



Cabinet
10 November 2014

**Report from the Strategic Director of
Regeneration and Growth**

For Action

Wards affected:
ALL

**Authority to award the Brent Employment Services
Provider Framework**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks authority to appoint Providers onto the Brent Employment Services Framework, as required by Contract Standing Order 88. This report summarises the process undertaken in tendering this Framework and, following the completion of the evaluation of the tenders, recommends to whom the Framework should be awarded.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet to approve the appointments of the twelve (12) providers listed in Para. 3.15 of this report to the Brent Employment Services (multi-provider) Framework for an initial period of two (2) years with an option to extend up to a further two (2) years.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The proposed Brent Employment Services Provider Framework ("the Framework") will comprise a multi-provider arrangement consisting of preferred organisations able to deliver employment-related support services to Brent residents in pursuit of Borough priorities as detailed in the Cabinet report, Brent Employment Services Provider Framework, dated 26 August 2014.
- 3.2 We are proposing to appoint 12 providers (which includes consortia's) to act as Framework partners due to the high response and variety of tenders received.

- 3.3 The Framework was competitively tendered through an open procurement round adhering to internal corporate procurement guidelines, which abides by the EU treaty principles with regards to public procurement. The tender was administered through the council's e-tendering portal, London Tenders Portal.
- 3.4 The process started with a market-testing event in May, where we gauged market response to the opportunity. In September the formal bidding process opened, corresponding with a tender information event attended by over 60 local, regional and national providers. The written bid submissions comprised of pre-qualification questions and tender questions, submitted together within a 21 day tendering period.
- 3.5 We received interest from local, regional and national providers. A total of 189 expressions of interest were received, resulting in 38 completed responses. Of these, 28 providers and consortia qualified through the pre-qualification questions and were assessed against the evaluation criteria in the tender documents.
- 3.6 The evaluation panel comprised of three (3) officers from the Employment and Enterprise team with both delivery and performance management experience and representation from the council's Partnership and Engagement team.
- 3.7 The tender questions were double scored for accuracy adhering to open and objective scoring guidelines. Following written scoring, we undertook clarification interviews with a selection of larger providers who have not previously engaged with the council to seek further clarity regarding their submissions for appointment onto the Framework. These were clarification interviews, addressing specific detail highlighted in their bid submission.
- 3.8 Transparent evaluation criteria assessed submissions based on tenderer's capacity and capability to support Brent residents into meaningful and sustainable employment. The criteria included assessing:
- local knowledge and accessibility to our priority neighbourhoods;
 - an understanding of the multiple and complex constraints residents face when finding, securing and sustaining employment;
 - quality assurance and performance management;
 - cost implications and economic competitiveness; and
 - track record.
- 3.9 Officers shall issue the scoring guidelines and detailed feedback to every submission received.
- 3.10 Objective and open scoring has identified 12 providers and consortia to be appointed onto the Framework. Submissions representing the 12 highest scoring bids are being presented and recommended to Cabinet.
- 3.11 Critically we need a strong presence of established local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) organisations on the Framework. Brent community-based organisations have local expertise and existing in-roads to our most disadvantaged communities. Therefore a strong, local supply chain

and experience of delivering in Brent is essential for the success of the Framework. One third of Framework partners are established local voluntary and community sector partners.

