

Cabinet – 26 July 2017

Procurement of White Goods, Furniture and Floor covering for the Crisis Support Service

Portfolio: Councillor D Coughlan - Social Care

Related portfolios: Councillor K Chambers - Personnel and Business Support

Service: Money Home Job

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Walsall Crisis Support Scheme (WCSS) was established in April 2013 after the abolition of the discretionary elements of the Social Fund relating to Crisis Loans schemes and Community Care Grants previously administered by the Department for Work and Pension (DWP).
- 1.2 Government's expectation was that councils would develop 'Local Welfare Assistance' schemes 'concentrated on those facing greatest difficulty in managing their income'. The intention was for local authorities to deliver a 'flexible response in order to reduce unavoidable need'
- 1.3 The Government's stipulations for Local Welfare Provision are that the grant provided by the DWP should be used to support applicants who were experiencing an 'immediate threat to their health or safety' and to provide some financial support to customers moving into the community to replace the former scheme of Community Care Grants.
- 1.4 Up to this point, local suppliers have been used for the purchasing of goods, but no formal contract is in place. This is due to the uncertainty of the funding of the scheme by the DWP. To formalise the arrangement for the supply of goods, an Invitation to Tender was published on 19 April 2017 inviting suppliers to bid for contracts to supply Electrical White Goods, Residential Furniture and Floor coverings.
- 1.5 The Cabinet timetable does not allow sufficient time to complete a compliant tender process, conclude the tender evaluation and recommendations prior to the proposed contract start date of 1 August 2017. There is therefore a need to seek delegated authority for the Interim Director (Change and Governance) to accept tenders and award contracts.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet delegates authority to accept tenders and award contracts for the provision of Electrical White Goods, Residential Furniture and Floor Coverings for Crisis Support, for a period 2 years from 1 August 2017, with the option to extend on an annual basis for a further period of 2 years, to the Interim Director (Change and Governance), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Social Care.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Interim Director (Change and Governance), to enter into contracts for the provision of Electrical White Goods, Residential Furniture and Floor Coverings for Crisis Support and to subsequently authorise the sealing of any deeds, contracts or other related documents for such services

3. Report detail

The Procurement Process

- 3.1 An Open Procedure Procurement Process was used to invite tenders for the provision of Electrical White Goods, Residential Furniture and Floor Coverings for Crisis Support, using an Open procurement process. A public advertisement was placed in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and the Council's e-tendering portal 'Intend', on 19 April 2017.
- 3.2 The Tenders are split into 3 Lots and the Council is seeking to appoint 1 organisation for each Lot. Organisations were able to bid for more than 1 Lot. Officers will order goods from the successful Tenderers subject to a satisfactory review of their performance in year as the contract term progresses.
- 3.3 The use of 'Lots' (specific independent sections) within the tender will help to increase the quality of service/goods being delivered by the successful Tenderers. This has also allowed local businesses the opportunity to tender for specific lots based on their local expertise.

(a) Lot 1 - Electrical white Goods - Indicative Annual Volumes

Item	Quantity
Electric Cooker	193
Gas Cooker	105
Washing Machine	181
Fridge Freezer	75
Fridge with freezer box (under counter)	306
Microwave	3
Table top cooker	2

(b) Lot 2 - Residential Furniture - Indicative Annual Volumes

Item	Quantity
Single Bed plus Mattress	275
Double Bed plus Mattress	63
Bunk Bed plus Mattresses	29
Double Mattress	12
Single Mattress	3
Three Seater Settee	10
Two Seater Settee	10
Single Seat Armchair	10
Table and Four Chairs	3

(c) Lot 3
Floor covering - Indicative Annual Volumes

Item	Quantity
Carpet	212 units
Vinyl Floor Covering	7 units

3.4 Tenders were opened via the In-Tend e-tendering portal on 24 May 2017, by the Head of Business Change and a Senior Procurement Officer.

37 suppliers expressed an interest and downloaded the Invitation to Tender

14 tender(s) were received from bidders as stated below;

5 tender(s) were non compliant and 9 compliant tenders were evaluated from bidders as stated below;

Bidder No.	Bidder Name	Company Status	Walsall Based Provider Yes/No	SME Yes/No
Lot 1				
1	A.E.Chapman and Company Ltd (t/a Chapman's Electrical)	Public Limited Company	No	Yes
2	Borshch Limited	Public Limited Company	No	Yes
3	Bull Dog Appliances Ltd	Public Limited Company	Yes	Yes

4	David Phillips	Public Limited Company	No	No
5	Furnipacks Ltd	Public Limited Company	No	Yes
6	Furniture Resource Centre Limited	Public Limited Company	No	Yes
7	John Gillman & Sons (Electrical) Ltd t/a D.A.D	Public Limited Company	No	Yes
8	Hughes TV & Audio Limited t/a Trade Electricals Direct	Public Limited Company	No	No
Lot 2				
1	David Phillips	Public Limited Company	No	No
2	Furnipacks Ltd	Public Limited Company	No	Yes
3	Furniture Resource Centre Limited	Public Limited Company	No	Yes
Lot 3				
1	David Phillips	Public Limited Company	No	No
2	Designer Contracts Limited	Public Limited Company	No	Yes
3	Furniture Resource Centre Limited	Public Limited Company	No	Yes

3.5 Tenders were evaluated in accordance with the following criteria as published in the Invitation to Tender 'ITT' :

Price	80%
Quality	20%

3.6 The following process was used to evaluate tenders:

- Due diligence checks undertaken by Procurement and Finance
- A panel of evaluators collectively scored the quality sections of the tender
- A Moderation meeting was held on 21 June 2017, at which the evaluation panel members reviewed the quality questions along with the tender

responses and individual evaluator's scores, discussed the findings and agreed a moderated final score for each of the quality questions.

