

### **1.11. Area Plan for the East Site Assessment Framework Agreement – Carrying out and costs of assessments**

The Hon. Member for Onchan (Mr Callister) to ask the Minister for Policy and Reform:

*Who carried out the site assessments under the Area Plan for the East Site Assessment Framework Agreement; and how much the assessments cost?*

**The Speaker:** Question 11, I call on the Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Callister.

**Mr Callister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Could I ask the Minister for Policy and Reform who carried out the site assessments under the Area Plan for the East Site Assessment Framework Agreement; and how much the assessments cost?

**The Speaker:** The Minister to reply.

**The Minister for Policy and Reform (Mr Thomas):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Cabinet Office appointed the consultants GVA Grimley Ltd, trading as Bilfinger GVA, on 28th November 2016, following the normal tendering process and in line with procurement advice on such appointments. The consultants were tasked with assisting officers on the early work associated with the Area Plan for the East.

Between November 2016 and February 2017, their main aim was to assess all of the sites suggested or identified as being worthy for consideration during the call for sites stage. These assessments, which are yet to be finalised, were prepared using the site assessment framework produced by the Cabinet Office.

The information requested is to be treated under clause 14 of the contract – Confidential Information – which is prevented from disclosure unless an exception in clause 14.4 of the contract is triggered. This Keys Question does not in itself represent an exception to warrant disclosure. The contractor may well give consent if asked, but they are not required to do so. It has not been possible to find an answer either way in the time available.

It may interest Mr Callister to know that an enquiry could be raised by following the relevant procedural requirements under Freedom of Information. Of course, it may be that the information is found to be commercially sensitive and could not lawfully be released under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mr Callister.

**Mr Callister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his detailed response.

The finance angle is not my concern here, but I was wondering if I could actually ask the Minister why a number of site assessments were added to the framework agreement without the owner's consent?

Could I also ask the Minister if he is actually aware of the considerable stress that this has caused to a number of my constituents in Onchan who have no intention of allowing their extended gardens to be developed in the future?

**The Speaker:** Mr Callister, the Question asks who carried them out and how much they cost. I think you have strayed a little beyond the boundaries of it.

**Mr Callister:** Okay, Mr Speaker. It is your guidance, sir.