- 3.12 Framework providers and consortia have the capacity and capability collectively to serve a broad range of cohorts and support needs, with local provision complemented by regional providers experienced in delivering to London's most disadvantaged communities and the expertise of larger national providers delivering sub-regional contracts.
- 3.13 By following the council's corporate procurement process we are presented with some new entrants to the market in Brent as well as regional and national providers who have previously engaged with the council. However these providers are alongside local providers who have been commissioned by the council previously to deliver employment-related services. There are also four (4) large national providers who are well versed in securing public contracts through competitive bidding. They add value to the Framework, especially for cross-borough European Social Fund (ESF) contracts; however this is at the expense of appointing local, specialist provision to the Framework, who failed to achieve a top scoring bid.
- 3.14 In the event of securing funding to deliver specialist employment provision to support offenders or residents with learning difficulties or disabilities we reserve the right to commission outside of the Framework. In these instances, for low value contracts, Officers will follow Contract Standing Orders with regards to seeking specialists to quote and compete for these opportunities in the future.
- 3.15 Upcoming call-offs for Framework providers and consortia include:
- recommissioning of a Job Brokerage service to support residents impacted by welfare reform to be released at the end of November 2014;
 - European Social Fund specifications due to be launched in January 2015 presenting a huge opportunity for Brent and its partners. We have been closely involved with London Councils and the GLA in the development of these specifications and are well positioned to bid for this round of funding.
- 3.16 Subsequently, objective and open scoring has identified the following 12 providers to be appointed onto the Framework:

Name	Needs addressed		Score (per cent)
Prospects Services	Young people	National	88
Prospects has a strong understanding of the challenges facing young people at key transition points between education, training and employment. They deliver the Connexions service in Brent and are well placed to deliver programmes across the borough, with existing links to services for young people, schools and stakeholders relevant for supporting this cohort.			
Reed in Partnership	Broad range	National	88
Reed in Partnership delivers employment programmes nationally, and brings			

a wealth of resources and knowledge to help a range of support needs into meaningful employment. They are a Work Programme Prime provider and have previously engaged with us positively. Critically, Reed in Partnership brings expertise in delivering cross-borough ESF specifications.			
East London Advanced Technology Training (VCSE)	Broad range	Regional	87
A leading London charity highly experienced in the provision of employment and skills services working with long term unemployed, 16-24 NEET, those with disabilities, women and BAME communities for over 30 years and in Brent since 2011. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the challenges facing Brent residents across a range of cohorts and support needs and clearly outlined established routes into our most disadvantaged communities. Although a relatively new provider for Brent, they have a strong understanding of stakeholders and services across the borough.			
Groundwork (VCSE)	Broad range including provision for offenders and mental health	Regional	81
Groundwork has a strong track record of delivering community-based projects to support unemployed residents across West London find, secure and sustain employment. They show wide capacity across the borough, with a range of partners who ensure they remain embedded within our priority neighbourhoods, delivering flexible, high quality support with a strong community ethos.			
South Kilburn Trust (VCSE)	South Kilburn	Local	81
<p>South Kilburn Trust has pulled together a strong consortium of registered housing providers and community organisations to deliver neighbourhood-based provision across one of our priority areas. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help Somalia Foundation • Brent Housing Partnership • Network Stadium Housing • A Fairer Chance • P3 • Richmond Fellowship • Genesis Housing • 5E • Catalyst Housing • London and Quadrant Housing Trust <p>The consortium will be led by the Employment and Enterprise Lead based in the Trust.</p>			
P3 (VCSE)	Broad range	National	78
P3 delivers services to young people and vulnerable adults across Brent and has an established local provision in Brent. They support a range of cohorts to find, secure and sustain meaningful employment.			
CNWL NHS Trust	Multiple and complex support needs including mental health and addiction.	Regional	78

