

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People & Families

SUBJECT Waiver of Procurement Standing Orders in respect of Provision of Music Services to Schools

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request a waiver of procurement standing orders 4.1 Competition Requirements, for contracts up to but not exceeding £173,934 in value, via procurement standing order 1.8.4 (f) where compliance with Standing Orders would be inconsistent with joint and Partnership working or special external funding arrangements. To award the incumbent supplier a one year contract based on the current terms and conditions, currently agreed.

EU Public Procurement Regulations 2006 do not apply as the value for a one year contract is below the current threshold.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: That Executive Board

- 1) grant approval to waiver Procurement Standing Orders 4.1; and**
- 2) note that this waiver will be for the period from 1st September 2013 to 31st July 2014.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The creation of music hubs was central to the national plan for music education. A hub is a partnership between councils and various music organisations that would plan and deliver a variety of opportunities including instrumental and vocal tuition and extra-curricular activities to all 5-19 year olds in their area.

Halton partnered with Warrington to form a Music Hub in September 2012 following the successful bid for Music Hub funding. The Hub receives a grant from the Arts Council, ring-fenced for the development of music provision for schools.

As a condition of the grant funding, we are required to deliver against 4 key areas to:

1. Ensure that every child aged 5 -18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (other than the voice) through whole class ensemble teaching programmes for ideally a year (but for a minimum of a term) of weekly tuition on the same instrument
2. Provide opportunities to play in ensembles and to perform from an early stage.
3. Ensure clear progression routes are available and affordable.
4. Develop a Singing Strategy to ensure that every child sings regularly

The provision of music services in Halton schools is currently provided through Halton and Warrington District Music Service (HWDMS). They are currently contracted to provide Whole Class Tuition projects for schools and also the Halton Schools' Concert and Training Band. The contracts end on the 31st July 2013.

HWDMS are currently providing a service in 46 Halton Primary Schools delivering 54 Whole Class Music projects in:

- African Drumming
- Samba Drumming
- Strings
- Guitar
- Soundstart (mixed brass / woodwind and percussion)
- Brass
- Recorders
- Vocal

Provision includes:

- Specialist tutors who are quality assured.
- Weekly lesson plans with clear learning objectives related to National Curriculum Strategy
- A tracking and monitoring system that follows the pupils and can provide schools with data to support Ofsted inspections
- Large scale end of year Whole Class Concert
- 4 Playdays for Brass / Woodwind / Percussion students

Halton owns a range of instruments that are loaned to schools to support children's participation in the tuition projects and the Concert and Training Band.

The success of the singing strategy is evident through the hugely successful Children of Halton Sing (COHS) events. At the Summer event over 1500 school children, from over 40 schools, come together at the Stadium to take

part in a mass singing performance. This is in addition to the Spring term COHS events at The Brindley Theatre. The Infant Music Festival events provide performance opportunities for 1600 children.

3.2 Value for money and Competition

Feedback from schools regarding the services they receive from our current provider is very positive and they have indicated their commitment to engage in music projects for the next academic year. Requests from schools for 2013 – 2014 projects are, to date, showing an increase on last year's figures and in some cases identify specific staff they wish to retain as deliverers. There is an intention to go to market in the Spring of 2014.

3.3 Transparency

The Procurement Division will provide full support with the new tender opportunity, which will be published via the chest ensuring fair, transparent, and proportionate principals are embedded into the process, which will be open to the supply market for competition. Compliance with both Procurement Standing Orders and EU Public Procurement Regulations 2006, where applicable.

3.4 Funding

The projects for schools are subsidised through grants paid to the Halton and Warrington Music Hub by the Arts Council. The funding includes very specific criteria regarding delivery of services to schools and targets for levels of engagement of pupils.

There is no cost to the Council for the contracts which have a collective value for 2013 / 14 of a maximum of £83,000.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

As with any grant there is a risk of clawback in the event the outputs outlined in the condition of grant are not delivered.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Council is committed to raising standards for its children and young people. It is recognised that standards and engagement in core subjects can be enhanced through recognising and developing a range of talents across other curricular areas including music and the arts. Continued access to high quality music provision in schools is very important to achieving this ambition.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

See 6.1

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Increased confidence, value and self-worth improves the emotional health and well-being of children and young people.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 A procurement process could be completed and contract awarded prior to September 2013. However, should the outcome be a change of provider, the risks associated with mobilisation were considered too great:

- Provider unable to offer full range of services for schools from September
- Impact upon children and young people's achievement and possible disengagement
- Insufficient time to transfer data around children's current achievement with regard to national curriculum levels and as appropriate grades, to inform future planning – potential impact upon continuity and progression
- Level of risk for schools if provision around music is affected and they are unable to deliver full range of curriculum entitlement – Ofsted
- Potential impact upon standards

7.2 Consideration was also given to awarding a one term contract to the current provider with a view to procuring a new provider for January 2014. However there were a number of risks identified with this, including:

- Schools are signing up for a one year commitment and a change of staff / systems part way through would be detrimental to students and impact upon continuity and monitoring systems
- Schools may not engage with a 1 term music offer with a risk of change mid-year
- The current provider may not be willing to commit to a 1 term offer as it would potentially impact upon tutor recruitment and retention

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Provision of opportunities to engage in music projects in schools, and through the Halton band, are particularly important for our most vulnerable children who would not otherwise have this opportunity due to the financial implications of private music tuition.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.