1. Introduction and context

Guildford Borough Council (the Council) is seeking to appoint a consultant to undertake a master planning exercise for Guildford Town Centre and identified hinterland (the ‘study area’). The key output will be a Guildford Town Centre Master plan.

Guildford is the county town of Surrey and is an established regional centre within the south east with a resident population of approximately 73,779 (just over half of the total population in the borough).

Guildford town centre is the largest retail, service, administrative and commercial centre in Surrey (measured by the amount of floorspace).

The town centre is focused around two linear features, the River Wey and the High Street that rises up the valley side from Town Bridge. The centre has striking topography, relating to its origins and historic growth in the River Wey valley and along its eastern valley sides. Open countryside is only a short walk to the south and south east of the centre. It is renowned for its picturesque historic High Street and lanes off it, known as “gates”, and the attractive views out to the surrounding countryside. These natural and historic features are a vital part of the special character of the town centre.

Guildford town centre has many assets, and it has proved to be one of the most resilient centres in the country in times of economic downturn, primarily due to its largely affluent catchment population and attractive environment.

Nevertheless, centres do not stay the same and are constantly changing. As the ways that we shop and spend our leisure time change, and nearby similar sized centres such as Kingston, Reading and Woking improve, so must Guildford town centre. As well as providing for shopping and employment needs, we must improve the overall experience for people visiting Guildford town centre. Improvements needed include the leisure daytime and evening economy, and the built and natural environment in certain areas (including the riverside) and the dominance of traffic congestion and surface car parks.

Study Area

The study area is shown in Figure 1.

Planning policy framework, existing evidence base and background documents

A new Local Plan to 2031 is currently in preparation and a consultation was recently undertaken on the Draft Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites (July 2014) document. This document includes the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the borough, and identifies proposed strategic site allocations. It also includes a proposed policy (Policy 15) and site allocations (20 – 42) for Guildford Town Centre.

Alongside the draft Local Plan consultation, the Council consulted on the draft Guildford Town Centre Vision 2014, produced by consultants Allies and Morrison. This identifies opportunities for the town centre.
The master planning exercise will build on these, and when complete, will form part of the Evidence Base that will inform the next iteration of the Draft Guildford borough Local Plan and a subsequent Guildford Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The next iteration of the Draft Guildford borough Local Plan will cover both strategy and sites and also development management policies.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Guildford Town Centre Masterplanning Technical Assessment will be a non-statutory document and will not form part of the Development Plan for Guildford borough.

The Council will also commission a parallel study, the Guildford Town Centre Highway Assessment Study (GOTCHA Study), to identify a deliverable transport strategy for Guildford town centre and its immediate approaches. This study will be undertaken in collaboration with Surrey County Council and, as required, with other infrastructure providers including the Highways Agency, Network Rail and train and bus operators. The GOTCHA Study project team will work closely with the appointed consultants for the Guildford Town Centre Master Plan. They will provide technical advice on the transport impacts of emerging proposals as set out below in this specification.

Key items in the existing evidence base and background document include:

- **Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003** (Guildford Borough Council, 2003)
- **National Planning Policy Framework** (DCLG, 2012)
- **National Planning Practice Guidance** (DCLG)
- **Draft Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites** (Guildford Borough Council, July 2014)
- **Initial feedback on the draft Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites consultation** (Guildford Borough Council, October 2014)
- **Guildford Town Centre Vision 2014** (Draft document) (Allies and Morrison, July 2014)
- **Allies and Morrison review of representations on the Guildford Town Centre Vision 2014**
- **Guildford borough Community Involvement in Planning** (Guildford Borough Council, 2013)
- **The Guildford Community Engagement Strategy 2011** (Guildford Borough Council, 2011)
- **Guildford Town Centre Vitality and Viability Report** (Guildford Borough Council, 2011)
- **Retail and Leisure Study** (Roger Tym & Partners, May 2011)
- **Guildford Interim Town Centre Framework** (Guildford Borough Council, September 2012)
- **Town Centre Area Action Plan**
- **Town Centre Development Study: Guildford** (Cushman and Wakefield, 2010)
- **Corporate Plan April 2013 – March 2016** (Guildford Borough Council, October 2013)
- **Guildford Town Centre Conservation Character Appraisal** (Guildford Borough Council, 2006)
- **Bridge Street Conservation Area Appraisal** (Guildford Borough Council, 2003)
- **Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan 2014 – 2020** (EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership, 2014)
- **Enterprise M3 Delivery Plan 2014 – 2020** (EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership, 2014)
- **Guildford Borough Economic Strategy 2013-2031** (Guildford Borough Council, 2013)
- **Guildford Economic Development Study** (University of Surrey, 2009)
- **Visitor Strategy 2014 -2020** (Guildford Borough Council, 2014)
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- **Guildford Borough Parking Strategy** (Guildford Borough Council, 2003)
- **Guildford Town Centre Parking Strategic Review: Stage 1: Parking Demand** (Steer Davies Gleave, 2013)
- **Guildford Town Centre Parking Strategic Review: Stage 2: Car Parking Management Proposals** (Guildford Borough Council, 2013)
- **Vehicle Parking Standards SPD** (Guildford Borough Council, 2006)
- **Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study** (Arup, April 2014)
- **Surrey Transport Plan** (Surrey County Council, April 2012)
- Surrey Transport Plan: Guildford Borough Draft Local Transport Strategy & Forward Programme (Surrey County Council, forthcoming November 2014) (copy to be provided upon appointment)
- **Options Growth Scenarios Transport Assessment Report** (Surrey County Council, January 2014)
- **Guildford borough Infrastructure baseline** (Guildford Borough Council, July 2013)
- **London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy Report** (Network Rail, July 2011)
- **Surrey Future Congestion Programme** (Surrey County Council, 2014)
- **Surrey Rail Strategy: Surrey Rail Strategy Report** (Arup, 2013)
- Guildford Gyratory: Enhancing Movement and Place (Atkins, 2013) (copy to be provided upon appointment)
- Other publically-available data and information sources: National Travel Survey, Local area walking and cycling statistics, Census, DfT Core Accessibility Indicators, Vehicle Licensing Statistics.

2. **Project aim and requirements**

**Project aim**

To prepare a Master Plan for Guildford Town Centre and identified hinterland. This will recommend proposals for land use, buildings, spaces, and a movement strategy, and match these proposals to a delivery strategy.

The delivery strategy will recommend actions and projects to guide future private and public sector investment.

The master planning exercise and the resulting proposals will be commercially based, aspirational yet deliverable, and driven by a thorough understanding of the retail, residential and leisure market in Guildford town centre.
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Project requirements

The recommended proposals should:

- Identify property and transport/movement development opportunities.
- Promote active use of the riverside and the River Wey
- Improve pedestrian and cycle links to and along the River Wey and to key destinations including Guildford Cathedral, the University of Surrey’s Stag Hill and Manor Park campuses, the Royal Surrey County Hospital and the Surrey Research Park, and the wider town and area.
- Improve the pedestrian experience in the town centre
- Promote high quality and environmentally sustainable new architecture and public realm including the palette of materials, including frontages and other urban design opportunities for sites and/or areas
- Promote a balance of residential, commercial and retail uses
- Improve the evening economy
- Raise the profile of, and better integrate, the town centre’s many heritage assets including Guildford Castle and its gardens and Guildford Museum, and those on and closer to the High Street
- Demonstrate maximum appropriate densities for sites, showing scale, massing and capacity
- Facilitate access by sustainable modes, tackle traffic congestion in and on the approaches to Guildford town centre, and make appropriate arrangements for servicing, resulting from an iterative dialogue and testing with the GOTCHA project team.
- Propose the mechanisms by which a local delivery body could be created and set out its role and terms of reference.
- Propose a delivery strategy including a viability assessment. The delivery strategy will demonstrate proposed phases, including a temporary uses strategy which identifies which sites might effectively accommodate pop-up and meanwhile uses. It will also identify delivery partners, funding sources, links to other projects, and risks.
- Demonstrate how the views of stakeholders and the community have been considered and addressed.

3. Scope of the project

Stage 1: Inception and Analysis
Indicative timescale: January 2015.

Overview: The consultant will:

- Review the existing and emerging evidence base and background documents and understand parallel projects being undertaken as part of the preparation of a new Guildford borough Local Plan.
- Develop an understanding of the current commercial and property context through meeting with Cushman and Wakefield, the Council’s retained property advisors.
- Develop an understanding of sites, including strategic site allocations in the Draft Guildford borough Local Plan, and other sites and areas, which could provide opportunities for the master planning exercise.
- Review of character, public realm and other urban design issues, with identification of character areas and opportunity areas.
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- Review of transport/movement issues, including supply and demand considerations and externalities, in respect of all modes (cars including car parking, LGVs and HGVs including servicing, buses, coaches and taxis including waiting facilities, stops and layover facilities, pedestrians, cyclists, and rail), with identification of options for future investigation.
- Review the connectivity of Guildford railway station with the town centre and bus and coach operators’ market aspirations including interchange requirements.
- Identify statutory undertakings, including supply and demand considerations and externalities, which should be considered further through the master planning exercise.
- Identify potential sources of funding to realise the delivery strategy which will be developed through the master planning exercise.
- Develop a strategy for engaging and consulting with stakeholders and the community, including hard-to-reach groups. This will be carried out in line with the Council’s best practice as set out in its Community Engagement Strategy and Community Involvement in Planning. The Council will provide a list of stakeholders with contact details at the start of the project.

