 Consultants are also invited to provide a fixed fee quote for the provision of an annual update to the SHMA on behalf of the partner authorities.
- 10.4 As further support in relation to the SHMA is likely to be required at subsequent examinations, a fixed daily rate should also be provided.

11. PAYMENT PROCEDURES

- 11.1 Payments will be phased with 50% of the fee payable on satisfactory completion of a draft report and the remaining 50% on approval of the final report.

12. COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

- 12.1 The contractor will be responsible for ensuring that in the undertaking of any work for the Council that it fulfils all the requirements of UK and EU law together with all health and safety and equality and diversity legislation. The contractor must inform the Council immediately if it suspects that it has in anyway breached any UK and EU legislation in the performance of the contract.