

## **Key Decision: Chief Officer**

**Date: 23 September 2021**

Exempt or confidential report: the following paragraph of Part 4b Section 10 of the constitution applies in respect of information given in Appendices A of this report and they are therefore exempt from publication. Members and officers are advised not to disclose the contents of this report: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

Wards: All Wards

## **Subject: Award of contract for the provision of Electoral Services Printing**

Lead officer: Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services

Lead member: Tobin Byers, Cabinet Member for Finance

Contact officer: Andrew Robertson, Head of Democracy and Electoral Services

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. To award a contract for the provision of Electoral Services Printing on behalf of the London Borough of Merton to the successful bidder as set out in Appendix A from 01/12/2021 for a period of 4 years for the price set out in Appendix A .
- B. In accordance with Contract Standing Orders (CSO 24.3) that authority be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services to exercise, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, the council's option to grant the extension for Merton of the contract term for any period up to one further year beyond the expiry of the initial contract term on 01 December 2025.

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 It has been a longstanding requirement of Commercial Services and Electoral Services to establish an official contract for the provision of Electoral Services Printing.
- 1.2 During the procurement process, it was reasoned that due to the specialised nature of work involved and the limited number of suppliers in the market, if more boroughs were involved in this contract then best value for money could be achieved. In 2019 the London Borough of Wandsworth agreed to join Merton in this procurement, but the project was delayed by a series of snap elections. In 2020 the procurement process was resumed in earnest and the London Borough of Richmond also joined the project.
- 1.3 The procurement was led by Merton Council, on behalf of all three councils. The contracts are to supply Electoral Services Printing, including all elections and electoral registration products, for the London Boroughs of Merton, Richmond and Wandsworth. Each Borough is a separate entity and will manage their own contract separately.
- 1.4 The contract will be for an initial term of 4 years, commencing on 1 December 2021, with the option to extend for a further 12-month period at each Council's discretion.

1.5 Now that the procurement process has been completed, this report seeks approval to award a contract for the provision of Electoral Services Printing on behalf of the London Boroughs of Merton, Richmond and Wandsworth to the successful bidder.

## 2. DETAILS

- 2.1 The restricted procurement process was led by Merton Council, on behalf of all three councils. The Supplier Questionnaire (SQ) was published on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021, along with all tender documents on the London Tenders Portal and was made available to all those suppliers expressing an interest in the opportunity.
- 2.2 Four SQ submissions were received by the submission deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and were deemed compliant.
- 2.3 The Invitation to Tender (ITT) was sent on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 to the four suppliers who submitted an SQ response.
- 2.4 Four tender submissions were received by the submission deadline of 1 April 2021 and were deemed compliant.
- 2.5 The contract was awarded based on the most economically advantageous tender to the Council and based on a 50% Quality: 50% Price split.
- 2.6 The bids were evaluated against the following Quality criteria;

### For each Lot

Criteria	Sub Criteria	Weighting	Sub Criteria Weighting
<b>Technical &amp; Quality</b>		<b>50%</b>	
	Service delivery proposal		10%
	Risk management approach		5%
	Social Value		5%
<b>Price</b>		<b>50%</b>	
	Price		50%

### Lot 1: Elections Print and Post

Criteria	Sub Criteria	Weighting	Sub Criteria Weighting
<b>Technical &amp; Quality</b>			

	Quality assurance		5%
	Production and Delivery		5%
	Flexibility to change		5%
	Compliance to legislation		5%

**Lot 2: Statutory Registration, Annual Canvass, Household Notification Letters (HNL)**

Criteria	Sub Criteria	Weighting	Sub Criteria Weighting
<b>Technical &amp; Quality</b>			
	Value for money		5%
	Capacity and Capability		5%

2.7 The names of the tenderers and their respective scores are included in Appendix A (Exempt). Officers therefore recommend the award of the contract to the highest scoring tenderer.

**3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1 Originally Merton was going to tender as a single authority, however it was reasoned that due to the specialised nature of work involved and the limited number of suppliers in the market, if more boroughs were involved in this contract then best value for money could be achieved.

3.2 All boroughs involved in the South London Legal partnership were approached but only Richmond and Wandsworth were able to enter into the project at this time.

**4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1 The tender evaluation was carried out by the Heads of Electoral Services from the London Boroughs of Merton, Richmond and Wandsworth.

4.2 Each compliant tender was evaluated individually by each member of the evaluation panel, using evaluation sheets to note down their comments on how well each of the award criteria was addressed.

- 4.3 The panel met on 7 June 2021 to discuss individual scores and comments for each question in order to arrive at an agreed, moderated score.

## **5. TIMETABLE**

- a. The contract is due to commence on 1 December 2021, for an initial term of 4 years, with the option to extend for a further 12-month period at each Council's discretion.

## **6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The value of the contract for Merton is included in Appendix A (Exempt)
- 6.2 A credit check was carried out on the successful bidder and the recommended contract value is £1,800,000 for a single contract and £3,000,000 for all contracts.
- 6.3 The value of the contract will vary year on year depending on the elections which are held. The values quoted do not include the cost of postage.
- 6.4 Where spend is incurred on electoral printing for non-local elections, the costs incurred will be included in claims made for reimbursement from the GLA or Cabinet Office.
- 6.5 For spend incurred on local elections, there is a nominal estimated cost saving of approximately £4731 per annum based on the quotes supplied by the bidders.

## **7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 A compliant procurement was run in line with Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) and the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSO). As set out above, CSO 23 was followed in respect of evaluation of bids and award criteria.
- 7.2 The Council needs to take a decision in accordance with the conditions set out in CSO 24.2. Once CSO 24 has been satisfied, the Council can proceed to issue standstill letters to both the unsuccessful tenderers and the successful tenderer in accordance with CSO 19.5 and the usual contract award notices in accordance with CSO 20.
- 7.4 Once the contract is entered into, the Council will need to comply with the requirements of CSO 32 to ensure that the contract is recorded on the Council's Contract Register and finalise the regulation 84 report required under the PCR.

## **8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The provider has confirmed that they pay staff above the London Living wage.
- 8.2 They also add a social value benefit by reducing their waste, carbon footprint and using environmentally friendly goods

## **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None

## **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Elections printing is very high profile and any issues have the potential to cause reputational damage to the council. Therefore it is important that the successful bidder has experience in the market, hence the restricted procurement.

10.2 The successful bidder is an experienced provider that specialises in Electoral Services Printing and provides a complete service for an Electoral Services department. Nationally, they have around 80 local authority clients including several London Boroughs.

## **11. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

11.1 Appendix A – Exempt – Name and Value of Contract

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None