

Notice of Non-Key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Approval to extend the commissions for Conservation Area Appraisals and Specialist Planning Support and to accept and spend the Green Belt Review Fund.
Decision Maker:	Helen Oakerbee - Director of Planning & Public Protection
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Graham Williamson - Cabinet Member for Regeneration
ELT Lead:	Helen Oakerbee - Director of Planning and Public Protection
Report Author and contact details:	Linda Beard Senior Planning Policy Officer, Development Planning linda.beard@havering.gov.uk 01708 433131
Policy context:	National Planning Policy Framework 2024 London Plan 2021 Havering Local Plan 2016-2031
Financial summary:	<p>This report seeks approval to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the existing commission for Conservation Area Appraisals. The fee for this work is £25,958.34 and will be funded from within the Local Plan cost centre. Extend the existing commission for specialist support for planning applications. The fee for this work for 2025/26 is £60,000 and will be funded from within the Local Plan cost centre. Accept and spend grant funding of £70,000 from the Government for a Green Belt Review.
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	Places

Non-key Executive Decision

Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	The decision will be exempt from call in as it is a Non key Decision
--	--

Non-key Executive Decision

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy X

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This report seeks approval to:

1. Commission Purcell Limited to provide Conservation Area Appraisals through the Council's existing contract with Constellia Limited at the value of £25,958.34.
2. Commission Essex County Council to provide Specialist Support for Planning (Heritage, Ecology, Landscaping and Trees) through the Council's existing contract with Constellia Limited at the value of up to £60,000.
3. Note that on the 17th of January 2025 the Council accepted a Green Belt Review Fund of £70,000 from the Government for a Green Belt Review.
4. Spend the grant funding money from the Green Belt Review Fund to commission Land Use Consultants Limited to support the review of the Local Plan through the Council's existing contract with Constellia Limited at the value of up to £70,000.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 Responsibility for Functions

Section 3: Functions Delegated to Officers

Scheme 3.3.5 Specific powers of the Strategic Director of Place

2. Planning

2.1 To exercise all powers and functions on behalf of the Council and to meet all obligations imposed upon the Council pursuant to any planning legislation, except where such powers, functions and obligations are reserved to the Council or its committees.

Scheme 3.3.3 Powers common to all Strategic Directors

5. Grants

5.1 To apply for, accept and thereafter spend / allocate any grant funding connected with their directorate provided that any match funding or residual liabilities can be met from the existing budget of the directorate. For the avoidance of doubt this delegation shall allow the acceptance of any grant offered / allocated to the Council without any application.

Functions 3.3.3. and 3.3.5 sub-delegated from Strategic Director of Place to Director of Planning and Public Protection on 3 April 2024.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. Conservation Areas

- 1.1 Conservation Areas (CAs) are areas that have been designated because of their special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 1.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas. Section 71 of the Act requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas and requires proposals to be submitted for consideration in a public meeting in the area to which they relate.
- 1.3 Havering has 11 Conservation Areas, each with an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP). The CAAMPs for all the Conservation Areas require review and updating. Due to the number of Conservation Areas, the work is being carried out in tranches, and began with the Romford, Rainham and Gidea Park Conservation Areas.
- 1.4 In 2024 consultants Purcell Ltd. were appointed, under Matrix MM, to update the CAAMPs for the Romford, Rainham and Gidea Park Conservation Areas. The updated CAAMPs were adopted by Cabinet on 17 September 2025.
- 1.5 Three further CAs have been selected for updating: Havering-atte-Bower, The Langtons and RAF Hornchurch.
- 1.6 The Council has appointed Purcell to undertake this work and Purcell will be appointed through Constellia.
- 1.7 The cost for the work will be £25,958.34, and will be met within the existing Local Plan budget. The project started on 6 August 2025 and will be completed by 31 March 2026. The Council will pay the fee for the work to Constellia.

2. Specialist Support for Planning (Heritage, Ecology, Landscaping and Arboriculture)

- 2.1 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has a statutory responsibility to process and determine planning applications that are submitted by residents, landowners and developers. In order to robustly assess a planning application and ensure the best outcomes there is often a need for the LPA to seek expert advice in relation to particular specialisms. The specialist nature of the advice means that it can only

Non-key Executive Decision

be provided by suitably qualified and experienced experts. This expertise is not available within the Council and external support is therefore necessary.

2.2 The LPA has commissioned Place Services, which is a service provided by Essex County Council to provide advice on the following specialisms:

- Heritage, including advice on listed building applications and proposals within conservation areas
- Ecology, including advice on the impact of proposals on protected sites and species
- Landscaping
- Arboriculture, including advice on the impact of proposals on trees and ensuring they are protected during and after construction.

2.3 The cost of the commission for 2025/26 is anticipated to be up to £60,000. Full spend of this budget is dependent on the quantity and type of planning applications received. The Council will pay the fee for the work to Constellia. This procurement has previously been managed via Matrix MM which was the Council's preferred procurement partner for professional services.

