

REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	10 April 2014
Subject:	Election Print Procurement
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Hugh Peart, Director of Legal and Governance Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report requests authority for the council to enter into a framework agreement jointly with the London Boroughs of Barnet and Hounslow for the provision of Electoral Services printing and postage requirements for a period of 5 years.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Governance Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources, to enter into a 5 year framework agreement jointly with the London Boroughs of Barnet and

Hounslow for the provision of all Electoral Services printing and posting with the successful bidder following the tender process currently in progress.

Reason: (For recommendation)

Entering into a framework agreement jointly with the London Boroughs of Barnet and Hounslow will have the following benefits:

- It will allow the Council to have a clear and robust arrangement for requesting, obtaining and awarding print and postage contracts for appropriate electoral services activities.
- It will allow the Council to have a solution which efficiently supports and facilitates compliant electoral processes and the management and delivery of future elections and other electoral activities within the borough.
- It will offer the Council the 'best in class' levels of value-for-money, quality assurance, resilience and supplier service for its electoral print and postage requirements.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

2.1 The London Borough of Harrow covers an area of 50.47 km² and contains over 88,000 registered properties. Harrow is the twenty first largest London Borough by population with over 239,000 inhabitants. Harrow currently has over 181,000 registered voters and of these, over 30,000 are currently registered to receive a postal vote.

Background

2.2 Following discussions between officers of the relevant authorities, the London Boroughs of Harrow, Barnet and Hounslow are proposing to put in place a framework agreement for a maximum period of 5 years, for the provision of Electoral Services printing and postage requirements which:

- Will give the authorities (and their Electoral Registration Officers [EROs]/ Returning Officers [RO]) a clear and robust arrangement for requesting, obtaining and awarding print and postage contracts for appropriate electoral services activities.

- Will give the authorities (and their EROs/ROs) a solution which efficiently supports and facilitates compliant electoral processes and the management and delivery of future elections and other electoral activities within the boroughs.
 - Will offer the authorities (and their EROs/ROs) 'best in class' levels of value-for-money, quality assurance and supplier service for their electoral print and postage requirements.
- 2.3 The framework agreement will meet the specific print and postage needs of any elections that are held within the contract period and the requirements of the Electoral Registration Service, including Annual Canvass, Absent Vote Identifier Refreshes and the new print and postage requirements brought about by the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER).
- 2.4 Evaluation of tenders will be undertaken by relevant officers from within the Electoral Services and Corporate Procurement Teams of Harrow and Barnet.
- 2.5 It is anticipated that the successful bidders / suppliers will demonstrate that they are able to offer not only market leading value but also a commitment to quality and service that gives assurance to each authority and their EROs/ROs that they are in the best possible position to deliver their statutory electoral obligations.

Current situation

Tender Process

- 2.6 Submissions were invited for bidders / suppliers to be included on a framework contract for the supply of Print and Postage Services for all Electoral Service requirements, including (but not limited to):
- All borough-wide election (including but not limited to: Parliamentary, Local, European, London Mayoral and GLA, Referendums, etc.) print and postage requirements including:
 - Poll Cards.
 - Postal Voter Packs.
 - Ballot Papers.
 - Election Count stationery.
 - Electoral Registration print and postage requirements including:
 - Voter Registration forms.
 - Voter information forms.
 - Postal Vote application forms.

- Annual Canvass print and postage requirements including:
 - Household Canvass forms.
 - Household Reminder forms.
 - Canvasser’s Household forms.
- Absent Voter Identifier Refresher print and postage requirements
- Individual Electoral Registration* (IER) print and postage requirements including:
 - Household Enquiry Forms.
 - Individual ‘Invite to Register’ Forms.
 - Registration Confirmation letters.

2.7 This Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (“PQQ”) was issued by the London Borough of Barnet in connection with a competitive procurement following the Restricted Procedure under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

2.8 The PQQ was available for download via the relevant portal administered by Barnet Council. In total, 8 companies expressed an initial interest and completed and returned PQQs within the time limit.

2.9 The returned PQQs were evaluated on the basis of 5 sections relating to:

- Potential Provider Information – Pass / Fail.
- Technical Resources and References – 50%.
- Financial Information – 30%.
- Health and Safety – 10%.
- Environmental Issues – 10%.

2.10 5 companies were shortlisted on 27 February 2014 to receive Invitations to Tender (ITT). The ITTs were sent out on 28 February 2014 and are not due to be returned until 4 April 2014. The evaluation of the tenders is scheduled for 11 April 2014, after the Cabinet meeting, with an implementation date for the contract of 1 May 2014. The scoring mechanism under the ITT will be as follows:

Scoring Mechanism

Criteria	Weighting
Technical/Quality Evaluation	60%
Price Evaluation	40%

- 2.11 As the evaluation of the tenders will not take place until after the Cabinet meeting, Cabinet is requested to delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Governance Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources, to enter into a 5 year framework agreement with the successful bidder(s) / supplier(s) jointly with Barnet and Hounslow Councils for the provision of all Electoral Services printing and posting following the conclusion of the tender process.

