

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 15th November 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Environment

SUBJECT: Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Joint Procurement Partnership Contracts for Delivery of Landscape Maintenance and Cleansing in Runcorn

WARD(S): All Runcorn Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To explain the forthcoming arrangements and proposals of the RSL's (Registered Social Landlords) for procuring the delivery of landscape and cleaning services in Runcorn.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the Strategic Director, Environment be given delegated authority to complete and prepare bids for the four separate contacts proposed; and**
- (2) the Strategic Director, Environment be given delegated authority to bid for any further contracts that are advertised by the RSL Joint Procurement Partnership.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 At present the Liverpool Housing Trust (LHT), Riverside Housing Trust (RHT) Cooperative Development Services (CDS) and Maritime Housing, RSLs, who have properties mostly in the Runcorn New Town area, have between them fourteen contracts for the delivery of landscape maintenance and cleansing on their respective land holdings. All four RSLs are acutely aware that this current arrangement does not provide a good level of service, often leads to confusion of responsibility and does not offer the best value for money. The four RSLs, led by the largest partner LHT have, over the past year, worked together to develop a joined up approach to the issue of public realm maintenance. The result of this Joint Procurement Partnership is that four distinct contact areas have been created based on geography rather than land ownership. The areas are Castlefields, Murdishaw, Palacefields and Windmill Hill. The idea being that a single contractor will have responsibility for all aspects of landscape maintenance and

cleansing in a specific area in a similar way to how the Council has modelled its Streetscene operations. This approach has been supported by the Neighbourhood Boards.

- 3.2 The RSL Joint Procurement Partnership have engaged with consultants 'The Environment Partnership' (TEP) and 'The Appleton Group' to design contracts that offer more than just a basic maintenance service. Successful contractors will be expected to meet a high standard of environmental good practice, will have to facilitate the training and employment of local people through partnerships with the intermediate labour market and through the delivery of apprenticeships and will have to demonstrate that they can form effective partnerships with other organisations. The intention to let the four contracts was advertised on the 21st October 2007 in the OJ. The RSL Joint Procurement Partnership has made it clear that no single contractor will be allowed to hold more than two contracts at any one time. The total value of the contracts will be about £670,000.00.
- 3.3 In December 2005 the Council's Housing Stock was transferred to the Halton Housing Trust (HHT). The Landscape Services Division secured a two year SLA Contract with HHT to deliver landscape maintenance. In September 2007 HHT notified the Council that they would be extending the SLA contract until October 2008 after which they would seek to join the Joint Procurement Partnership with the other RSLs.
- 3.4 Currently the Council's Landscape Services Division provides services to a number of external customers as a contractor. Landscape maintenance and cleansing services are provided to 70% of the Borough's schools, the Halton Housing Trust, Norton Priory Museum, The Bridgewater Canal Trust, The Guinness Trust and Peel Holdings. The Division provides these services separately from its core budgeted services which include Streetscene Operations and Parks and Open Spaces management and maintenance. The Landscape Services Division has the necessary expertise to bid for, secure and operate contracts such as those advertised by the RSL partnership. There would have to be a remodelling of the Division to better enable it to focus on its contracted element. Work has already commenced on this exercise and will be progressed as part of the current and on-going restructure of the Division.
- 3.5 This restructure, if two of the advertised contracts are secured, would be likely to give rise to the need for additional full time staff as well as opportunities for additional apprentice placements. Partnerships would also be formed to create Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) positions. This would make a significant contribution to Employment, learning and skills in Halton.
- 3.6 The RSL Partnership has made it clear that it would welcome a bid from the Council for its advertised contracts.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The RSL Joint Procurement Partnership contracts will include maintenance and inspection of fixed equipment Children's Play Areas. The Landscape Services Division has developed extensive expertise in this aspect of management of children's facilities which could be applied in RSL areas.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The RSL Joint Procurement Partnership contracts will require that the successful bidders provide apprentice places for local young people. This will have a positive impact on employment and the creation of a skilled workforce.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

By securing up to two of the advertised contracts, and applying its expertise to the delivery of an enhanced service in the RSL areas of Runcorn a significant contribution could be made to the objective of creating a healthy Halton.

6.4 A Safer Halton

By securing up to two of the advertised contracts, and applying its expertise to the delivery of an enhanced service in the RSL areas of Runcorn, a significant contribution could be made to the objective of creating a Safer Halton.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The RSL Joint Procurement Partnership contracts will provide a significant enhancement of service delivery which will have a direct impact on urban renewal.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 At present the Landscape Services Division provides an SLA Contract service to the Halton Housing Trust. The contract term was for two years and was due to end in December 2007. Halton Housing Trust

have extended its contract with Landscape Services until October 2008. The Chief Executive of HHT has indicated that after this date his organisation will join the RSL Joint Procurement Partnership arrangements and a fifth contract will be created. The present HHT contract employs eight full time and six seasonal staff. If the Council decided not to bid for the recently advertised RSL Contracts, or if it failed to secure at least one of the advertised contracts it is very likely that it would not be invited to tender for the HHT contract in October 2008. This would put the current staff that deliver the present HHT contract at risk as there would be no other work for them and no funding for their retention. The staff would of course have rights under TUPE Legislation.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 No significant Equality and Diversity Issue have been identified.

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

9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.