
Meeting: Executive
Date: 5 February 2013
Subject: Award of the Contract for the Refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site, Pepperstock, Slip End
Report of: Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing
Summary: The report proposes to award the contract for the refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site, Pepperstock, Slip End.

Advising Officer: Julie Ogle, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Contact Officer: Ian Johnson – Housing Asset Manager
Public/Exempt: Public but with an exempt appendix under category number 3 “information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)”.
Wards Affected: Caddington
Function of: Executive
Key Decision Yes
Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate) Not applicable.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The actions support the Council priorities:

- Enhancing Central Bedfordshire – creating jobs, managing growth.
- Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable.
- Better infrastructure.

Financial:

1. The capital budget for this project is £931k which includes professional fees. £699k is provided by grant from Go East with the balance being funded from the capital programme.

The successful tender received can be delivered within the budget allocation.

Modernisation and improvement of the site will significantly reduce future revenue maintenance costs and the site is planned to be self financing from the outset. Personal metering of water supplies and direct charges for other utilities, plus a realistic pitch rent and management fee will mean that the modernised site will have a positive net income to the General Fund.

Legal:

2. Standard contract documentation NEC 3 – Option A Fixed price with activity schedule as amended to suit our requirements.

Risk Management:

3. The method statements submitted by the contractors identified the following risks :-

A fixed price style approach has been adopted to minimise risk of budget overspend. All design has been completed prior to issue of tender documents. The contractor is aware of the Council's maximum budget.

The nature of the contract does not provide for contingencies within the contract sum and any additional works will be funded from the existing budget of £931k. We are confident that the contract will be delivered within the set budget.

4. If the contract is not awarded there are risks that the Gypsy site will deteriorate further. There is a risk of unauthorised occupation as the site is currently vacant.

There will be loss of rental income to the General Fund and the Council would not meet it's commitment to site provision in this part of Central Bedfordshire.

5. The site is now closed and will not re-open without investment. Without this investment the Council might be obliged to provide further Gypsy and Traveller pitches elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire, although this would be a target set locally.

If refurbishment does not happen, approximately £699K must be re-paid to Government. Also there is a risk of reputational damage if money is handed back to Government.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

6. None.

Equalities/Human Rights:

7. Equality and diversity impact assessments have been completed and the recommendations are outlined below :-
8. The refurbishment of the Timberlands Gypsy and Traveller site has been recognised as necessary to address disrepair and breaches of Model Standards for Caravan Sites, including drainage problems and poor facilities in the amenity blocks. The new site will improve the quality of life for gypsies and travellers, having taken into account preferences expressed by site residents regarding the design of the site and its facilities.
9. By reducing the number of available plots, the refurbished site will provide more space for each plot, be safer, management of the site will improve and the new facilities will meet Equality Act 2010 disability requirements which will enable the residents to remain in their home and live independently for longer. Furthermore, smaller sites are recognised by a number of organisations representing Gypsies and Travellers as providing a proportionate balance that gives stability to the community.
10. However, a reduction in the number of plots could increase the incidence of unauthorised camping. The problems associated with unauthorised sites, such as the costs of taking enforcement action, the tension that exists between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community and the social exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites, could continue. The Council has committed to reducing the occurrence of unauthorised sites by making sufficient new provision for Gypsies and Travellers in the area. Although a reduction in the number of available plots contradicts this commitment, it will however address health and safety issues, by providing larger, improved plots and amenities which do not contravene model standards for caravans and facilities which are suitable and accessible for elderly and disabled Gypsies and Travellers.
11. With an increasing ageing population within Central Bedfordshire, the refurbished plots provide improved facilities and accessibility for elderly and disabled Gypsies and Travellers, thereby enabling them to continue living on sites rather than having to move to bricks and mortar accommodation.
12. Although the site residents would have preferred to remain on site during the refurbishment, this was not possible, due to health and safety issues. The Council recognises that having to move away from the site during the refurbishment period is a sensitive matter for the families concerned and ongoing support is important to ensure these residents maintain their current tenancies and are given information about the progress of the site refurbishment. The Timberlands Site Manager has already provided assistance and further support has been made available to them, if required, through Bromford Support. Furthermore, the families have been made aware of specific contacts within the Council, such as the Housing Estates Manager, Senior Estates Officer and Tenant Liaison Officers, who can assist them with any tenancy matters and information regarding the progress of the refurbishment. Communication is ongoing with the families and records have been kept regarding how any issues have been addressed and satisfactorily resolved.