- Moderated scores were fed in to the overall Value for Money assessment tool
- Final tender clarifications are currently being sought in order to finalise the evaluation process
- Upon completion of the evaluation, subject to Cabinet approval for delegated authority, a recommendation to award report will be produced and presented to the Interim Executive Director – Change & Governance for consideration and approval to award contracts to the successful bidders, in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Rules.

4. Council priorities

- 4.1 Key Council priority of **Make a positive difference to the lives of Walsall people**: This will be addressed by further developing our understanding of why customers are in crisis and exploring innovative ways to help them and so reduce the need for repeat applications.
- 4.2 Key Council priority of **Children are safe from harm, happy and learning well with self-belief, aspiration and support to be their best**: This will be addressed through the fact that the Tenderers that are successful in securing a contract from the council for each Lot will be subject to routine reviews to ensure that the safety and other standards specified in the ITT are being adhered to throughout the contract period.
- 4.3 Key Council Priority of **Safe, resilient and prospering communities**: This will be addressed by improving our understanding of the root cause of why a customer is in crisis and providing appropriate support. The current structure and placement of officers within Money Home Job provides a seamless referral pathway of welfare rights and/or specialist debt advice as appropriate.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 The principal risk is that potentially the Council would not be able to secure suitable organisations to supply the required goods. This risk has been mitigated by the fact that the tendering exercise is of a scale that requires advertising in the Official Journal of the European Union in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. As such the invitation to tender has resulted in a high level of interest and the necessary tenders being received.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 Currently the cost of providing the goods is covered by the grants issued by the DWP in 2013 and 2014 when the scheme was first introduced. Although no new grants are being issued, the unspent balance of previous grants is sufficient to cover current year expenditure. Careful monitoring and assessment of a customer's actual need rather than meeting their initial request, has allowed the council to maximise the best use of the grant in order to help more people.

- 6.2 Based on indicative data it is expected that the entire unspent grant will be fully spent on crisis support activity in this financial year. Further funding provision will need to be considered if the scheme is to continue in the next financial year.
- 6.3 The Tender has been prepared making it clear to bidders that there is no guarantee of any work and so there is no financial risk to the council should the scheme cease to continue.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 The procurement has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Rules. The recommendations in this report are also based on compliance with the Council's best value duty.

8 Procurement

- 8.1 The procurement process will be conducted via the Councils' e-procurement portal, in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Council's Contract Rules and Social Value Policy.
- 8.2 Steps will be taken to minimise procurement-related risk. However, there will always remain an inherent risk of legal challenge associated with any procurement undertaken by the Council. Input has and will continue to be sought from Procurement and Legal Services, as required to ensure the conduct of compliant procurement process.

9 Property implications

- 9.1 There are some associated risks when a contractor is required to enter a customer's property to deliver and/or install goods. The contract and Tender process has been written and will be managed to ensure that only competent and trained contractors are used and that goods supplied comply with all current fire and safety regulations.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

- 10.1 Assisting people who are in crisis in Walsall is a priority to addressing the problems highlighted above; this has been addressed within the Tender. The role of the Crisis Support Team is to provide short term help or support by removing "a crisis situation" which could lead to indebtedness or homelessness.
- 10.2 Where applicable we have required that a minimum energy rating of A is used for electrical products to ensure that customers have energy efficient products and can therefore also save on their on-going fuel bills. This is essential for low income families.

11 Staffing implications

- 10.1 There are no direct staffing implications as the service is provided by contractors who are, through the tender process, obliged to commit sufficient resource to support the delivery of the service.

11. Equality implications

- 11.1 The crisis support service is delivered to a diverse and changing community across the borough. Suppliers have been assessed within the procurement process to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of these customers.
- 11.2 Some areas of the borough use the crisis support service more than others. The contract will ensure that the council will work with the winning bidders to identify the changing community needs and ensure that appropriate support is provided where applicable.

12 Consultation

- 12.1 The majority of contact within the crisis support service is face to face and officers are constantly learning from the client's needs which are presented to them. Information from each contact is maintained within a dedicated database in order for us to better understand demand and therefore review client need.
- 12.2 We are already making better use of information from other internal stakeholders who are also working with these customers to ensure that we are engaging appropriately to meet the needs of the service and reduce dependency.

Background papers

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Julie Alderson
Executive Director

18 July 2017



Councillor D Coughlan
Portfolio holder

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