

Record of Cabinet portfolio member decision

HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY: AWARD OF CONTRACT DATE OF PUBLICATION – 8 FEBRUARY 2013

- NB: The Head of Legal and Democratic Services must receive a request to call-in this decision by 4.30pm on Friday 15 February 2013.
- Subject to the call-in mechanism this decision will be implemented on Monday 18 February 2013.
- The council's cabinet portfolio holder has taken the executive decision outlined below. This decision is published in accordance with the council's procedure rules.

DECISION TAKER	DETAILS OF DECISION
Mrs A Badcock	<p>To award the contract to the preferred supplier Mears PLC to become the Home Improvement Agency for South Oxfordshire. To enter into a contract with 'Mears' for the provision of Home improvement Agency services for 2013/2014 in the overall sum of £205,905 with the cost to this Council not exceeding £27,890.</p> <p>To agree an exception to the Council's Tender Evaluation Policy</p>
	<p>Reasons for recommending the decision</p> <p>Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) work in partnership with district councils, social services and health authorities to enable older, vulnerable and disabled residents to live independently in their own homes by providing a full technical and administrative service on behalf of the Councils in relation to the provision of Disabled Facilities and Home Repair Assistance grants.</p> <p>The HIA also provides a Small Repairs service to carry out small routine jobs that the occupier may be unable to do themselves, such as installing a grab rail or fixing a leaking tap.</p> <p>The service plays a vital part in community care and housing strategies. It is a real 'preventative service' helping people avoid unwanted moves into residential care and keeping them living independently in the community. It also provides a secure route for small repairs for vulnerable people who might otherwise be open to exploitation.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), in partnership with this Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC), has recently concluded a tender selection process for the appointment of a Home Improvement Agency Contractor. This process has been undertaken in a very short time period because of the reorganisation in Social Services. The current contract terminates on 31 March 2013 and the new contract needs to be awarded as soon as possible and no later than 28 February to avoid any risk of the service provision being withdrawn.</p>

DECISION TAKER	DETAILS OF DECISION
	<p>The procurement process was a full open tender and has been undertaken as detailed in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.</p> <p>Notice of a contract opportunity for the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service covering South & Vale Districts was placed on the South East Business Portal on 30 November 2012.</p> <p>Four expressions of interest were received; one eligible bid was received by the deadline of 2nd January 2013</p> <p>One company was invited to interview on 9th January 2013.</p> <p>The evaluation panel consisted of Paul Holland, Shared Environmental Protection Manager (South and Vale District Councils) and Manda Maple (Commissioning and Contracts Officer, OCC). Simon Walkden, Procurement Manager provided support.</p> <p>The evaluation panel considered the strength of the bid in relation to the quality criteria. Following the qualitative evaluation the panel then evaluated the bid price.</p> <p>The County Council followed their evaluation criteria because they were leading the tender process and the pricing elements of the contract have been given a 50% weighting whilst quality criteria were given a weighting of 50%. (The councils weighting as specified in the Tender Evaluation Policy is a 60/40 price/quality split)</p> <p>The following elements were considered appropriate for discussion within the remit of the evaluative process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The successful provider needed to have previous HIA experience or be able to clearly demonstrate how other experience was transferable. ○ The need to secure an Oxfordshire presence with local management firmly in place. ○ The requirement for strong support from their central management and the service to respond to local needs. ○ The need for close contract management and setting of reviews/performance management. ○ The award recommendations are based upon the 'most economically advantageous tender' taking into consideration a combination of quality and price. <p>Tender evaluation score</p> <p>Quality score: 48 out of 55</p> <p>Price score: 10 out of 10 (bid price slightly lower than service budget provided in the ITT)</p>

DECISION TAKER	DETAILS OF DECISION
	<p>The Council's Contract Procedure Rules state that because fewer than five contractors express an interest, the head of service shall repeat the open procedure, follow an alternative procurement procedure or seek instructions from the cabinet or a Committee. In this case we are seeking authority from the cabinet member to award the contract to the preferred contractor.</p> <p>There are no new financial implications because the existing budget for the provision of HIA services meets the cost of the new contract.</p>
	<p>Alternative options considered</p> <p>The council has a statutory duty to provide Disabled facilities grants to qualifying persons. However the assessment of what constitutes a suitable grant is the responsibility of occupational therapists from the County. High level discussions have taken place about reconfiguring the service to overcome the need to work across authorities and the County have signalled a wish to review this again but not until 2014. Consequently this contract is for one year only with an option to extend. Notwithstanding future conclusions officers believe that the HIA provides a cost effective partnership approach to providing this service for the council.</p>

If you have any queries regarding this decision please contact the decision taker above or Paul Holland, 01491 823243, paul.holland@southandvale.gov.uk

A copy of the report considered by the Cabinet member is available from Steven Corrigan, Shared Democratic and Electoral Services Manager, Legal & Democratic Services, 01491 823049, steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk