

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 25th September 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director- Environment

SUBJECT: Halton Housing Trust Grounds Maintenance Contract from April 2009.

WARDS: Boroughwide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek retrospective approval to submit a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) to Halton Housing Trust for its advertised Grounds Maintenance Contract that will start on 1st April 2009. To seek approval to enter into the 'Competitive Dialogue' process and submit a Tender to Halton Housing Trust to deliver its Grounds Maintenance Contract from April 2009 for a three year period.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The Strategic Director Environment be given retrospective delegated authority to complete and submit a PQQ for the advertised Halton Housing Trust Grounds Maintenance contract.**
- (2) The Strategic Director Environment be given delegated authority to prepare a enter into the 'Competitive Dialogue' process and bid for the advertised the Halton Housing Trust, Grounds Maintenance Contract;**
- (3) the Strategic Director Environment be given delegated authority to bid for any further landscape maintenance contracts that are advertised by RSL's, Colleges, Landowning Trusts or other Public Bodies;**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 At present the Environment Directorate's, Landscape Services Division through its External Contracts Section delivers a landscape maintenance contract through a Service Level Agreement to the Halton Housing Trust. This arrangement started in December 2005 and was initially supposed to operate for only two years. Halton Housing Trust have extended the agreement three times and it is now due to expire on 31st March 2009.

- 3.2 The Landscape Services Division employs eight full time staff and six seasonal staff in its External Contracts Section who work exclusively on the delivery of the Halton Housing Trust Service Level Agreement Contract. There would be no funding for posts within the External Contracts Section and so these staff would be put at risk. They would however have the right to transfer to any future provider of Halton Housing Trusts landscape maintenance contract under TUPE regulations.
- 3.3 On the 28th July 2008 the Divisional Manager of Landscape Services was notified by the Halton Housing Trust that they had placed an advertisement within OJEU titled 'Halton Housing Trust - Grounds Maintenance Contract - 2008/S 142-190808'. The contract, to be let by 'Competitive Dialogue' will run for a period of three years.
- 3.4 Interested parties were invited to express an interest. Following discussions with the Strategic Director-Environment the Divisional Manager of Landscape Services expressed interest on behalf of Halton Borough Council on the 28th July 2008. The Halton Housing Trust required a PQQ to be submitted by the 21st August 2008. A PQQ was submitted by the Landscape Services Division at 09:30 on the 21st August 2008.
- 3.5 Halton Housing Trust evaluated the submitted PQQ's on the 2nd September 2008. The Landscape Services Divisional Manager was informed on the 3rd September 2008 that the Council had been successful and would be issued with an invitation to participate in the Competitive Dialogue process.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Within the Corporate Plan, 2006-2011, the value of open spaces is recognised under Halton's Urban Renewal Area of Focus 12, maintaining a quality landscape within Halton Housing Trust areas support's the Council's efforts to deliver urban renewal and a better quality of life in Halton.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Currently the value of the present Halton Housing Trust SLA for landscape maintenance is £370K, which covers all of the costs of the delivery of the service. If this funding were not available eight full time staff and six seasonal staff would be put 'at risk'. The Landscape Services Division will provide costs to the Halton Housing Trust as part of the Tender process that will enable it to deliver the service without any requirement for Council Revenue funding.

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

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton Borough Council**

The Halton Housing Trust Grounds Maintenance Contract 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.

5.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton Borough Council**

The Halton Housing Trust contract will encourage bidders to provide apprentice places for local young people. This will have a positive impact on employment and the creation of a skilled workforce.

5.3 **A Healthy Halton**

By securing the advertised contract, and applying proven expertise a significant contribution could be made to the objective of creating a healthy Halton.

5.4 **A Safer Halton**

Securing the advertised contract, and continuing to deliver a quality landscape maintenance service could make a significant contribution to the objective of creating a Safer Halton.

5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Halton Housing Trust Grounds Maintenance Contract will deliver a quality landscape, which will have a direct impact on urban renewal.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 At present the Landscape Services Division delivers 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 has extended its contract with Landscape Services three times and it is now due to expire on the 31st March 2009. The present HHT contract employs eight full time and six seasonal staff. If the Council decided not to bid for the recently advertised Halton Housing Trust Contract, or if it failed to secure the contract 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 Equality and Diversity Issue's have been identified.

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

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