

Meeting:	Wealdstone Regeneration Advisory Panel
Date:	8 th June Meeting
Subject:	Wealdstone Vitality Study and Traffic study
Responsible Officer:	Anna Robinson
Contact Officer:	Stephen Roberts
Portfolio Holders:	Councillors O'Dell; Burchell; Nolan
Key Decision:	
Status:	

Reason for report

The 25TH April meeting was advised that a budget was approved and a brief prepared for a vitality study to identify solutions to the matters set out in the report presented to the panel ~ item 223. Nine consultants had been approached and a strong level of interest received from eight of the nine. It was considered impractical to interview eight parties and therefore, the target interview date was postponed until 16th June and the intervening period used to probe the consultants as to their suitability based on their experience and approach and to thereby produce a more manageable shortlist.

Benefits

The vitality study must build upon the work that has been done before; to avoid both extra cost of a fresh analysis and to be able to comment critically and learn from past initiatives. Previous studies between 1998 and 2002 carried out principally by the GLE resulted in initiatives such as the establishment of WAC, the blooming Wealdstone campaign, street wardens and better cleaning, traffic initiatives and upgrading the station (lifts etc). Certain other initiatives such as employment and training and business support had a low take up and we need to understand why this was and whether these are relevant today. Most importantly, the traffic study must work alongside the vitality study and integrate fully with it. A holistic review of all past and proposed traffic initiatives must be undertaken to provide a "joined up approach. This traffic study must consider the impact of the proposed Byron Park development on traffic generation and also address trader's concerns about restricting car access to the High Street.

Cost of Proposals

Returns from consultants indicate that the figure will be in the region of £30,000 for the vitality study

Risks

The vitality study will commence shortly after the selection of the preferred consultant by the interviewing body selected by WRAP and will take approx. three months to report on suitable actions.

The traffic consultancy could take longer to put in place. It will need to operate both at a strategic/planning level, but will also need to resolve the complex legal, consultative and design criteria of “on the ground” traffic junction design to achieve the objectives.

At present, the portfolio holder has approved the engagement of the traffic consultant, subject to a budget cost. We are awaiting confirmation on whether we can use the services of the council’s preferred external consultant, who has demonstrated elsewhere a capability to deliver on similar projects, or if we need to tender the project. We hope to have confirmation in the next week.

Legal Comment

Selection and engagement of any consultant should be in accordance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations through appropriate delegation.

Finance Comment

Funding of £30k for Developing Vitality Profiles was approved at February Cabinet (Growth item) to enable improved bids for funding. Costs outlined must be met from and contained within this budget.