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**REPORT FOR: CABINET**

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**Date of Meeting:** 17 January 2019

**Subject:** Electoral Print Contract

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Responsible Officer:** Hugh Peart  
Director of Legal and Governance Services

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Keith Ferry  
Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio  
Holder for Regeneration, Planning and  
Employment

**Exempt:** No

**Decision subject to  
Call-in:** Yes

**Wards affected:** All

**Enclosures:** None

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report sets out proposals for the Council to enter into a Framework Agreement jointly with the London Borough of Barnet for the provision of Electoral Services printing and postage requirements for a period of 3 years, with an option to extend for a further year.

### **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is requested to delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Governance Services, following consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Enforcement, to enter into a 3 year framework agreement (with an option to extend for a further year) with the successful bidder(s) jointly with the London Borough of Barnet for the provision of all Electoral Services printing and posting.

### **Reason: (For recommendations)**

Entering into a framework agreement will provide clear and robust arrangement for:

- The 'best in class' levels of value-for-money, quality assurance, resilience and supplier service for its electoral print and postage requirements.
- Obtaining and awarding print and postage contracts for appropriate electoral services activities.
- 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.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introductory paragraph**

- 2.1 Harrow currently has over 92,000 residential properties on the Electoral Register with 187,000 registered voters and of these, over 36,000 are currently registered to receive a postal vote.
- 2.2 In April 2014, the Council entered into a Framework Agreement, jointly with Barnet, for the provision of Electoral Services printing and postage requirements for a period of 5 years. This Framework Agreement is due to expire in May 2019.
- 2.3 Following discussions Harrow and Barnet have agreed to enter into a new framework agreement for a maximum period of 3 years, with an option to extend for a further year, for the provision of Electoral Services printing and postage requirements.

This will provide the authorities (and their Electoral Registration Officers [EROs]/ Returning Officers [ROs]):

- Clear and robust arrangement for requesting, obtaining and awarding print and postage contracts for appropriate electoral services activities;
- 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; and
- 'Best in class' levels of value-for-money, quality assurance and supplier service for their electoral print and postage requirements.

### **Options considered**

- 2.4 At the end of this current Framework Agreement, the first option available to the Council was to revert back to a previous historic approach and negotiate contracts for Electoral Services print and postage on an individual basis.
- 2.5 The second option was to seek to renew the Council's approach in building resilience, confidence and assurance for Electoral Services printing and postage requirements for the best possible price.
- 2.6 Upon evaluation, the second option was considered appropriate and in the best interests of the Council.

## Background and Current Situation

- 2.7 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, to include Individual Electoral Registration, the Annual Canvass and the Absent Vote Identifier Refresh.
- 2.8 It is anticipated that the successful bidder(s) 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.
- 2.9 The Framework Agreement for the supply of print and postage services and for all Electoral Service requirements will include:
- All borough-wide election (including but not limited to: Parliamentary, Local, European, London Mayoral and GLA, Referendums, etc.);
  - Individual Electoral Registration (IER) and Annual Canvass requirements;
  - Absent Voter Identifier Refresh requirements; and
  - Other ad hoc requirements that may arise and also result from technology innovation or legislative changes.

## Procurement Implications

- 2.10 The procurement for the proposed Framework Agreement is being run by the London Borough of Barnet.
- 2.11 The printing and postage requirements within the proposed Framework Agreement have been divided into three lots:

Lot No.	Description
Lot 1	Elections Print and Post
Lot 2	Statutory Registration, Annual Canvass, Household Notification Letters (HNL)
Lot 3	Innovation, New Ways of Working and Ad Hoc Activity

- 2.12 The Print Specification and Invitation to Tender (ITT) guidance was published on 15 November 2018 with a return deadline of 17 December 2018. The scoring mechanism under the ITT will be as follows:

Criteria	Weighting
Technical/Quality Evaluation	70%
Price Evaluation	30%

- 2.13 The Technical / Quality Evaluation will take place through the submission of responses to Method Statement Questions.
- 2.14 The evaluation of the tenders is scheduled for late January 2019.
- 2.15 As the evaluation of the tenders will not take place until after this Cabinet meeting, Cabinet is requested to delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Governance Services, following consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Employment, to enter into a 3 year framework agreement (with the option to extend for a further year) with the successful bidder(s) jointly with the London Borough of Barnet.

