

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee
DATE: 30th June 2011
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children & Enterprise
SUBJECT: Advanced Level Performance System (ALPS)
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek agreement to enter into a contract without conducting a tender exercise or seeking three written quotations in order to comply with procurement standing order 4.1 and 4.2, which places a requirement on the Council to invite quotations or tender for contracts with a value less than £50,000.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) **under Procurement SO 1.8.2 (a) SOs 4.1 and 4.2 be waived in respect of Alkemygold Ltd for the Advanced Level Performance System (ALPS).**
- ii) **the 14-19 Divisional Manager be authorised to enter into a contract with Alkemygold Ltd as the only provider of the Advanced Level Performance System for the analysis of results for the academic year 2010/11.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Advanced Level Performance System (ALPS) is a nationally used Level 3 A Level and BTEC Course analysis and training package for delivering quality improvement in schools and colleges. It was developed to raise standards in education on a national scale and to engage with teachers and educational professionals to give them practical tools to achieve this.

3.2 The ALPS, provided by Alkemygold Ltd, is a unique analysis and training package because it:

- Uses a fixed benchmark over time so that schools, colleges and LAs can plot trend performance across a number of years, in addition to each academic year individually.
- Measures performance against the best 25% of schools and colleges, not against the median.
- Provides target setting software to allow for departmental and individual student targets to be set and the ability to scrutinise performance on a regular basis throughout the academic year

against the aspirational targets of performance.

- Analysis reports include key indicators that allow for analysis of breadth of study, not only attainment.

3.3 The ALPS analysis is produced on an annual basis and was funded by North West Learning & Skills Council (LSC) from 2002 to 2007. From 2008 to 2010 the LSC directed funding to purchase ALPS to Halton Local Authority (LA). During this time Halton LA has contracted directly with Alkemygold Ltd. (suppliers of ALPS) to receive the analysis.

3.4 As part of the ALPS analysis each individual subject and each provider is assessed and allocated a value added score. The score system is an integral part of the ALPS resource and not comparable to other value added scoring methods.

3.5 Halton LA has historical ALPS value added scores for Post 16 institutions and each subject area, which allows analysis of trends over time. Continuation of the use of ALPS will allow for continued analysis of the effectiveness of Post 16 Institutions' improvement plans in raising attainment for learners compared to other institutions nationally.

3.6 Post 16 institutions make valuable use of the target setting software to set challenging targets for learners and this is part of the strategies that have resulted in the increased Level 3 performance Halton has experienced. In 2010, 42.3% of Halton learners had achieved a Level 3 qualification by age 19. This is an 8.4% increase upon the 2009 recorded figure for this indicator and represents the second largest annual local authority increase.

3.7 ALPS analysis data is recognised by OFSTED as evidence of performance.

4.0 **BUSINESS CASE**

4.1 **Value for Money**

Since 2002 the price for ALPS is negotiated each year in respect of the number of learners in the borough compared to the previous year, and the number of reports produced. The cost for the academic year 2010/11 is £4,000 ex vat.

4.2 **Transparency**

This contract will be subject to issues of confidentiality and be open to scrutiny under the Freedom of Information Act, through the internal and external audit process and through the Policy & Performance Board scrutiny arrangements.

4.3 **Propriety and Security**

Integrity clauses will be built into the contract document and only staff with a need to know will have information about the contract.

4.4 **Accountability**

This will remain with the Divisional Manager awarding the contract and the internal and external audit process.

4.5 **Position of the Contract under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006**

This contract is for an Education/Vocational service and as such is largely exempt from the 2006 regulations. The value of this contract is below the financial threshold at £4,000.

5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None

6.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The funding for ALPS has been identified in the 2011/12 spending plan for the 14-19 Division.

6.2 The contract is subject to annual renewal.

7.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

7.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

ALPS analysis supports the LA in monitoring achievement outcomes for learners.

8.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 NONE

9.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 NONE

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 NONE