

Cabinet – 18 June 2008

Black Country libraries partnership consortium

Portfolio: Councillor Louise Harrison – Leisure and Culture

Service: Libraries and Heritage

Wards: All

Key decisions: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

All the Black Country library authorities contracts for the supply and servicing of library books and audio visual materials end on the 31 March 2009. There are proposals that the Black Country Libraries in Partnership (BCLIP) would draw up a joint specification and the Black Country Purchasing Consortium (BCPC) would tender on behalf of Walsall, Sandwell Dudley and Wolverhampton with a framework agreement to be in place for 1st April 2009

The proposed tender would be undertaken by BCPC and led by Wolverhampton City Council.

Cabinet permission is required to join the consortium and to tender because the value of Walsall contracts will be an estimated £1,800,000.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet give approval for the BCPC to tender on behalf of Walsall for the supply and servicing of library books, audio visual material for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2011 with an option to renew the contracts for a further two years, with contracts being awarded by Wolverhampton City Council on behalf of Walsall, Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton

3. Background Information

- 3.1 On 19th March 2008 Cabinet agreed to award contracts for the Supply and Servicing of Library Books and Audio Visual material for one year with the option to renew for a further year. The length of the contract was with a view to joining a consortium in the future.

- 3.2 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport Better report, Stock - Better Libraries, was published in August 2006. It identified that efficiencies and better value for money could be made in the stock procurement process by forming consortia.

Membership of existing consortia, the Central Buying Consortium and West Mercia Libraries Consortium, was investigated. Walsall Council is not a member the Central Buying Consortium (CBC) and that meant that Walsall Library Service was not eligible to join the CBC Libraries consortium. It would be in breach of European procurement regulations to join the existing contract with West Mercia, which will not expire until 2011, as there was no specific authority to enable the council to participate in the contract.

BCLIP has worked together on a number of projects during recent years and Libraries and Heritage is proposing to join with the other Black Country libraries to create a joint BCLIP specification which will form the basis of a BCPC tender. It is proposed that the tender will initially be for 2 years with the option to renew for another 2 years. This will give the opportunity to review the library supply market which has shrunk considerably over the last 5 years. It will also give the opportunity of merging with other regional consortiums e.g. West Mercia in 2011. It is for this reason that it was thought prudent to propose awarding the framework agreement for two years with the option to extend for a further two years

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial

The funding for books and audio visual items is within Libraries and Heritage revenue budgets for 2008/9 and proposed estimates for 2009/10

An estimated expenditure of £450,000 for books and audio materials will be incurred annually over the contract period.

There is no financial cost to establishing the consortium; it is proposed that Wolverhampton City Council will lead on the tendering process, as well as paying the costs, associated with the tender. This will be no charge to the other authorities

4.2 Legal

The proposed procurement would comply with Walsall Council Financial and Contract Rules Section 9.2.9 which states that all partnerships and purchasing purchases must be procured in accordance with these rules, except in the case of a purchasing consortium where another Public Body's constitution is followed and the procedure followed represents Best Value and good practice in view of the Council's corporate procurement unit

An agreed terms of reference for the group will need to be established to set out the terms under which members participate in the consortium and decision

making powers before the tender exercise can be started to ensure that Walsall Council limits any arising liabilities.

4.3 Staffing:

None

5. Citizen impact

The contract will enable the supply of new books and audio visual materials to be maintained at all libraries and maximise value for money.

6. Community safety

None

7. Environmental impact

None

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk:

The new contracts need to be in place by 1 April 2009 to ensure that there will be no break in supply of new stock for libraries. If this does not happen there is a risk of a decline in satisfaction levels.

8.2 Performance Management:

This will enable the Media Purchase Fund to achieve optimum value for money.

9. Equality implications

The tendering process will be designed to ensure that the widest range of stock is available to meet the diverse needs of all local communities. Where there are specific requirements, such as; large print and talking books, Asian languages books and recorded music, DVD and video and black interest books; these will be purchased from specialist suppliers and publishers outside the contracts.

10. Consultation

Consultation has taken place with other Black Country and West Midlands library authorities and Walsall Procurement and Legal Services sections.

Background papers

Museum Libraries Archives Council (MLA) – Better Stock Better Libraries Report, August 2006

Cabinet 19th March 2008 - The supply and servicing of library books and audio visual material 2008 to 2010.

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