

## **Delegated Officer Report**

**Decision Maker:** Emma Barton, Director of Economy, Skills and Neighbourhoods

**Date of Decision:** 28.11.2019

**Subject:** Oldham Mills Strategy

**Report Author:** Georgina Brownridge, Strategic Planning

**Ward (s):** Boroughwide

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**Reason for the decision:** To approve appointment of consultants ELG Heritage to undertake an Oldham Mills Strategy.

**Summary:** The purpose of this commission is to prepare an Oldham Mills Strategy.

It has been identified during the early engagement (Regulation 18) with Historic England on the Local Plan review that there is a need for up to date evidence on the historic environment to support the Local Plan. Further discussions have led to an Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan being prepared (CAAMP) and the need for a Mills Strategy to be established in Oldham to ensure a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment as required by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Oldham has a rich industrial heritage with over 100 textile mills remaining. They form a unique part of Oldham's landscape, and with the topography of the town are important when considering views and vistas from higher grounds.

Many of the mills are in active use, offering low cost premises to certain employment uses, residential use, retail or for social uses such as sports clubs. However, some mills have been derelict for many years or are underused with upper storeys not in use, which puts them at risk of falling into poor condition, making conversion more difficult in the future. They are also often close to existing residential properties and may not always be in the best location for their use.

The mills are an important resource; however, they need to be managed to ensure a sustainable future in making the best use of the mills going forward.

Oldham's housing requirement in the draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF, 2019) is 14,290 homes (752 homes per year) between 2018 and 2037. The latest housing requirement set out by the Government's standardised methodology equates to 692 homes per year. Finding sites for this amount of homes is a key challenge for Oldham over the next 15 years. NPPF encourages the re-use of brownfield land and underused buildings and so we need to be clear what role our mills can play notwithstanding that they may also continue to play an important role to meet employment needs or other uses.

Essentially the Mills Strategy needs to set out which unlisted mills are no longer suitable and may have potential for alternative development such as residential development and which mills should remain and how we can deliver to ensure their sustainable future.

Discussions with Historic England and evidence from the Oldham Town Centre CAAMP have also suggested that it is important to understand the landscape contribution of mills in Oldham, to identify individual mills and/or clusters that make a highly significant landscape contribution to the character of Oldham.

The Mills Strategy will consist of the following steps:

Stage 1: Landscape overview

Stage 2: Assessment against criteria looking at historic significance and sense of place;

economic impact and potential; and economic impact and housing potential.

Stage 3: Needs analysis – using evidence to inform what is needed in the area.

Stage 4: Selection of Priority Sites – this stage will rank the mills from high to low priority.

Stage 5: The final stage is the development of an overall strategy for the mills and action plans for the mills categorised as ‘High priority’ overall.

The strategy should outline how we are taking forward the findings from stages one to four for each mill category. It should outline what this means for the mills going forward and make policy recommendations on each mill category, landscape analysis, local lists etc.

The Action Plans will include approximately 1-2 detailed pages for each mill within the ‘high priority’ category with the identified potential use(s) such as housing, different types of employment, culture, hospitality, community uses etc.

Listed mills and mills in conservation areas will not form part of the action plans as there is a presumption against demolition and they are subject to the requirements of NPPF and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Mills that are categorised as being ‘Medium priority’ may be treated with more flexibility in terms of their future use.

Mills that are categorised as being ‘low priority’ hold less significance and offer opportunities for their reuse, these mills may be appropriate to demolish subject to planning permission.

The Request for tenders was released to the open market with a closing date of the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019. In total ten tenders were received.

Bidders in alphabetical order were:

- Aspinall Verdi
- Carter Jonas
- Cass Associates
- Colliers International

- Cushman & Wakefield
- DAY Architectural
- ELG Heritage
- Hawkins Brown
- Lambert Smith Hampton
- Sanderson Weatherall

The evaluation exercise has sought to balance the issues of quality and price to ensure that the chosen bidder offers the most economically advantageous quotation for the Council.

The evaluation criteria, and the associated weightings, which were utilised in this assessment are: -

- Relevant Experience and Contract Examples: Pass / Fail
- Project Team: 20%
- Methodology: 40%
- Social Value: 5%
- Price: 35%

The evaluation was undertaken by strategic planning (Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart, Georgina Brownridge and Clare Davison), regeneration (Brian Enright) and Historic England (Emily Hrycan).

The following scores were agreed by the evaluators for the ten suppliers that submitted a bid:

- Aspinall Verdi - 57.25%
- Carter Jonas – Fail
- Cass Associates – 56.35%
- Colliers – 55.00%
- Cushman & Wakefield – 53.39%
- DAY Architectural – 48.88%
- **ELG Heritage – 73.47%**
- Hawkins Brown – 53.02%
- Lambert Smith Hampton – 49.51%
- Sanderson Weatherall – 34.59%

The outcome of the evaluation process was that ELG Heritage submitted the tender offering the most economically advantageous quote in relation to cost and quality.

The cost of the Mills Strategy undertaken by ELG Heritage is £49,425.

Historic England have agreed to contribute £15,000, towards the Mills Strategy. Oldham Council will lead the commission and Historic England will take an overseeing role to ensure that they jointly satisfied with the Mills Strategy.

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):***

*The alternative options considered are:*

- Option 1: To approve the appointment of ELG Heritage to prepare a Mills Strategy. This will allow evidence to be prepared to inform the Local Plan review and will identify actions for the future use of mills.
- Option 2 - To not approve the appointment of ELG Heritage to prepare a Mills Strategy. This will mean that up to date evidence is not prepared to inform the Local Plan review, which will limit the effectiveness of plan policies. It will also mean that there is no strategy for how to treat Oldham's mill and their future use going forward or actions plans to help secure their successful re-use.

***Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.***

N/A

***Recommendation(s):***

To approve the appointment of ELG Heritage to prepare an Oldham Mills Strategy.

***Implications:***

***What are the financial implications?***

The Councils contribution to the proposal in this report to produce a Mill Strategy can be fully funded from reserves set aside for Oldham's Local Plan.

As Historic England are contributing £15,000 toward the strategy, Oldham's contribution of the funding will total £34,425.

(Jamie Kelly)

***What are the legal implications?***

The Council has followed its own Contract

Procedure Rules and followed an open tender process to select the most economically advantageous tender. (Elizabeth Cunningham Doyle)

What are the **procurement** implications?

An open procurement process was facilitated in-line with EU Treaty Principles and Council CPRs. A consultancy contract will now be executed with the successful consultant organisation. All required documentation will be provided to Historic England to demonstrate that a fair and open process was facilitated. (Dan Cheetham, Procurement).

What are the **Human Resources** implications?

Not applicable.

**Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment** attached or not required because (please give reason)

Not applicable. Will feed into the Local Plan review which will be subject to an EqIA.

What are the **property** implications

There are no direct corporate landlord property implications with the proposal of this report” (Peter Wood)

**Risks:**

None received.

**Co-operative agenda**

The work will form part of the Local Plan evidence base and will provide a positive strategy for heritage in a transparent way.

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget?

Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No

**There are no background papers for this report**

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<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
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	G.Brownridge
<b>Date:</b>	28/11/2019

In consultation with Director

Signed :  Date: 28.11.2019

Emma Barton, Director of Economy