

# NORTON PARK

## Commissioning Brief

### Shaping the Future of the Norton Park Conference Centre

#### 1. About Norton Park

Norton Park SCIO is an Edinburgh-based charity and social enterprise providing affordable, high-quality workspace and facilities for the voluntary and community sector.

Norton Park's mission is *to provide accessible, affordable, responsibly managed workspace for the voluntary sector, supporting organisations to connect, collaborate and maximise their impact.*

Norton Park owns and operates two buildings:

- Norton Park Business Centre – a former school building providing workspace for around 30 non-profit organisations
- Norton Park Conference Centre – a converted church hosting meetings, events and community activity

The Conference Centre is currently under-used. Norton Park believes there is significant potential to redevelop the building to deliver greater social and financial impact.

The building is listed and has heritage significance, which should be considered in future proposals.

#### 2. Purpose of the Commission

Norton Park is seeking to appoint a lead consultant to deliver a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the Conference Centre that would support the organisation's charitable purposes.

The work will identify and test viable options for the future use of the building, identification of a preferred option, and provide an evidence base for future business planning and funding applications.

The commission should:

- improve understanding of the demographic profile and needs of the local community
- identify the workspace and facilities needed by the local community and voluntary sector (e.g. office, meeting and activity space)
- identify opportunities for services or provision that could be delivered from the building.
- develop a small number of viable options for the building
- prepare concept layouts to support testing of options with stakeholders and the community
- establish a high-level financial case to assess viability
- refine and select a preferred option

## **3. Scope of Work**

### **3.1 Local Needs Assessment and Demand Analysis**

- Desktop research on local demographics, context and relevant policy
- Identification of community and third sector needs and gaps in provision
- Initial assessment of demand for different types of space and use

Resulting in a clear summary of needs, context and demand, including identification of opportunities for services that would complement existing local provision.

### **3.2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

- Engagement with voluntary and community organisations, local residents and community groups, neighbouring organisations and businesses, and relevant public sector partners
- Engagement activities appropriate to the scale and scope of the commission (e.g. workshops, focus groups, surveys)
- Gathering views on needs, priorities and potential uses

Engagement should be inclusive and reach a diverse range of local people and communities, including under-represented groups. The engagement should provide clear evidence of stakeholder and community input to shape and test options.

### **3.3 Demand and Viability Testing**

- Testing potential demand for different uses of the building, including likely users and willingness to pay
- Review of comparable facilities and relevant market trends
- Initial assessment of the financial viability of potential uses

### **3.4 Development of Options**

- Development of a small number of options for the future use of the building
- Each option to outline proposed uses, target users and operational approach
- Options informed by research, engagement, demand analysis and initial feasibility work

Resulting in a shortlist of options for wider testing and appraisal.

### **3.5 Testing Options**

- Presentation of options to stakeholders and the wider community
- Use of appropriate methods (e.g. survey, workshop, event)
- Gathering feedback on support, likely use and priorities

Resulting in clear evidence to inform selection of a preferred option.

### **3.6 Concept Design and Spatial Testing**

- Identification of opportunities and constraints within the building, including layout, access, circulation and heritage considerations
- Architectural input, including preparation of concept drawings, to:
  - test how each option can be accommodated within the building
  - demonstrate how space could be organised and used
  - explore efficient use of space
  - consider implications for energy use, including opportunities to improve energy efficiency
- Preparation of concept-level layout drawings for each option
- A high-level review of regulatory compliance, including fire safety and means of escape
- A high-level energy strategy, aimed at minimising energy costs and exploring low or zero direct emissions heating solutions
- A high-level assessment of materials and construction approach, considering embodied carbon, reuse and long-term maintenance
- Consideration of conservation principles, including alignment with a Conservation Plan (in line with the Burra Charter), where appropriate

Proposals should be informed by stakeholder and community input and align with Norton Park's mission and long-term objectives. Concept layouts should support high-level cost estimates and assessment of deliverability.

### **3.7 Feasibility and Financial Assessment**

- High-level financial assessment of each option
- Indicative capital cost ranges, informed by appropriate professional input
- Initial assessment of operational implications, income potential and financial sustainability
- Identification of key risks, assumptions and potential mitigation

The purpose of this work is to assess the financial and operational implications of options and provide an evidence base for future business planning and investment decisions.

### **3.8 Preferred Option**

- Review of findings from the research, engagement, demand testing and spatial/financial assessment
- Selection of a preferred option

### **3.9 Summary and Next Steps**

- Preparation of a summary of the preferred option, including proposed uses, users and anticipated benefits
- Identification of key assumptions, risks and investment requirements
- Recommendations for next steps and future project development

## 4. Deliverables

The consultant will produce:

- a local needs, demand and gaps analysis
- evidence of stakeholder and community engagement, including how feedback has informed the development and testing of options
- an options appraisal and feasibility report
- concept layout drawings
- a preferred option report
- a financial and operational appraisal
- recommendations for next steps

## 5. Timeframe

Norton Park expects this commission to be completed within approximately 3–4 months from appointment. Proposals should include a clear programme setting out:

- key stages of work
- engagement activity
- development and testing of options
- reporting and final outputs

The consultant team will be expected to attend regular (monthly) progress meetings and include appropriate interim review points within the programme.

## 6. Budget

Norton Park anticipates a budget in the region of **£30,000 plus VAT**.

Proposals should demonstrate how the core scope will be delivered within this budget

## 7. Consultant Requirements

Applicants must:

- act as lead consultant
- demonstrate experience delivering feasibility and options appraisal work
- include input from a suitably qualified architect, ideally with conservation and/or sustainability accreditation (e.g. RIAS)
- show experience of projects progressing to capital funding
- hold Professional Indemnity Insurance of at least £1 million

There is no commitment to progress the project beyond the feasibility stage. However, should the project proceed, the lead consultant will be expected to hold Professional Indemnity Insurance of £5 million.

## 8. Proposal Requirements and Application Process

Norton Park welcomes proposals from suitably qualified consultants and multidisciplinary teams.

We welcome consortium or partnership approaches where these bring together complementary skills. In such cases, a lead applicant must be clearly identified, who will act as the main point of contact and be responsible for coordinating the submission and, if successful, the delivery of the commission.

Interested consultants/teams are invited to submit a full proposal including:

- understanding of the brief and key issues
- proposed methodology and approach
- team structure and key personnel
- relevant experience and examples of comparable projects
- proposed programme
- deliverables
- fee breakdown
- confirmation of Professional Indemnity Insurance
- availability for interview during July 2026

Proposals should not exceed 10 pages excluding CVs and appendices. Bids are expected to be in the region of £30,000 plus VAT.

Submissions should be made electronically to [krobertson@nortonpark.org](mailto:krobertson@nortonpark.org) by **30 June 2026**.

Proposals will be assessed on a 70% quality / 30% price basis.