

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
14th SEPTEMBER 2004

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

NAME OF WARD(S)
ALL

REPORT TITLE: APPROVAL OF THE AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR ACCESS
CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Above

Below

FP REF: Cor-04/05-69

Confidential Line

Except for Appendix 1

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report requests authority to award the access consultancy contract as required by Contract Standing Order No 89. This report summarises the process undertaken in tendering this contract and, following the completion of the evaluation of the tenders, recommends that the contract should be awarded to Vectra Group Limited.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members agree to award the contract for Access Consultancy Services to Vectra Group Ltd.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Council's Contract Standing Orders state that contracts for supplies and services exceeding £500k shall be referred to the Executive for approval of the award of the contracts.
- 3.2 The contract for the supply of access consultancy services will be let for an initial period of three (3) years with the option for the Council to extend it for up to a further two (2) years.
- 3.3 The estimated value of the contract over five (5) years was outlined in the Executive Report dated 29th March 2004, which sought authorisation from the Executive to invite tenders. This was stated as being £600k. From the Pricing Evaluation Grid in Appendix 1, the "notional year" taken as a cost example shows a total for fees over a 5 year contract as being higher than this. The actual amount payable in fees under the contract will depend solely on how much work is commissioned from the Access Consultants – and work will only be commissioned where budget funding exists to cover the cost of the works plus fees.

- 3.4 The cost of the monthly retainer is covered by existing revenue budgets. The retainer covers work on general access consultancy, liaising with the voluntary sector, attending meetings and vetting planning applications. Consultant's fees for access projects, such as DDA projects, form part of capital bids for such projects. Otherwise use of the consultant's time for work not included in the retainer services will have to be funded by service areas commissioning the consultants from existing resources or from applications for capital funding.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The access consultancy contract is considered to be a Part B service in accordance with the EC Procurement Regulations and therefore is subject to only partial application of the Regulations namely non discrimination in the technical specification and publication of an award notice.
- 4.2 This contract is a high value contract for the purposes of Contract Standing Orders and therefore the award of this contract is required to be made by the Executive.

5.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The service is currently provided by an external contractor and there are no implications for Council staff arising from the re-tendering of the contract.

6.0 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1.1 Accessibility-for-all was the theme for year two of the Council's previous Equalities Action Plan. In the new Corporate Plan and the Equalities and Diversity agenda, compliance with the DDA and access issues remain key components.
- 6.2 Otherwise, there are no equality implications in the award of this contract and it is not deemed necessary to undertake an equality impact assessment in relation to this contract.

7.0 DETAIL

- 7.1 The Council currently has a contract with Vectra Group Ltd (formerly Amey Vectra Ltd) for the provision of its access consultancy services. This contract, which was extended by the 29th March 2004 Executive, comes to an end on 30th September 2004.
- 7.2 On the 29th March 2004 Executive granted the Manager, Corporate Property Services the authority to invite tenders for a 5 year contract for access consultancy services.

- 7.3 In April 2004 an advertisement was placed in the local press, "Disability Now" and a Local Government Contracts Publication inviting expressions of interest. In response to these adverts a total of 21 responses were received from contractors 'expressing interest' and they were sent select list questionnaires, including a draft 'specification of requirements', to complete and return by 5th May 2004.
- 7.4 A total of 4 completed select list questionnaires were received. 'Select list' shortlisting was carried out by a panel of appropriately qualified and experienced Council officers who assessed the contractors' financial viability, technical ability and a number of other matters including health & safety, service and quality assurance. This exercise resulted in 3 contractors being shortlisted and invited to formally submit tenders.
- 7.5.1 The 3 'select list' contractors were sent tender packs including a comprehensive Service Specification, Contract Conditions and Tendering Instructions.

8.0 EVALUATION PROCESS

- 8.1 All tenders had to be submitted to the Council no later than noon on 26th July 2004 and they were opened by Committee and Democratic Services at the Town Hall. Valid tenders submissions were received from 3 contractors:
- 8.2 Submissions were given to each member of the evaluation panel who read them individually and used evaluation sheets to score and note down their comments on how well each of the technical criteria was addressed. The evaluation panel consisted of officers from Human Resources Management Services, Education Services Asset Management Team and Corporate Property Services. An officer from Brent Financial Services vetted the bids and pricing model.
- 8.3 The panel met on 30th July 2004 and sections of each submission were marked by the whole panel. The evaluation approach included the application of weightings for the scoring of each section and linked the scoring with the award criteria set out in the Instructions to Tender. On the 30th July (pm) 2004 and 6th August 2004 the 3 contractors made presentations to the panel and questions were put to them in order to clarify their written tender submissions where necessary. After the meetings with the contractors, the panel came together again to finalise their scores.
- 8.4 An appropriate pricing model was developed in order to evaluate the tendered bids. The model compares the 3 contractors prices in the separate fee categories and the "notional year" gives an indication of what the fees payable to the 3 contractors would be when all the fee categories are combined. The "notional year" is indicative of the amount of work – number of projects – which could be placed with the consultant in any one year of the contract and the amount of fees the consultant would earn based on the fee scales covering the different types of work covered by the contract.

9.0 RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

- 9.1 All three tenderers achieved a technical score acceptable to the Council i.e. above 75 points, with two tenderers achieving 119 points and one tenderer 94 points (**see Appendix 1**).
- 9.2 The results of the pricing evaluation are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 9.3 The Panel recommends that the Access Consultancy Contract be awarded to Vectra Group Ltd on the basis that they have attained a high technical score of 119 points and have submitted the lowest price.
- 9.4 It is proposed that the new contract will start on 1st October 2004.

10.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 10.1 Procurement files
- 10.2 Executive Report dated 29th March 2004

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact:

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