Options Considered

- 2.12 The first option available to the Council was to remain with the current approach and negotiate contracts for Electoral Services print and postage suppliers on an individual basis.
- 2.13 The second option was to seek an innovative approach to building resilience, confidence and assurance for Electoral Services printing and postage requirements whilst at the same time reducing costs to the Council.
- 2.14 Upon evaluation, it was felt that pursuing the second option was in the best interests of the Council for the reasons set out in paragraph 2.2 of this report.

Legal Implications

- 2.15 The Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer has a statutory duty to maintain a register of Parliamentary electors and a register of local government electors.
- 2.16 The Returning Officer is responsible for the running of an election and for ensuring that it is run in accordance with the law.
- 2.17 A fair and transparent procurement procedure in compliance with public procurement rules is being followed to procure suppliers for Electoral Services printing and postage requirements.
- 2.18 HB Public Law has been providing legal advice during the entire procedure from its conception and will continue to provide advice and support up until a contract is agreed and implemented.

Financial Implications

- 2.19 The Council's Contract Procedure Rules state that contracts for supplies and services exceeding £250k shall be referred to Cabinet for approval.
- 2.20 Electoral Services currently spend approximately £60,000 on printing and postage requirements during the year.

- 2.21 Whilst the specific figures are not yet determined because potential bidders / suppliers are still in the process of completing their ITTs, it is envisaged that implementation of the proposed agreement will result in savings.

Performance Issues

- 2.22 As part of the PQQ process, potential suppliers were required to provide information relating to Quality Assurance and whether they had achieved the ISO 9001 accreditation. They were also asked which targets they measured, whether they had a quality procedure manual, whether there was a single individual in the organisation responsible for Quality Assurance and details of the organisation's approach to service and performance management.
- 2.23 As part of the ITT process, potential suppliers have been asked to provide a Service Delivery proposal, information on Management, Supervision and Resources and to provide details of their capability in delivering the agreement.
- 2.24 The assessment of these questions during the PQQ stage has enabled the Council to have confidence in the integrity in the anticipated performance of the organisations which have been selected to take part in the ITT stage and ultimately the selected bidder(s).
- 2.25 The Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer is also required to maintain an accurate electoral register and deliver effective, transparent and fair elections.
- 2.26 The proposed agreement will allow the Council to have robust, effective and reliable printing and postage arrangements in place. It will also allow for value for money to be realised by the Council and promote quality assurance.
- 2.27 This will therefore promote integrity, confidence, and transparency in relation to the printing and postage of relevant Electoral Services documents and subsequently also in relation to the entire elections processes.

Environmental Impact

- 2.28 As part of the PQQ process, suppliers were required to provide information relating to the Environmental Management Systems which were assessed under the Environmental Issues heading. They had to provide information relating to the following:
- Whether the organisation has an Environmental Policy and whether the relevant standards in this policy are in accordance with the Eco-

Management & Audit Scheme (EMAS), ISO14001, EN16001 or equivalent.

- Whether the organisation has a carbon, climate change or energy efficiency strategy, policy or action plan.
- Whether the organisation has a sustainable procurement strategy.
- Whether there is an appointed person responsible for environmental issues.
- Whether the organisation disposes of the waste generated during the manufacture or provision of the service and details on how this takes place.
- Whether the organisation uses any recyclable or reusable materials.
- Whether the organisation monitors energy and water usage and carbon emissions.
- Whether the organisation has been prosecuted under environmental legislation.

2.29 The bidders / suppliers who were selected to progress to the ITT stage all had scores which ranged from 3 to 4.5 out of 5.

2.30 The assessment of the ITT returns will also include provision for bidders / suppliers to provide the environmental, equality and diversity approach taken in relation to the delivery of this service. This will form part of the 60% assessed for technical / Quality Evaluation.

2.31 This has therefore promoted confidence in the integrity of the environmental policies of the organisations which have been selected to take part in the ITT stage and ultimately the selected bidder.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? No

Key risks during the course of the contract are :-

1. Not having a contract in place at the time of the anticipated commencement date.
2. Sudden and unexpected demise of one the successful bidders.
3. Deterioration of contract relationship between the Council and the successful bidders.

These risks are being managed and the framework contract will include robust contract performance management processes to ensure that potential problems are picked up early.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

There are no equalities implications from the proposal as it relates to the selection of successful bidders for Electoral Services printing and posting requirements.

Corporate Priorities

The proposed agreement if implemented will contribute towards the Corporate Priority of 'Fairer' by reducing the amount of money received by the Council which it spends on Electoral Services printing and postage requirements.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Simon George	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Financial Officer
Date: 18 March 2014		
Name: Stephen Dorrian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 16 March 2014		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Alex Dewsnap	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director Strategic Commissioning
Date: 17 March 2014		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker



on behalf of the
Corporate Director
(Environment &
Enterprise)

Date: 17 March 2014

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Elaine McEachron, Democratic & Electoral Services Manager,
020 8424 1097

Background Papers:

- 1) Pre-Qualification Questionnaire Electoral Print and Postage Services

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]