

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 23 JUNE 2003
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

FP ref.no.

FOR ACTION

NAME OF WARD(S)
AFFECTED: HARLESDEN

REPORT TITLE : SURE START ROUNDWOOD: ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report seeks the Executive's approval to the continued use of the architectural practice of Llowarch & Llowarch on the Sure Start Roundwood project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Executive notes the manner in which the architectural practice of Llowarch & Llowarch was appointed as set out in paragraph 5.6.

2.2 That the Executive agrees that, subject to the Manager, Corporate Property ensuring Llowarch & Llowarch meets the Council's minimum requirements in terms of financial standing, technical capacity and technical expertise and negotiating suitable terms with them, there are good financial and/or operational reasons for the continued use of Llowarch & Llowarch on this project for the reasons noted in the Detail to this report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The professional fees which would be paid to Llowarch & Llowarch should they continue as architects to this project would be broadly in line with the fee scales payable for similar work to the two practices of architects selected to work for Brent following the recent retendering exercise of the Council's architectural consultant contract.

3.2 To terminate the engagement of Llowarch & Llowarch in favour of one of the two practices referred to in 3.1 would result in additional cost to Brent and a delay in the project.

3.3 The total fees payable to Llowarch & Llowarch on the Sure Start Roundwood project will be less than the EU threshold for services contracts of £ 154,000.

3.4 The budget for the Sure Start Roundwood project contains an amount to cover architectural fees. Fees paid to Llowarch & Llowarch for work to date on this project, pending the Executive's approval to continue with their appointment, amount to some £ 7,000.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The value of the contract with Llowarch & Llowarch is less than £154,000 and therefore is not subject to the EU Procurement Regulations.

4.2 Ordinarily, in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders all contracts valued between £20,000 and £150,000 should be let after seeking three competitive quotes.

4.3 Standing Order 85(a) states that all contracts must be let in accordance with Contract Standing Orders unless the Executive agrees that there are good operational and/or financial reasons not to.

4.4 It is usual practice before appointing a contractor to ensure they meet the Council's minimum standards of financial standing, technical capacity and technical expertise.

4.5 It is intended that the Council enter into a formal written contract with Llowarch & Llowarch based on the Royal Institute of British Architect's Standard Form of Agreement for the appointment of an architect.

4.6 The Council's existing architectural consultant contract is a call off contract. It is not an exclusive arrangement and therefore it is not a breach of that contract for the Council to engage other architects if it chooses.

5.0 DETAIL

5.1 The Roundwood Project is the third Sure Start project underway in the borough, following on from Sure Start Central Brent (at Bridge Road) and Sure Start Kilburn (at Canterbury Road).

5.2 Unlike the Central Brent and Kilburn projects, which are Primary Care Trust led, the Roundwood project is Brent Council Social Services led.

5.3 Like the other two Sure Start projects, the aim of the Roundwood project is to create facilities for 0-4 year olds in a specific catchment area with the objective of improving their life chances.

5.4 In addition to office accommodation for the Sure Start staff, the facility will contain space for a neighbourhood nursery, creche and drop-in, consultation rooms and support and advice space for health visitors.

5.5 A capital budget of £ 1,075,000 (one million and seventy five thousand pounds) has been awarded by the Government Office for London Sure Start

unit to this project, subject to GOL's formal approval. In addition, some £ 206,000 of New Opportunities Fund monies and Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative monies have been allocated to this project.

- 5.6** On the recommendation of the consultant then working on the Sure Start Central Brent project for Parkside Health Authority, the architectural practice of Llowarch & Llowarch was employed at the onset of the Roundwood project in August 2002 to give advice on options where to build in the Roundwood catchment area and produce feasibility studies for the Brent team.
- 5.7** Curzon Crescent Nursery School has been selected as the main site for the new neighbourhood nursery with drop-in and consultation facilities : it is proposed to build an extension onto the existing school. Llowarch & Llowarch, working in consultation with the Head Teacher and Brent's project team, have obtained outline planning permission for the extension and now wish to proceed with the detailed plans.
- 5.8** Before progressing further with this project and work on the Sure Start offices at another, nearby location, the appointment of Llowarch & Llowarch needs to be formalised, as at present their appointment has not been in accordance with the requirement in Standing Orders to obtain three competitive quotes.
- 5.9** Officers working with Llowarch & Llowarch on this project recommend that there are good operational and/or financial reasons for confirming their appointment as follows:
- i) they are professional in their approach and so far have performed well.
 - ii) their fees are in line with Royal Institution of British Architects scales and are not too different from the fees being charged by Brent's contracted architects for similar projects.
 - iii) To dis-instruct then now and award the work to one of Brent's two contracted architects will result in extra costs and delays in the project.
 - iv) Time for progressing the project is becoming critical : the NOF and NNI monies need to be fully committed, if not spent, by 01 April 2004 if they are not to be withheld / lost. It is estimated that appointment of another architect at this stage will add at least another two months to the project timetable thereby meaning that the deadline of 1 April 2004 will not be achievable. GOL's Sure Start unit has asked for the project financial approval document (form F25) to be submitted as soon as possible in order to process the application through GOL's channels : to complete the forms additional architectural inputs and cost estimates will be required.
 - v) Llowarch & Llowarch are fully conversant with the project and they have succeeded in obtaining outline planning permission for the planned extension to Curzon Crescent in addition to working on options for a location for the Sure Start offices. Llowarch & Llowarch's

involvement in the project to date, and their continued involvement if approved by the Executive, will not be in breach of any of the conditions of the grant funding which forms a crucial part of the project's budget.

6.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project papers, minutes of meetings, architects feasibility study and outline capital plan .

Copies of above held by :

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