

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

3 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANT – REVIEW OF HOMELESS SERVICES IN WIRRAL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- advise Members of the outcome of the recent tendering exercise and evaluation process carried out in respect of commissioning a review of Homelessness services in Wirral, which Cabinet approved on 23rd June 2011 and;
- to seek Members approval to appoint GLHS Ltd to carry out this review on behalf of Wirral Council.

1.2 The review is required to:

- meet the Council's statutory duties under the Homelessness Act 2002, which includes developing and publishing a new Homeless Strategy informed by a comprehensive review of all forms of homelessness in the Wirral area;
- assist in meeting one of the Council's Corporate Priorities to significantly 'prevent and alleviate homelessness';
- assist in meeting key targets in the Housing Strategic Plan (approved by Members at Cabinet on 23rd June 2011), to commission a complete review of homeless services and provision in Wirral and developing and implementing a new Homeless Strategy.

1.3 This report contains an Exempt Appendix which provides details of all tenders and their respective price submissions and evaluation scores achieved against the tender scoring matrix. The inclusion of the names of the contractors, save for the successful contractor, is considered commercially sensitive and therefore considered exempt information under Part 1,

Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) notes the outcome of the recent tendering exercise and evaluation process carried out in respect of commissioning a consultant to assist the Council undertake a review of Homeless services in Wirral;
- b) approves the appointment of GLHS Ltd to assist the Council carry out the requisite homeless services review, required in connection with developing and implementing a new Homeless Strategy;
- c) agrees to the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning, in consultation with the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management (or officers duly authorised by them) to complete any legal documents necessary to give effect to paragraph 2.1 (b) above.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 Following Members approval at Cabinet on 23rd June 2011, officers carried out a tendering exercise to engage consultants to undertake a Review of Homelessness in Wirral. This was carried out in accordance with the Councils Contract Procedure Rules. The closing date for receipt of tenders was 12.00 noon on 19th September 2011.
- 3.2 A total of fifteen submissions were received ranging in price from £9,500 to £32,968, with varying quality standards. The evaluation panel, consisting of officers from the Housing Strategy Team and Rehousing Services Team, scored the submissions based on the method statements each organisation submitted. These method statements counted for 50% of the overall scores, with the remaining 50% based on costs.
- 3.3 As a result of this process, the most economically advantageous supplier providing best value in line with the original scope and specification, was the tender submission by GLHS Ltd at £23,383. Appendix 1 of this report provides an evaluation table which clearly details the weighted scores for each of the suppliers for both price (50% of the scoring) and quality (50% of the scoring). The tendering exercise produced both a broad range of prices and clear variations in quality. The evaluation process revealed that GLHS Ltd provided a very high quality submission, which looks to achieve the scope and specification at a reasonable cost (£23,383) and was considered the most appropriate contractor to carry out the work required in relation to the review into Homeless Services in Wirral.
- 3.4 The Exempt Appendix includes all the information and the names of all the other tenderers against their prices and scores.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The appointed contractor will carry out a thorough review of the existing Homeless Strategy and action plan, which will involve evaluating success by analysing performance and feedback, including consideration of the impact of changes in policy, legislation and case law in order to understand their impact they have had. The contractor will engage with a range of stakeholders, service users and providers, through a variety of methods including online engagement (such as a survey or online discussion board), specific focus groups, one to one discussions (either in person or over the telephone) with key stakeholders and consultation through existing forums.
- 4.2 The contractor will use a combination of research and data to examine levels of and routes into homelessness, taking into account changing demographics with associated demand and implications on homelessness from the welfare and social housing reforms. The contractor will also identify all homeless prevention services and will project different types of need for the Wirral. The contractor will also assess the efficiency and effectiveness of existing services and as part of the review will draw on service user feedback obtained through consultation. Comparative data will be used to enable the contractor to determine whether specific services are delivering value for money.
- 4.3 Throughout the review the contractor will identify any gaps and barriers in relation to homelessness services and identify and recommend positive and emerging practice that could be used to address the gaps and barriers in Wirral. The contractor will also review national and local drivers impacting on change and explore, the opportunities (including funding) and challenges these drivers present to addressing homelessness in Wirral.
- 4.4 It is anticipated that the contractor will commence the review in November 2011 and complete the review by the end of March 2012. The contractor will be required to provide an interim report detailing their initial findings of the review by mid February 2012. This initial report will form the basis for further consultation with key stakeholders before a finalised report with recommendations is provided in March 2012. The findings of the review and recommendations will be presented to Cabinet.
- 4.5 The review will be monitored by a project steering group consisting of representatives from the Housing Strategy Team, the Rehousing Services Team and the Supporting People Team, who will have regular contact with the contractor throughout the review process.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 Carrying out a comprehensive review of homelessness and using this to inform and produce a Homeless Strategy is in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002. Therefore if this is not carried out Wirral Council will be in breach of its statutory obligations and subject to potential legal challenge.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The option to conduct the review using in house staffing resources was considered and outlined to members at Cabinet at its meeting on 23rd June

2011. Conducting the review in-house was not considered good practice as an internal review may not be as effective, objective or sufficiently independent. The review needs to be independent to be able to help identify which services need improvement/development and/or whether there is a need to refocus priorities and action plans, and/or a need to reconfigure resources. The contractor as part of the review will also put forward recommendations for improvement.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation in respect of the review into homeless services will include stakeholders, partner organisations and other interested persons. Many of the homelessness services in Wirral are carried out by the voluntary, community and faith sector; therefore all such relevant bodies will be consulted.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 The Homeless Review will positively affect the general public, Housing Associations, local enterprises, local services, and voluntary and community organisations. All relevant representations made by such bodies/persons will be considered as part of the review.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 9.1 Officers within the Strategic Housing Division of Regeneration, Housing and Planning will work with the consultant to complete the review.
- 9.2 The review into homeless services will cost £23,382.60 with this being met from the Supporting People Reserve as the Review will be vital in determining the commissioning needs for housing support services in Wirral for socially excluded groups.
- 9.3 There are no IT or assets implications arising from the report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There is a statutory requirement for the Council to produce a Homeless Strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002 based on the findings of the review into homeless services.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups will be considered as part of the review into homeless services will be addressed within the Homeless Strategy. It is a key objective of the current Strategy to ensure that those at risk of homelessness or currently homeless have equal access to opportunities, and would continue to be so in the new Strategy.

- 11.2 The Homeless Strategy aims to reduce poverty, isolation and exclusion by meeting local needs and assisting to provide access to appropriate accommodation.

- 11.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? Yes

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None known.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no planning and community safety implications arising from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Evaluation Table

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Review of Homeless Services in Wirral	23rd June 2011