



Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Garry Payne Chief Executive	Cllr Alan Vincent Resources Portfolio Holder Cllr Pete Murphy Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder	30 June 2016

Provision of specialist ecology advice on the Local Plan

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the engagement of Tameside MBC (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) to provide ecological advice on the Local Plan including an ecological assessment of draft allocations and responding to ecology issues at the examination.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Ensure a sound Local Plan
- 2.2 Compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules ensuring cost effective procurement.

3. Recommendation/s

- 3.1 That approval is given to proceed with the engagement of Tameside MBC (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) to advise on ecological matters on the Local Plan under the exemption to Contract Procedures contained within the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules on the grounds that exceptions may apply where "goods, works or services are of a specialised nature carried out by only one or a limited number of firms with no reasonably satisfactory alternatives available".

4. Background

- 4.1** It is necessary to understand the impact on habitat and species of development proposals and in particular development allocations before finalising the Local Plan. The ecological assessment of potential allocations will form an essential part of the Local Plan evidence base. Potentially ecological issues may be raised through representations on the 'Publication Draft' of the Local Plan and during the examination. It will be necessary to engage specialist advice to deal with these matters.
- 4.2** The Development Management part of the Planning Service currently obtain specialist ecology advice from Tameside MBC (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) following approval to engage the Tameside MBC (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) in 2014 for a period of three years as the Council's preferred consultants for the provision of ecological advice in respect of the consideration of planning applications.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** It is important that there is consistency in the ecology advice provided to the Council on both on the Local Plan and planning applications. Since Tameside MBC (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) is the Council's ecology advisor on planning applications, it is therefore considered to be the best organisation to also advise on the Local Plan. Tameside MBC (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) are also already familiar with ecology characteristics and issues in Wyre.
- 5.2** The cost of providing advice on the Local Plan will be based on a daily rate of £135 or an hourly rate of £18, with the estimated total cost of the contract being in the region of £5,000.

6. Delegated functions

- 6.1** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following Executive Function delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution): "To consider departures from Rules relating to financial and contractual matters if appropriate".

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	The cost of the contract which is estimated at £5000 will be met by the previously agreed Local Plan budget. The aggregate cost of the Local Plan (excluding in-house staff time) is currently estimated at £665,370.
Legal	The Council has signed a contract with Tameside MBC (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) in relation to Development Management. A separate contract for advice on the Local Plan will be entered into with Tameside MBC (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit).

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
data protection	x

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection

List of appendices

arm/ph/re/cr/16/0606rp1