Outputs:
- Scoping Report and Project Plan, including, where appropriate, decisions required from the client. First issue to be provided by 31 January 2015. Allow for two revisions.
- Minutes of meetings. Allow for one revision.

Stage 2: Preparation of Draft Guildford Town Centre Master planning Technical Assessment
Indicative timescale: February-April 2015.

Overview: The consultant will:
- Develop proposals for sites, quantifying capacity by uses and access points, and proposals for network changes including transport/movement development opportunities, for iterative dialogue and testing with the GOTCHA project team.
- Develop a Draft Guildford Town Centre Master planning Technical Assessment.
- Undertake parallel assessments of social and environmental issues as follows:
  i. Strategic environmental assessment (SEA): in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No.1633), which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC). The consultant will use a receptor and impact pathway focused method of SEA, whereby the likely significant environmental effects of the strategy will be identified and evaluated with reference to the baseline situation for each receptor.
  ii. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): in accordance with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Statutory Instrument 2010 No.490), in respect of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). To include consultation with Natural England, with the aim of achieving the approval required in advance of the strategy being adopted.
  iii. Health Impact Assessment (HIA): in accordance with current good practice in respect of transport focused HIA, in a level of detail appropriate and proportionate to that of the strategy.
  iv. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): in accordance with current good practice in respect of transport focused EqIA, in a level of detail appropriate and proportionate to that of the strategy.
- Engage with key stakeholders including developers/landowners of key sites, bus and coach
operators, taxi representative group, Network Rail, South West Trains and other train operating companies, Surrey County Council, the Highways Agency, amenity and transport user groups and business groups.

- Evening presentations to two formal meetings of the Council.

The parallel social and environmental assessments described above will ensure that these issues are properly considered in the preparation of the Draft Guildford Town Centre Master Plan. Nevertheless, for the avoidance of doubt, the Guildford Town Centre Master plan will be a non-statutory document and will not form part of the Development Plan for Guildford borough.

Outputs:
- Draft Guildford Town Centre Master Plan. First issue to be provided by 30 April 2015. Allow for two revisions.
- Technical report demonstrating the iterative dialogue and testing with the GOTCHA project team of the emerging proposals forming the Draft Guildford Town Centre Master Plan. Allow for two revisions.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment – Scoping Report. Allow for two revisions.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report. Allow for two revisions.
- Health Impact Assessment. The consultant may incorporate this within the Environmental Report. Allow for two revisions.
- Report on engagement activities. Allow for two revisions.
- Minutes/notes of meetings.

Stage 3: Consultation on Draft Guildford Town Centre Masterplanning Technical Assessment

Indicative timescale: June-July 2015.

Overview: The consultant will:
- Stakeholder and community consultation on the Draft Guildford Town Centre Master Plan in line with the Council’s best practice as set out in its Community Engagement Strategy and Community Involvement in Planning. The Council will provide a list of stakeholders with contact details at the start of the project. Details of proposed consultation strategy to be provided.
- Review representations and summarise key issues arising from consultation.
- Provide recommendations and seek the client’s agreement to proposed changes to be made to the Draft Guildford Town Centre Master Plan.
- Provide revised proposals for testing with the GOTCHA project team.
- Finalise Guildford Town Centre Master Planning.
- Prepare a consultation statement setting out the consultation process and summarising key issues and how these have been addressed.
- Evening presentations to two formal meetings of the Council.

Outputs:
- Guildford Town Centre Masterplanning First issue to be provided by 31 July 2015. Allow for two revisions. The consultant should provide 10 bound copies of the final document along
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- Technical report demonstrating the further iterative dialogue and testing with the GOTCHA project team of the final proposals forming the Guildford Town Centre Master Plan. Allow for two revisions.
- Consultation statement. Allow for two revisions.
- Minutes/notes of meetings.

Project meetings with client
The consultant’s project manager will attend fortnightly progress meetings with the client at the Council’s Millmead offices in Guildford.