

Subject:	Procurement of Arboricultural Services		
Date of Meeting:	18th March 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director of Economy Environment and Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Robert Walker	Tel: 01273 294349
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report outlines the arboricultural services [tree works] required by the Council. This work is funded from both the general fund and the Housing Revenue Account.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval to tender this work.
- 1.3 The report was presented to Procurement Advisory Board on 8th March 2021 who recommended the report is approved by Policy and Resources committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee delegates authority to the Executive Director of Economy Environment and Culture to take all necessary steps to:
- 2.2 [i] procure and award an arboricultural contract for up to £2 million for an initial term of three [3] years and a possible extension of up to 24 months;

[ii] grant the optional extension to the contract referred to in 2.1 [i] subject to satisfactory performance of the contractor.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 This report was considered at the Procurement Advisory Board on the 8th of March. The board recommended that the contract should be procured as set out in this report.
- 3.2 Several service areas within the council individually procure arboricultural services. Finance have reviewed the total value of this work over the last 4 years and have estimated the value of a new contract to include the requirements of all service areas. The areas identified with significant spend were Cityparks, Housing, Bereavement Services and Property Services.

- 3.3 When the public consultation on the Councils Open Spaces Strategy [2017-2027] was carried out the public feedback was that trees were the most important feature to focus resources on in our open spaces, the importance of trees to the City is becoming even more apparent as we work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030. At a time of heightened public interest in the city's trees our tree stock faces massive challenges with questions over the resilience of some species to climate change on top of the known disease challenges. Most of the city's ash trees [which make up about 25% of our woodland trees will die over the next few years. Increased funding for elm disease control this year and planned for next year will hopefully bring this disease back under control but if we lose control it will have a devastating effect on our street trees, around 40% of our urban trees are elms. The service has recently been expanded to resource the increased tree planting and planting numbers have started to increase.
- 3.4 The additional staff will enable us to harness the public's enthusiasm to get more trees in the City. Going forward, plans are in place to resource dealing with ash die back, initially clearing dead trees but then in line with the draft tree strategy working towards a more resilient tree stock particularly on our streets and in our woodland where we are overly reliant on ash and elm.
- 3.5 The contract will include tree surgery, tree inspection and tree planting. Ash die back this is something that will involve the successful contractor, but specialist forestry work will be procured outside of this contract. This forestry work for Ash dieback will not be recurring and it is anticipated that it will be one off work in each of our woodland areas. Many of the firms that could competitively compete for tree surgery and inspection work will not have the specialist equipment and expertise to carry out large scale forestry work.
- 3.6 Social value has been incorporated into the specification by affording additional weighting for prospective bidders who engage apprentices. We will be encouraging the contractor to promote apprenticeship opportunities with our care leavers and in more deprived sections of the community.
- 3.7 Cityparks current contract for arboricultural services will end in November 2021.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Different service areas separately procuring arboricultural services is considered unlikely to give best value for money.
- 4.2 City Parks will manage the overall contractor relationship. Various council departments will call off services for bespoke or regular services to address the particular departments requirements as and when they are needed these requirements and the call off contracts/will be administered by the local client department and the contractor, City Parks will have minimal input or involvement with this process.
- 4.3 Within City parks arboriculture work is split with the majority of spend going on the inhouse service. Due to the seasonality of the council's tree work, most being carried out in the winter, this is the best way of providing resources when required.
- 4.4 Much of the tree surgery work carried out under this contract is essential to keep our tree stock safe and our highways passable. Tree planting

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 There has been no public consultation on procuring this contract. There is however ongoing public consultation principally through the council's tree strategy on how we manage our tree stock in the future.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 It is important that the council's tree stock is managed both for safety and to provide environmental benefits for both wildlife and people. Procurement of the services of a suitable contractor will enable the council to do this.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The proposed contract will bring together separately procured arboriculture services into a series of lots that will support a consistent approach across to procurement across the council. Demand for these services is increasing with at least £1.5m spent over the last 3 years. Budget council in February 2021 approved the inclusion of an additional £0.6m in 2021/22 in recognition of the increasing costs of managing Elm disease and Ash Dieback.
- 7.2 The contracts will be call-off and therefore the spend will be determined by demand and available resources although the initial 3 years is estimated to be approximately £2m. These services are budgeted for across the council including the HRA.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 15/02/2021

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The Policy and Resources Committee is the appropriate committee for the recommendations set out in paragraph 2 above in accordance with Part 4 of the council's constitution.
- 7.4 The contract must comply with all relevant procurement legislation and the council's Contract Standing Orders and in order to comply with Contract Standing Order 3.1, authority to enter into contracts in excess of £500,000 must be obtained from the relevant Committee

Lawyer Consulted: Manjinder Nagra

Date: 12/02/21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 None

Sustainability Implications:

7.6 Maintaining a good tree stock is critical to our environment and meeting our target to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.

Brexit Implications:

7.7 None