

Paper on potential employment of Planning Consultant to support Waterbeach Parish Council over the planning process for the Barracks development

Background

At an early meeting with the Parish Council, the potential for some funded support to assist the Parish Council in their working with Urban&Civic was suggested. This was an approach agreed with Stukeleys Parish Council, at their request, in relation to the development of Alconbury Weald, where it was (and is still being) carried out by Tim Slater, of 3D Planning Consultants. It has been seen by both Urban&Civic and the Parish Council as a successful approach. Waterbeach PC have asked for some background information on the suggested approach and ways of working, which are set out below.

Purpose

The role of the Consultant will be to enable the Parish Council to have constructive and informed involvement when commenting upon and responding to planning matters raised by the proposed development.

The Consultant can have regular technical discussions with the Planning Consultants and Design Team, to enable them to feedback to the Parish Council, and support them in knowing the timing and approaches to best influence the planning and development process. This work sits alongside the Engagement Strategy but gives the Parish Council specifically a professional planning representative in some of the key discussions.

The Consultant supports the Engagement Strategy by seeking to ensure planning discussions based on dialogue – even where there are disagreements – to ensure the Parish influences the plans and has a voice at each stage.

Scope

Specifically, the Consultant will be expected to assist the Parish Council in: reviewing and commenting on material produced by the Urban&Civic team; and identifying potential points for discussion with the Parish Council and for submission back to the U&C team, or to the District or County Council, depending on the issues. Where the submission is made direct to third parties, U&C would welcome dialogue on the key points in advance. It is envisaged the Consultant would support the Parish Council through the planning and design process and with material planning matters.

U&C, in conjunction with RLW Estates who control the adjoining land, is preparing a Development Framework Document to help ensure a high quality and comprehensive approach for the whole new settlement and a positive response to Waterbeach. In parallel and moving forwards, U&C will be preparing its own planning application on land under its control. The consultant may need to assist on the following matters (not exhaustive):

- content of the draft Development Framework Document for the wider Waterbeach new settlement site, including objectives and principles for the development;
- the emerging U&C masterplan including proposed design vision and principles, connectivity, green spaces, housing mix/typology and other community/commercial uses;
- environmental impact matters including landscape & visual, heritage and ecology, and water management;

- Transport and Traffic – including pedestrian/cycle improvements, public transport and offsite junctions/road improvements;
- proposed phasing strategy;
- Construction impact mitigation;
- Effects on Waterbeach community and social facilities; and
- maintaining the separate identity of existing communities.

It is not expected the consultant will assist in the drafting of the Waterbeach neighbourhood Plan as part of this agreement, but they could assist the Parish Council with advice pertinent to the process or linkages between the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan, DFD and developing Outline Application, where relevant to the barracks development . It is also not expected the consultant will deal directly regarding RLW proposals but U&C will liaise with RLW on any site wide issues that are identified or discussed.

Appointment

It is suggested potential candidates are discussed and agreed to be approached, with an interview process with both the Parish Council and U&C represented to ensure both parties feel able to work with the appointed candidate.

Appointment would be for a year in the first instance to cover the period into Outline Application Submission, and would be subject to review at six months, with the potential for extension at the end of the period.

Ongoing instruction

The precise scope of work and tasks to be completed by the Consultant will be agreed in advance by U&C and the Planning Group of the Parish Council on a regular basis. This will necessarily be a function of the stage of the project and the level of planning discussion / submissions at that time. This could be facilitated through discussion at a regular slot in the Planning Group or Parish Council agenda.

Fees can be discussed on appointment, and kept under review, but a regular scope of work per month is envisaged, with peak times in the process requiring some flexibility. It is anticipated that Invoices will be submitted on a monthly basis to U&C with a copy being sent to the Parish Council for review against the monthly instruction.

Review

It is acknowledged that the process described above will need to evolve and as such review meetings will be held between U&C and the planning group of the Parish Council and the Consultant, as required, with the suggestion these occur on a quarterly basis.