



MAPPING SENSITIVE AREAS FOR BIRDS

TENDER DOCUMENT

NOVEMBER 2007



	Page
Introduction	3
Background	3
Steering Arrangements	4
Scope of Tender – Key Tasks	4
Timescales & key outcomes	5
Invitation to Tender	5
Costs	5
Tender Evaluation	5
Submission of Proposals	6
Outputs Required	6

Introduction

To define and map areas, and plot likely flight routes, of particular importance for feeding and breeding bird species in order to minimise the impact of developments that might arise as a result of Borough Council's Local Development Framework.

Background

The Borough Council published its Core Strategy Preferred Options Report for consultation on 9th July 2007. This Development Plan Document, part of the suite of documents that will make up the Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF), puts forward the preferred policy approach to the future built development of the Borough.

To determine and reduce the environmental effects of the Core Strategy a Sustainability Appraisal and an Appropriate Assessment (AA)¹ Screening Study were undertaken. AA aims to ensure that plans, such as the Core Strategy, will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of European designated nature conservation sites. Such sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs)², Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)³ and Ramsar Sites⁴.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Study assessed the potential impacts of preferred options on European and Ramsar Sites within the Borough and on sites within a 'zone of influence' of the Core Strategy. These sites included all European and Ramsar sites in neighbouring Local Planning Authority jurisdictions. As such, well-known sites outside of the Borough, including the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA and the North Pennine Moors SPA, were considered as potentially sensitive to changes in land use in Sedgefield Borough.

The findings of the Appropriate Assessment Screening Study included that the Core Strategy should adopt certain avoidance measures to minimise any potential for bird collisions with, or disturbance from, wind turbines for a group of four species⁵.

¹ Appropriate Assessment is also known as Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

² Special Protection Areas are sites designated under the EC Birds Directive for rare or vulnerable bird species, for regularly occurring migratory bird species, and for the protection of wetlands, especially wetlands of international importance.

³ Special Areas for Conservation are protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive that make a significant contribution to conserving the habitat types and species (excluding birds) identified in Annexes I and II of the Directive.

⁴ Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Although they are not part of the European Site (Natura 2000) network the Government has stated that Ramsar sites should receive the same level of protection as SACs.

⁵ The screening exercise determined that for most species listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive no significant impacts could occur. However, it was not possible to determine whether the Core Strategy, in combination with other plans and projects, would result in detrimental effects on four species of bird at levels of significance in relation to the Conservation Objectives of European Sites. The four species identified were golden plover, peregrine falcon, merlin and hen harrier.

The avoidance measures proposed include the following:

- The boundaries of the most valuable bird sites should be clearly defined during the development of the LDF;
- No wind farms should be located within 600m of valuable bird sites;
- Key flight lines are to be mapped to inform the further development of policy relating to the location of wind farms.

Steering Arrangements

A steering group containing representatives from the appointed consultant and Council Officers will manage the project. To keep the project on time, it will be important for this group to meet on a regular basis to ensure that both parties are satisfied with progress and identify any problems that could lead to delay. To this extent, it is vital that the appointed consultant develops a project management structure that identifies key milestones and dates for their delivery.

Scope of Tender – Key Tasks

The key tasks of the project are:

1. To define and map the locations of the Borough's most important sites for bird species that are potentially vulnerable to wind turbine development, including those which were identified in the Appropriate Assessment;
2. To identify the boundaries of the most important sites through appraisal of habitat in the vicinity of the most important locations;
3. To provide bird species lists and brief assessments of condition for the most important locations;
4. To map the likely principle flight corridors across the Borough of importance to birds potentially affected by wind turbine development, including species identified in the UK and Durham Biodiversity Action Plans and golden plover, peregrine, hen harrier and merlin; and,
5. To present data in a single report.

Important sites are to be confined to the area of Sedgefield Borough, however it is recognised that bird flight routes may be to sites beyond the Borough's boundaries. The report will identify likely routes and propose reasons why birds are using these routes. Where it is possible to infer connections to European and Ramsar Sites these should also be recorded.

Due to the sensitivity of data, an agreed means of ensuring that nesting locations are not disclosed in the report should be agreed.

Timescales & key outcomes

The appointed consultant will be required to set out, at the outset, when each of the Key Tasks will be completed. It will be important that the conclusions of the Report are clearly identified and developed, as this will allow the Council to identify key areas of constraint in the preparation of Local Development Documents.

Invitation to Tender

This brief will enable consultants to submit a proposal for the scheme. This should include:

- a. proposed methodology;
- b. time to be spent on the study by each named individual involved, including details of any sub-consultants (e.g. bird specialists) to be used to fulfil the requirements of the commission;
- c. overall timetable of works and the expected fees for the study;
- d. resume of experience of similar studies;
- e. cost analysis of the study broken down into individual elements, such as Site Audits;
- f. a Risk Assessment of the various elements of the study e.g. in terms of long-term sickness cover and staff leaving and the identification of whether contingencies are required;
- g. method of liaising with the client during the project.
- h. compliance with the Mapping Service Agreement Framework with respect to a Contract Licence(s) for the use of Service Provider(s) data.

Costs

The tender is required to provide a fixed price quotation (exclusive of VAT) for the Mapping Sensitive Areas for Birds in the Borough of Sedgely Project.

It is suggested that the full payment will be made after submission of the final report, within 30 days from presentation of invoice in each case, subject to the adherence to the project's timeframe.

Tender Evaluation

The consultant will be awarded following the tendering process. It will be on the basis of the best value and generally most economically advantageous to the Councils. The award criteria of the Contract will be based on price (40%) and quality (60%):

Price	40%
Quality	60%
Quality will be assessed regarding:	
Resources	10%
Project plan outline	5%
Examples of previous Bird Study work	10%
Methodology	10%

Staff experience and expertise	15%
Details of sub-contractors	5%
References and experience	5%

The Council will need to be satisfied that the tender can provide a robust and high quality study able to withstand close scrutiny at a public examination.

The Council does not bind itself to accept the lowest tender or any of the tenders received and will not be responsible for any costs incurred in preparing the tender submissions.

2 copies of the tender documents must be submitted.

Submission of Proposals

All contact from shortlisted consultants should be with Chris Myers, Forward Planning Manager at Sedgefield Borough Council. Proposals should be based on the information in this brief. It is not anticipated that further information will be made available. However, if any additional information is made available it will be released to all parties.

Selected consultancies may be asked to meet with Council Officers before a selection is made.

Proposals should be submitted for the attention of the Chief Executive Officer at Sedgefield Borough Council by no later than 12.00pm Friday **** 2007 and the preferred consultant will be appointed thereafter.

The final report will be required by 31st March 2008.

Outputs Required

The selected consultant will be expected to provide the following outputs:

- i. A formal presentation to the sponsors of the projects' conclusions
- ii. A draft report to be presented on CD;
- iii. 4 final reports (2 bound and 2 single side loose leaf) and on CD; and,
- iv. The CDs to be in Microsoft Office format for word processing, spreadsheet, database and GIS shapefiles.

References

Sedgefield Borough Council (2007), Local Development Framework: Appropriate Assessment of Sedgefield Borough Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Screening Report.