

WIRRAL COUNCIL

**REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND PERFORMANCE
COMMITTEE**

17TH SEPTEMBER 2013

SUBJECT:	<i>USE OF DELEGATED POWERS REPORT</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL WARDS</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members in accordance with the “Approved Scheme of Delegation” and the “Contract Procedure Rules” of the use of delegated authority to

a) accept the lowest tender to continue the maintenance of a number of sites acquired/created during the Housing Market Renewal Initiative, located in Birkenhead, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and Wallasey and;

b) accept the tender to appoint Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners to undertake a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Wirral.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 That the Regeneration and the Environment Policy and Performance Committee note the use of delegated authority to accept the lowest tender to continue the maintenance of a number of sites acquired/created during the Housing Market Renewal Initiative, located in Birkenhead, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and Wallasey

2.2 That the Regeneration and the Environment Policy and Performance Committee note the use of delegated authority to accept the tender to appoint Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners to undertake a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Wirral.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 Contract Procedure Rules require that tenders with a value of more than £50,000 that are approved using delegated authority must be reported to the next meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

Maintenance of sites

4.1 As part of the former HMRI a number of sites were acquired and/or created through the demolition of low demand housing. The majority of these remaining

sites will eventually be redeveloped over time, however, in the mean time, arrangements are necessary to ensure the sites don't become a nuisance and blight on local neighbourhoods. The maintenance of the sites includes grass cutting and fly tip removal. During 2012/13 the maintenance contract was awarded to Lairdside Communities Together and this contract expired on the 31st March 2013. This was extended to allow for the completion of a new tendering exercise to appoint a contractor for 2013/16.

- 4.2 The tendering exercise started on the 28th of May. A total of 12 submissions were received during the tender period. Following the subsequent evaluation of the tenders received, the winning contractor was determined to be Continental Landscapes Ltd. The contract price for the 33 month term is £56,565. This compares to the previous contract sum of £20,000 which covered a 10 month period.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 4.3 Under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, local authorities are required to consider the various accommodation needs of the local population and to carry out periodic reviews in order to provide relevant and appropriate provision to meet these needs. The information obtained through this is used to enable the Council to update and inform its Housing Strategy, strategic priorities and to provide the evidence base for the preparation of the Local Development Framework.
- 4.4 Wirral's existing Strategic Housing Market Assessment was completed in 2007 and approved at Cabinet as material consideration in negotiating with developers on affordable housing contributions through S106 agreements.
- 4.5 The SHMA was subsequently updated in 2009, however this evidence base is no longer considered robust due to the fact that the original survey data undertaken dates back to 2006/07. The update also used 2006 household projections as the basis for estimating household change, however the 2011 Census data recently released identifies that the number of actual households recorded is much higher than the number previously projected.
- 4.6 This has placed uncertainty on the previous household projections used in the existing SHMA and highlighted the need to take post Census data into account as part of a new SHMA. In addition there have also been significant changes in relation to the economy, the housing market and people's circumstances since 2006/07, which the existing assessment does not take into account, hence the need for a new assessment to be undertaken.
- 4.7 The tendering exercise started on the 10th May 2013. A total of three eligible submissions were received during the tender period. Following the subsequent evaluation of the tenders received, the winning consultant was determined to be Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners. The contract price submitted was £45,770.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 The maintenance contract allows for the removal of 300 fly tips of approximately 1 tonne each over the term of the contract. There is a possibility that more than 300 fly tips may occur during this period which will increase the price above the contract sum. The estimated number of fly tips was based on

previous experience and is considered to be realistic for the sites involved. In addition a contingency was built into the original figure and this should protect the Council in the event of unforeseen work.

- 5.2 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment relies on a range of data sources, and in particular consultation with members of the public and key stakeholders. There is the possibility that the overall process for carrying out the SHMA may take slightly longer than the six month timetable agreed. This risk will be mitigated by regular updates from the consultant appointed along with regular meetings to discuss progress. The consultant has also provided a detailed risk assessment documenting how they would mitigate any delays in the overall timetable for this work.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 In respect of the maintenance contract, the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team were not in a position to be able to take on this work at the start of the tendering exercise, however there may be opportunities in the future for them to do so.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The tendering exercise was undertaken using the North West's Local Authority Procurement Portal, otherwise known as 'The Chest'.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 The appointed maintenance contractor has advised that opportunities to engage with local communities will be explored and developed by the Contract Manager.
- 8.2 Nathaniel, Litchfield and Partners will engage with a wide variety of stakeholders, members of the public and community, voluntary and faith groups as they undertake specific elements of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This includes telephone questionnaires and stakeholder consultation events.

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

- 9.1 The maintenance contract sum is £56,565 spread evenly over 33 months. Resources have been identified to cover these costs from HMRI Revenue Budget (H7140) which in turn is supported by the HMRI/Empty Property Reserve (0000 475B R8036). The contract can be managed using existing IT and staffing resources. During the course of the contract period a number of the sites will be developed and eventually sold thus reducing the Councils liability.
- 9.2 The SHMA contract sum is £45,770. Resources have been identified to cover these costs from a Housing Strategy Research Budget (H7090 R402 46143) managed by the Housing Strategy Team to undertake this type of statutory research.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 A contract between the Council and Continental Landscapes was signed on the 25th of July 2013 and is now operational.

10.2 A contract between the Council and Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners (NLP) was signed on 24th July 2013 and is operational from 1st August 2013 to 31st January 2014.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no discrimination issues, nor any social inclusion or human rights issues arising from the use of delegated power.

11.2 It is considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is not required in both cases

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Continental Landscapes Ltd has an Environmental and Re-cycling policy that is certified to ISO 14001:2004. The successful submission for the maintenance contract advised that approximately 85% of the waste generated is recycled.

12.2 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment when complete will enable the Council to update and inform its Housing Strategy, strategic priorities and to provide the evidence base for the preparation of the Local Development Framework. It will identify what new housing supply is required in the borough along with the type and tenure of housing. In instances where new housing replaces older poor quality stock, new improved building standards, practices and materials will be used. This will have a significant impact on carbon reduction across the borough.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Results of the SHMA will inform the future housing requirement for the borough and produce the key evidence base for the Core Strategy.

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REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date