

Report to: Managing Director

Date of Meeting: 5th September 2013

Report of: Planning Policy Section Head

Title: Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

BACKGROUND

Watford Borough Council commissioned a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which was completed by Halcrow in 2007, with a revised edition published in 2012, to take into account of upgrades to the flood defences on the River Colne and revised regional modelling by the Environment Agency.

Following the completion of a Sequential Test, in addition to the Watford Health Campus site, there are a further 5 sites that are shown to be at a risk of flooding and therefore require further assessment.

Table 1: Sites Requiring Further Modelling

Site code	Address	Use	Description	Size	Phasing
CEN 57	Lower High Street	Co-op Funeral Parlour and scrap yard	In use. Surrounded by retail and main road.	0.46	Long term potential
CEN 59	Lower High Street	Land around gas holder	Large allocated site. Part of the land is used for coach parking. Surrounded by residential, retail and main road system	1.17	Long term intention to move Gas Holder
CEN 60	Lower High Street	Furniture store and Saab Showroom	In use. On main road. Adjacent to gas works site and residential	0.24	Long term potential
CEN 70	Local Board Road	Pump House Theatre & Arts Centre, Nissan Showroom and adjacent units	Former water board building converted into theatre. With associated large temporary car park. Adjacent to works units and retail, residential	0.82	WBC some ownership.
CEN 119	Lower High Street	Gas holder		0.30	Long term intention to move. Gas interested in redevelopment but need to move operational parts.

In order to undertake a National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) compliant Level 2 SFRA, it is necessary to appoint an experienced consultant team working in partnership with key stakeholders and the council to undertake this further assessment.

The SFRA will form an important part of the evidence base, and will provide a framework for managing and addressing future flood risk. It will draw together the baseline evidence including historic flooding, existing defences and future changes along with an initial assessment of flood risk in the Borough from other flood risk strategies. This will provide a consistent baseline for managing future flood risk including identifying objectives and measures for addressing this risk.

Importantly, flood management authorities have a duty to act consistently with the local and national strategies in respect of exercising their flood risk management functions. There will be a greater need for the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Watford Borough Council, Environment Agency and other flood management authorities to work together so that strategic policies in the Local Plan align with the SFRA and are taken into account when deciding on planning applications and sustainable development.

The Level 2 SFRA for Watford Borough Council will provide a complete assessment of present and future flood risk, bringing together flood risk identification and its assessment from all available sources. This will provide spatial and emergency planners with a reference guide in partnership with the NPPF for allocating areas of development which are both appropriate for the identified flood risk area and sustainable for future generations. The proposed development locations will be assessed, and wider study area outputs will be used to assess windfall sites in that area as they come forward.

OPTIONS ON CONSULTANTS

Previously Halcrow had undertaken the initial SFRA, completed in 2007. However, since then Aecom have been working closely with the Council on the Watford Health Campus site. The Level 2 SFRA proposed project programme and study cost benefits from the synergies provided by Aecom's involvement in the ongoing Watford Health Campus project. The intention will be to draw upon the knowledge obtained from their work undertaken, which provides an opportunity for cost savings in the model development, whilst keeping the two projects independent of each other.

As this work is required for the Local Plan Part 2 and has synergies with the Health Campus work, it is deemed appropriate that, rather than undertaking a full procurement process we appoint Aecom. This can be accommodated under the Council's contract procedure rules as an exception. This needs to be approved by the Managing Director and then reported on to Cabinet.

PRICING

The fees and expenses of the main elements of work by Aecom total;

(£17,700 (Excluding VAT)

Should data costs be incurred, Aecom will recharge these at cost + 10% to Watford Borough Council. However from their past experience it is assumed that data would be obtained through the Environment Agency in a partnership at nil cost.

The team daily rates are the same as the 5% discounted BAFO rates agreed with the LABV for the WHC project.

RECOMMENDATION

To agree the Level 2 SFRA project brief and contract submitted by Aecom (attached) without the need to go out for a more formal procurement stage.

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