3. Green Belt Grant

3.1 As part of the evidence base to support the review of the Local Plan, a Green Belt review was commissioned in 2024, Land Use Consultants Ltd. were appointed to conduct the review and this work was commenced.

3.2 In December 2024, the Government updated the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This included making changes to national policy on Green Belt and creating a new classification of Grey Belt. The new assessment methodology meant that the Green Belt review would need to include a Grey Belt review.

3.3 Early in 2025, the Government invited local planning authorities to apply for funding to assist with the costs of Green Belt Reviews to reflect the changes in national policy and the new Grey Belt designation.

3.4 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) made direct grant funding to a maximum of £70,000 available to planning authorities in January 2025 for reviewing Green Belt and Grey Belt. The London Borough of Havering submitted an expression of interest and was allocated the maximum amount, provided via Section 31 Local Government Act 2003 powers.

3.5 MHCLG monitoring of the spend is required alongside involvement in a wider learning programme to help MHCLG to better understand whether the funding achieves its stated aims and to help inform future policy, programmes and funding. Land Use Consultants Limited is best placed to provide a refreshed Green Belt review as, given its previous involvement, the report will build on existing knowledge and analysis. The Council will utilise the full grant of £70,000 to provide the refreshed review. The Council will pay the fee for the work to Constellia.

Non-key Executive Decision

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The option of not commissioning updating of the CAAMPs has been rejected as failure to update CAAMPs could lead to failure to comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The option of not commissioning for specialist Planning Advice has been rejected as it would significantly impact the ability of the LPA to appraise specialist technical components of submitted planning applications.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Not Applicable

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Linda Beard

Designation: Senior Planning Policy Officer

Signature: *Linda Beard*

Date: 5 January 2026

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has a duty to formulate proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Council is making decisions to commission appraisals, specialist support and reviews relating to conservation areas for that purpose.

The Council has an existing contract with Constellia Limited. The contract enables the Council to commission work to be carried out through work orders.

The Council has received grant fund money from the Green Belt Review Fund. It must spend the grant fund money to ensure it is well equipped and supported to implement the changes in the National Planning Policy Framework in accordance with the requirements of the Green Belt Review Fund. The Council is making a decision to spend the grant fund money for that purpose.

Therefore, the Council can commission the work for these projects.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans (CAAMPS)

CAAMPS are required for the 11 Conservation Areas within Havering. The Council has a duty to review and update these existing plans and has recently done so for the first three. The next tranche for 2025/26 covers Havering-atte-Bower, The Langtons and RAF Hornchurch.

The cost is £25,958 and will be funded by the Local Plan service area. For continuity the existing consultants, Purcell, will be utilised via Constellia.

Specialist Planning Support

An extension of commissions for specialist planning support (Heritage, Ecology, Landscaping and Arboriculture) via Constellia is required to cover these specialist areas concerning appropriate advice in planning applications. Place Services (a traded service of Essex County Council) is currently providing these services.

The estimated spend based on historic spend and anticipated demand is £60,000 for 2025/26; actual spend may vary depending on planning application volumes. The cost will be funded from the Local Plan service area.

Green Belt Review Funding Grant

The Green Belt Review Grant has been received from MHCLG for £70,000. The grant has been made available to planning authorities for reviewing Green Belt and Grey Belt designations in view of updated policies in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The grant has been provided via Section 31 Local

Non-key Executive Decision

Government Act powers and whilst there are monitoring conditions there is no obligation to repay the funding. The service has currently committed two thirds of this funding with the remainder as contingency with the intention to complete the work in 2025/26.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The recommendations made in this report do not appear to give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

The Council seeks to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all in all situations.

There are no equalities and social inclusion implications and risks associated with this decision.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is not required.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no environmental or climate change implications from this decision.

Non-key Executive Decision

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Havering Council is committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of residents.

There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the proposed decisions.

The updating of the CAAMPs will help to protect and enhance cultural heritage and maintain the quality of the built environment in the Conservation Areas. Research identifies a modest but not insignificant impact that cultural heritage can have on wellbeing, with links between proximity to cultural heritage and reported life satisfaction. Particular emphasis is placed on the benefits of cultural heritage that is accessible and integrated within our daily lives, which would include areas covered by local CAAMPs.

The Green Belt review will help ensure that the Green Belt is protected appropriately and that sites suitable for development, in accordance with the updated NPPF policy on Green Belt and Grey Belt, can be identified. This offers the opportunity to protect and improve health and wellbeing by a) ensuring that residents continue to experience the benefits of access and exposure to open green spaces and b) supporting resident access to high-quality, affordable accommodation in the medium to long term by enabling new development sites on the Grey Belt to be brought forward where appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

None

Non-key Executive Decision

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed 

Name: Helen Oakerbee, Director of Planning and Public Protection

Date: 19 January 2026

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____