Public Health:

13. Not applicable.

Community Safety:

14. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

15. Not applicable.

Procurement:

16. The contract has been tendered in accordance with the Council's Corporate Procurement Rules.

Overview and Scrutiny:

17. This matter has not been considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive is asked to:

1. **award the contract for the refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site, Pepperstock, Slip End to Contractor A.**

Reason for Recommendation: So that the refurbishment of this Gypsy site is completed by the end of 2013.

Executive Summary

17. This report outlines the outcome of the tendering of the refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site , Pepperstock, Slip End.

This contract was procured using standard contract documentation NEC 3 – Option A Fixed price with activity schedule as amended to suit our requirements.

18. A fixed price style approach has been adopted to minimise risk of budget overspend. All design has been completed prior to issue of tender documents. The contractor is aware of the Council's maximum budget.
19. The contract programme has been set at 36 weeks within the tender documents with a start date in April 2013.

Background

20. The project is to refurbish the Timberlands Gypsy and Traveller site.

Timberlands is in poor condition; there are public health issues (eg: poor drainage) and refurbishment is long overdue. Grant has been secured for £699k towards the proposed costs of £931k.
21. The designs for the refurbishment of the site cater for 6 plots, which ensures sufficient distances between vehicles and buildings for fire safety and to provide an improved environment. The layout has been agreed with local ward Members and with the planning team.
22. Bedfordshire County Council successfully bid in 2007 for Go East funding of £741k to refurbish the Timberlands site on the basis of a matching County Council capital contribution of £247k. After initial development appraisal costs, the remaining capital budget for Timberlands is £931k, which is sufficient for initial estimated costs of £931k, most of which has slipped due to complexities with the site. Previously, Government have accepted slippage but intention is to progress in 2013/2014.
23. **The Contract**
 - i) This is fixed price with a contract period of 36 weeks for completion.
 - ii) An established Tender Documentation, NEC 3 – Option A Fixed price with activity schedule as amended to suit our requirements.
 - iii) Using this type of contract, the contractor is paid for each item of completed work within the agreed activity schedule and programme up to the total contract sum.
 - iv) It has been prepared in a way to minimise variations and with the contractor taking the majority of the risk.

Tender Evaluation

24. A contract advert was placed on 1 May 2012 on “Intend”, the local newspapers and on the CBC website.
25. 21 pre qualification questionnaires were received, and 13 contractors were shortlisted.
26. 5 contractors declined to tender, 8 tenders were received by the closing date, 1 tender was rejected, 7 tenders were evaluated.

27. The Standard Award Criteria Evaluation Model is a points system based upon 80% of the points being awarded for financial submissions and 20% of the points being awarded for quality method statement submissions. The criteria for assessment of quality covered the following specific areas; Environment; Equalities; Health & Safety; Method of Delivery of the service; Resources to be allocated, Business Continuity; Monitoring and Performance Management (KPI's), Communication and Social Values.

28. A joint evaluation panel made up of officers and tenants was established to evaluate all tender bids.
 - i) The information provided in the quality method statements was reviewed and scored by the panel.

 - ii) If a contractor indicated that they could complete the project earlier than the 36 weeks allocated, an adjustment was made to their evaluation score.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Exempt report Award of the refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site , Pepperstock, Slip End.

Background Papers: (open to public inspection) None