## **Performance Issues**

- 2.16 As part of the ITT process, potential suppliers had been asked to provide a Service Delivery proposal, information on how their product and services were accurate and secure in accordance with their quality assurance systems, how they would plan and ensure legislative timetables are met and provide an outline on the technical equipment and systems they intended to use to ensure a high quality service in delivering the agreement.
- 2.17 The assessment of the responses and the weighting criteria will allow the Council to have confidence in the integrity of the anticipated performance of the organisations in the selected bidder(s).
- 2.18 The RO and ERO is required to maintain an accurate electoral register and deliver effective, transparent and fair elections.
- 2.19 The proposed agreement will therefore allow the Council to have robust, effective and reliable printing and postage arrangements in place with the relevant quality assurance measures. This will contribute towards promoting integrity, confidence, and transparency in the entire elections processes.

## **Environmental Implications**

- 2.20 The Method Statement Questions will ask bidders / suppliers to provide the environmental, equality and diversity approach taken in relation to the delivery of this service.
- 2.21 The assessment of the responses to these questions will therefore promote confidence in the integrity of the environmental policies of the successful bidder(s).

## **Data Protection Implications**

- 2.22 The successful bidder(s) will be acting as a Data Processor for the ERO/RO (Data Controller) and will have to ensure that it has in place appropriate technical and contractual measures to ensure the security of the Personal Data in accordance with relevant legislation.

## **Risk Management Implications**

Relevant risks are included on the Directorate risk register; there is no separate risk register in place.

- 2.23 Key risks during the course of the contract are:-
- A snap election being called which may lead to a delay in the anticipated commencement date;
  - Not having a contract in place at the time of the anticipated commencement date;
  - Sudden and unexpected demise of one the successful bidder(s); and
  - Deterioration of contract relationship between the Council and the successful bidder(s).
- 2.24 These risks are being managed and the framework contract will include robust contract performance management processes to ensure that potential problems are picked up at an early stage and resolved successfully.

## **Legal Implications**

- 2.25 The ERO has a statutory duty to maintain a register of Parliamentary electors and a register of local government electors.

- 2.26 The RO is responsible for the running of an election and for ensuring that it is run in accordance with the law.
- 2.27 The proposed Framework Agreement will provide the necessary quality and assurance to ensure that the ERO and RO is in the best possible position to deliver their statutory electoral obligations
- 2.28 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.
- 2.29 HB Public Law has provided Harrow and Barnet with 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**

- 2.30 The Council's Contract Procedure Rules state that contracts which involve a key decision shall be referred to Cabinet for approval.
- 2.31 Funding for UK Parliamentary Elections and Referenda is provided by the Government. Funding for Greater London Authority Elections is provided by Greater London Authority. However funding for Local Government Elections and the maintenance of the electoral register must be met from Council resources.
- 2.32 It is envisaged that implementation of the proposed agreement will result in the best possible value for money being achieved by the Council, in relation to print and postage services.

### **Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 2.33 There are no equalities implications from the proposal as it relates to the selection of successful bidder(s) for Electoral Services printing and posting requirements

### **Council Priorities**

- 2.34 The proposed agreement if implemented will contribute towards all of the Council's Corporate Priorities by seeking to achieve robust and reliable printing and postage requirements for Electoral Services. Elections provide residents with the opportunity to vote for democratically elected representatives who provide the political leadership for the Corporate Priorities and Harrow's Ambition Plan.

### **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Dawn Calvert  Chief Financial Officer

Date: 12 December 2018

Name: Hugh Peart  Monitoring Officer

Date: 22 November 2018

### **Section 3 - Procurement Officer Clearance**

Name: Lisa Taylor  on behalf of the  
Head of Procurement

Date: 26 November 2018

**Ward Councillors notified:** NO, as it impacts on all  
Wards

**EqIA carried out:**  
**EqIA cleared by:** NO. There are no  
equalities implications.

### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

Contact: Vishal Seegoolam, Deputy Electoral Services Manager, 020 8424 1158; vishal.seegoolam@harrow.gov.uk

**Background Papers: None**



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

**NO – CALL IN APPLIES**