

<b>Report to:</b>	Environment and Neighbourhood Committee	<b>Date:</b>	11 March 2020
<b>Report title:</b>	Procurement of Tree Maintenance Services for Council Owned Trees		
<b>Report from:</b>	Simon Latham, Interim Strategic Director, Environment, Housing and Regeneration		
<b>Ward/Areas affected:</b>	Borough Wide		
<b>Chair of Committee/Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Manuel Abellan		
<b>Author(s)/Contact Number(s):</b>	Bill Wyatt, Technical Services Manager, 020 8770 4674		
<b>Corporate Plan Priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being Active</li> <li>• Smarter Ways of Working</li> </ul>		
<b>Open/Exempt:</b>	Report - Open Appendix A - Exempt Under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 Paragraph 3		
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	27 February 2020

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 As part of the Council's 'Ambitious for Sutton' plan, we are committed to maintaining and improving the environment for all our residents. Trees and woodlands are an important part of Sutton's parks and streets and contribute to climate change mitigation, with growing support for tree planting to increase canopy cover throughout London. Ensuring that our trees are healthy and well maintained benefits the community and enables the Council to meet the objectives of its ambitious Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.
- 1.2 This report seeks permission to award a contract to provide tree maintenance services for Council owned trees from April 2020.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the award of the contract for the maintenance of Council owned trees, upon successful completion of the 10 day mandatory standstill period, to Contractor A. This will be for a period of 5 years, commencing on 1 April 2020 with an option to extend for a further 2 years, at 12 monthly intervals.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The current tree maintenance contract, awarded to City Suburban Tree Surgeons Ltd, commenced in April 2012 for an initial period of five years with an option to extend for a further three years. As a result of the quality of work completed, the options for extensions were taken up, however the contract will now end on 31 March 2020.
- 3.2 As part of the overarching Environment Strategy the recently published Parks and Open Spaces Strategy that includes the Tree Strategy, sets out the policies and actions the Council will follow to manage and protect trees and landscapes. The strategy recognises the need for trees to be managed and maintained to ensure public safety, to keep them healthy and prolong their life, and to mitigate issues with neighbouring properties.
- 3.3 Trees help to reduce pollution, by capturing carbon and filtering particulate pollution, greatly improving air quality. Not only does this help achieve sustainability targets, but by making the outdoors more appealing and healthy for residents well managed trees help to encourage residents to be active, a key priority set out in the corporate plan “Ambitious for Sutton”.
- 3.4 The Council has approximately 330,000 trees, including 17,500 on highways. Council officers inspect trees on a cyclical programme to identify maintenance works required. The Council requires a tree maintenance contractor to carry out work identified during inspections by council officers to ensure trees remain safe and healthy and to maintain the Council’s duty of care.

### **4. Issues**

#### Process followed

- 4.1 The Council conducted the procurement using the restricted procedure in accordance with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/102) (PCR 2015). The Restricted Procedure was used as there were likely to be many suppliers interested in the opportunity. The Council therefore used a two stage process where at the first stage, all bidders were invited to bid. Those bids were evaluated and only providers with the best capacity and capability to meet the contract requirements were invited to the second stage to bid on the full tender.
- 4.2 At the first stage, eleven providers bid for the contract. All bids received were scored in accordance with the guidance published to determine capacity and capability of the provider to meet the contract requirements. Out of the eleven bids received, eight of the highest ranked providers were invited to the second full tender stage (ITT).
- 4.3 The tender was based on a 70% quality and 30% price ratio in the evaluation process. The quality section was scored by assessing the responses to questions about: staffing levels, vehicles and machinery allocation, social value, previous comparable experience & competency, customer care, health and safety, and environmental standards. The tender responses were scored against the specification, method statement questions and published criteria.

## **5. Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Council has considered other ways to provide the service, including working with the existing grounds maintenance contractor and working with adjacent boroughs. Working with adjacent boroughs would have increased the size of the contract, but could have led to the exclusion of experienced, but smaller scale and more locally focussed providers from tendering.

## **6. Impacts and Implications**

### Financial

- 6.1 The cost of tree planting has risen more than pruning works. The rest of the increase is due to higher rates for other maintenance work compared to the previous contract which was let 7 years ago. The previous contract did not allow for annual inflation increases so the rates quoted now are higher because they are reflecting changes in the market over the past 7 years.
- 6.2 The increased cost of activities means that less work can be funded from the existing budget. The annual work programme will therefore be adjusted to focus more on health and safety related work and less on aesthetic pruning.
- 6.3 As work is paid for on completion, there is a low financial risk to the Council should the contractor fail to deliver the work as expected.

### Legal

- 6.4 This report describes a procurement run in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR). Following observance of the standstill period as noted in paragraph 2.1 and as stated in regulation 87 of the PCR the Council may enter into the agreement with the contractor noted to have submitted the most economically advantageous tender.
- 6.5 A contract award notice should be published within 30 days of the award of the contract in accordance with regulation 50(1), and a report prepared in accordance with regulation 84 and in compliance with regulation 108 of the PCR.

## 7. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix letter	Title
A	Outcome of Tendering Process - Exempt Under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 Paragraph 3

Background documents
None

Audit Trail		
Version	Final	Date: 27 February 2020
Consultation with other officers		
Finance	Yes	Victoria Goddard
Legal	Yes	Jonathan Miller
Equality Impact Assessment required?	No	N/A