Central and North West London NHS Trust offers a range of intensive employment support services for residents recovering from addictions and mental health conditions. They specialise in supporting multiple and complex support needs through their Individual Placement and Support model (IPS).			
Lift People (VCSE)	Broad range	Local	76
Lift People is an established local voluntary and community sector provider with a focus on supporting disadvantaged adults and homelessness. They are based in Harlesden, with a satellite site in another priority area.			
Sarina Russo	Broad range	National	76
Sarina Russo has previously engaged with the council and delivers a variety of contracts regionally and nationally. They have particular experience in delivering in-work training. Although new to delivery in Brent, Sarina Russo has recently established a base in Wembley. They have experience of supporting a broad range of cohorts into meaningful employment, and offer expertise of delivering larger cross-borough ESF contracts.			
Renaissi (VCSE)	Broad range	Regional	75
Renaissi delivers regeneration based activities across disadvantaged communities in London. Leading a consortium of registered housing providers Genesis, Network Stadium and London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Renaissi is able to deliver from numerous sites across our priority neighbourhoods with in-roads to our most disadvantaged communities.			
Ashford Place (VCSE)	Broad range	Local	74
Ashford Place is an established local voluntary and community sector provider with a focus on supporting disadvantaged adults and homelessness. They are based in Cricklewood and deliver a range of community activities and outreach services as well as running an employment division.			
New Challenge (VCSE)	Broad range	Local	73
New Challenge delivers a range of employment contracts including the National Careers Service from their Wembley base. They offer specialist support for the 50+ as well as showing demonstrable capacity to support a range of cohorts into meaningful employment.			

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Framework has an estimated value of between £100,000 - £20 million, depending on our ability to attract funding from external sources including:
- European Structural and Investment Funds
 - Department for Work and Pensions
 - Department for Communities and Local Government
 - The Big Lottery Fund
 - Various grant givers and funders across the public, private and charitable sectors.
- 4.2 Whilst the Framework will be used as the main method of procurement we reserve the right to:
- commission contracts outside of the Framework in line with Council procurement guidelines;
 - remove partners from the Framework for poor performance;

- remove partners for failure to bid for any call-off contracts within a two year period.
- offer no guarantee of any call-off contracts.

In most instances, contracts will be based on a payment by results model. It is possible that some opportunities may not follow this model, though unlikely, as every funding opportunity is different. We therefore cannot guarantee, from the outset, that all opportunities will follow this model.

- 4.3 As such the Framework makes no guarantee once it is established and therefore until a call-off contract is made, there is no contractual obligation or risk to the Council.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The estimated value of the Framework over its lifetime makes it a High Value contract which is in excess of £250,000 and therefore the procurement of and appointments to the Framework are subject to the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in respect of High Value Contracts. However, the procurement is of a service that is classed as "part B" services under the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (as amended) ("the Regulations") and therefore the Regulations only applied in part. However there is still a duty under the Regulations to act fairly and transparently to all bidders.
- 5.2 Officers had indicated within the tender documentation that appointment to the Framework would be made to the highest scoring 12 providers and are now seeking Member approval to appoint the recommended providers listed at Para. 3.15.
- 5.3 Although the services under the proposed Framework are deemed a Part B service under the Regulations, as advised in the Pre-Tender Cabinet report, Officers will observe a voluntary 10 day standstill period under the Regulations, so as to enable any unsuccessful providers to review and seek further clarification in relation to the Council's proposed award decision. Therefore once Cabinet has determined which tenderers should be appointed onto the Framework, all tenderers (including the unsuccessful) will be issued with written notification of the proposed Framework award decision. A minimum 10 calendar day standstill period will then be observed before the Framework is concluded – this period will begin the day after all tenderers are sent notification of the award decision – and additional debrief information will be provided to unsuccessful tenderers in accordance with the Regulations. As soon as possible after the standstill period ends, the successful tenderers will be issued with a letter of acceptance and the Framework agreement(s) may be conclude and commence.
- 5.4 Members should note that by nature of this service being procured via a Framework arrangement there is not commitment from the Council to procure any services and there is no guarantee of work under the Framework. Moreover, a binding contract will come into place following award of a call-off contract to one of the Framework providers. With regards to the call-off process under the proposed Framework (should Members be minded to

approve the appointments), Officers intend to undertake mini-competitions with the 12 providers each time a service requirement arises; seeking Expressions of Interest, prior to inviting providers to submit proposals in response.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 No additional implications following the initial report.

7.0 Background Papers

7.1 August 2014 Cabinet report- Brent Employment Services Provider Framework

8.0 Contact Officers

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