

**HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SERVICES**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mark Shurmer
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	Yes

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant programme and Home Repair Assistance programme are current provided by Fortis Living, known previously as Festival Housing. These housing aids and adaptations are delivered via the Home Improvement Agency which serves six Local Authorities across Worcestershire.
- 1.2 The current Home Improvement Agency contract commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 and this is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.
- 1.3 The service is therefore currently being re-tendered within timescales as set out by the Project Board.
- 1.4 Redditch Borough Council Chief Executive Kevin Dicks is the project sponsor on behalf of the six Worcestershire Local Authorities and County Council.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that**

- 2.1 Progress with re-letting the tender for Home Improvement Agency services be noted;
- 2.2 Authority be delegated to the Head of Community Services to accept the successful tender on behalf of the Council;
- 2.3 The Head of Community Services and Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be authorised to finalise the contract.

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 It is estimated that the value of the Home Improvement Agency tender over three years may exceed Officers Delegated Authority threshold for accepting tenders (currently £250,000).

- 3.2 The current year's total budget for this service is £721K, of which £46K is for the agency service; the amount spent varies each year depending on the demand for the services provided. The contract is for three years, with the option of an additional two years. The value of the contract has therefore been assessed as such.
- 3.3 The contract includes revenue costs and capital fees which are provided to the contractor in order to complete each Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Repairs Assistant Grant.
- 3.4 As part of the tendering process the contractors have been requested to provide running costs under two circumstances a) where the fee element is 5% and b) where the fee element is 10%.
- 3.5 The tender documentation is due to be returned on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014. At the time of writing this report we do not know whether or not the successful tender will be above the financial limit for acceptance by officers on behalf of the Council. This report therefore seeks delegated authority to accept the successful tender and enable the process to continue and to meet the deadline to ensure continuity of service for our residents.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.6 With the existing contract due to expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, delegated authority is required in order to maintain and continue the delivery of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) service and Home Repair Assistance (HRA) loans to vulnerable applicants throughout Redditch.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.7 Obtaining delegated authority will ensure that service continuity and delivery is maintained with officers able to approve the preferred partner/winning tender.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.8 An equalities impact assessment screening has been undertaken by Worcestershire County Council and it has been identified that *'there is equal access for everyone to the current agency. The new model will allow greater access for everyone.'*
- 3.9 A full equalities impact assessment is therefore not required.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Failure to obtain a decision regarding delegated authority will lead to a lack of clarity surrounding future arrangements and could potentially lead to disruption to

the delivery of aids and adaptations in Redditch after the existing contract with Fortis expires. There may also be a negative impact upon the council's strategic purposes; '*help me to live my life independently*' and '*help me find somewhere to live within my locality.*'

**5. APPENDICES**

N/A

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

**7. KEY**

N/A

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