

Cabinet – 27 April 2016

Disabled Facility and Housing Improvement Works Tenders

Portfolio: Councillor Adrian Andrew, Deputy Leader
Economy, Infrastructure and Development

Service: Money Home Job

Wards: All: Borough Wide

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet endorsement in line with the Council's Contract Rules and Procurement Regulations to establish a Council Framework and procurement process to seek and to subsequently appoint contractors to join the proposed Framework Agreement, to undertake building works (excluding lifts and hoists) for Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs), and services for housing repair and improvement projects.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the establishment of a Framework Agreement and obtain tenders for contractors to be appointed to it for the provision of building works (excluding lifts and hoists) for Disabled Facility Grants, and services for housing repair and improvement projects for the period from 1 April 2017 up to 31 March 2021.
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Head of Business Change, Change and Governance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to accept tenders obtained pursuant to Recommendation 2.1 above and to subsequently authorise the signing and/or sealing of all necessary deeds, contracts, agreements and any ancillary related documentation in relation to such works and services by the most appropriate measures.

3. Background information

- 3.1 The Council delivers a range of statutory and non-statutory forms of housing assistance for householders including Disabled Facility Grants ("DFGs"), and housing repair and improvement projects.

- 3.2 An existing Council Framework Arrangement for such works and services has been in place since 2013. This current Framework has helped lead to reduced timescales for residents waiting for essential adaptations to their homes, lower costs for works and a higher level of quality of works undertaken.
- 3.3 The current Framework is due to come to an end on 31 March 2017 and to provide continuity of service, a new Framework is proposed.
- 3.4 A separate Framework has been developed for DFG lifts and ceiling track hoists.

4 Council Priorities

Promoting health and wellbeing

- 4.1 A priority within the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 - Shaping a Fairer Future, is to promote health and well being the proposal is also consistent with the Marmot principles. The proposed works and services being tendered will directly help vulnerable residents continue to live safely in their own homes. The home adaptations to be provided pursuant to the proposed works and services are a cost effective way to directly support both vulnerable residents and their carers.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 The principal risk relates to the potential that the Council will not be able to secure suitable contractors to undertake the works and services. This risk is mitigated by the fact that the proposed tenders are of a sufficient financial value to require advertising in the Official Journal of the European Union and as such are anticipated to result in high level of interest from a wide range of contractors.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Funding from a variety of sources is continually sought for housing renewal and the proposed Framework will be flexible enough to enable increased funding in future financial years to be included. Indicative 'potential' levels of funding will be indicated in the Framework Agreement but it will be structured in such a way as to not commit the Council to any level of expenditure at all. The proposed Framework will be structured to ensure that no commitments are made of any kind for the 2015/16 financial year and beyond until funds have been secured.
- 6.2 In addition to the DFG grant funding received via the Better Care Fund (£2.145m) the Council's capital programme for 2016/17 has also allocated £1.487m of Council capital funding to help with adaptations.
- 6.3 Home adaptations offer significant value for money in helping residents stay safe and as independent as possible in their homes for as long as they would wish. The table overleaf shows the comparative costs of key adaptation works compared to costs of care and hospital stays.

Comparison between the average cost of works and alternative health / care costs

		Residential care	Home care*	Hospital bed cost
Replacing a bath with:	Cost	£370 per week	£12 an hour	£470 a day
a) Shower with low level tray	£1,500	4 weeks payback	4 weeks payback	3 days payback
b) level access shower (Full wet-room)	£4,100	11 weeks payback	12 weeks payback	9 days payback
Minor works:				
Ramp (6m) and handrails	£550	1.5 weeks payback	1.5 weeks payback	2 days payback
Door widening (4 internal and 2 external doors)	£2,450	6.5 weeks payback	7 weeks payback	5 days payback

* Based on 4 hours a day

- 6.4 The council continually seeks funding from a variety of sources for adaptations, home improvements and the new framework will be flexible enough to enable increased funding in future financial years to be included (or to accommodate reduced levels of funding).
- 6.5 The tenders being sought if Cabinet makes the Recommendations in this report are expected (through securing up to date costs) to lead to delivery of more adaptations for less expenditure at key stages:
- a) Securing contractors for the period up to 1 April 2021 will reduce the revenue costs and time involved in repeated tendering on an annual basis and or an individual scheme basis;
 - b) Economies of scale are expected from the tendering for larger 'blocks' of work. These have already been noted by the service through previous tender processes; and
 - c) Use of 'Lots' (specific independent sections, for example Handyman Service,) within the tender to maximise the ability of a wider range of contractors to tender and therefore maximise the level of competition which will again help to drive down unit costs.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 The legislation which enables local authorities to offer housing assistance is set out in the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002. This legislation allows councils to adopt a flexible approach to giving financial help reflecting local circumstances, needs and resources.
- 7.2 The legislation for offering Disabled Facilities Grants is set out by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. This Act places a statutory duty on local housing authorities to provide grant aid to people with disabilities who meet the criteria for a range of adaptations to their homes.
- 7.3 The tenders are to be sought in full compliance with the Council's Contract Rules

and the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The Council's Procurement Team will assist with setting up a Framework and managing the most suitable procurement process in a compliant manner.

- 7.4 The Council's Legal Services Team will assist with using the most appropriate procedures and preparing the Framework Agreement and all related contractual documents and any ancillary legal documents.

8 Property Implications

- 8.1 The proposed new framework will be available for use by the Council in any residential or similar premises which are retained by the Council (for example registered children's homes).

9 Health and Wellbeing

- 9.1 The tender will enable the robust and Best Value delivery of housing adaptations and will directly support the Council's key strategies including the Health and Well Being Strategy and Housing Strategy. Works will enable residents to remain living in their homes longer. Building adaptations have a direct positive impact on the individual health and wellbeing of residents and their carers, including reducing the risk of slips, trips and falls in the home.

10. Staffing

- 10.1 The Council provides a discretionary agency service to help vulnerable residents make valid DFG applications. Where this service is provided, a fee of up to 7% is charged, as part of DFGs, by the Council, which part funds the agency service.

11 Equality implications

- 11.1 When commissioning and procuring the services, as a minimum, the Council will insist upon terms and conditions of contract which:
- prohibit contractors from unlawfully discriminating under the Equality Act;
 - require contractors to take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff, suppliers and subcontractors meet their obligations under the Equality Act.
- 11.2 The proposed new framework will continue to help vulnerable members of the community by providing significant support for residents with disabilities through maximising their ability to live independently; it will seek to deliver a range of solutions that can be tailored to meet a person's individual needs.
- 11.3 An Equality Impact Assessment for the delivery of DFGs and related adaptations has already been produced and this proposal is in line with this.

12 Consultation

- 12.1 As well as advertising in OJEU the tender advert will be advertised on the Council website to afford maximum opportunity for contractors within the borough to tender for the works.
- 12.2 As with the lift and hoist tender previously approved by cabinet the proposal to tender for DFG building works has been supported by the Walsall Joint Commissioning Committee who support DFGs through the award of money from the Better Care Fund.

Background papers

Author

David Lockwood

Housing Standards and Improvement Manager

☎ 01922 658459

✉ lockwooddavid@walsall.gov.uk



Paul Gordon
Head of Business Change,
Change and Governance



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio Holder – Economy
Infrastructure and Development