

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Tendering Committee: 22 August 2012

Subject: Business Gateway Service Delivery for West Dunbartonshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To advise the Committee of tenders received for the delivery of the Business Gateway Service for West Dunbartonshire (2012 - 2017), and to seek approval to commission the preferred bidder.

2. Recommendations

- 2.2** The Committee is recommended to approve the awarding of the contract to Business Development Advisers Ltd in the amount of £1,139,650 for a three year period commencing 1 October 2012 with the option to renew for a further two periods, each of one year.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Tendering Committee held on 7 March 2012 gave approval to initiate a tender for the supply and delivery of the Business Gateway Service for West Dunbartonshire for the period 2012 – 2017 with an indicative value of £1,140,000.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The contract will be awarded initially for a period of three years, 1 October 2012 – 30 September 2015. The contract may be extended for a further two periods, each of one year, giving a total potential contract period of five years.
- 4.2** The contractor will provide services to support new start and existing businesses in West Dunbartonshire through the provision of information, advice and skills workshops. A segmentation approach is applied to focus resources on businesses that demonstrate growth potential.
- 4.3** The tender value exceeds the European threshold and therefore required to be tendered through the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). The tender process has been completed in consultation with Legal, Democratic and Regulatory services and Corporate Procurement.

- 4.4 Through the OJEU process, initiated in March 2012, five qualifying Pre-Qualification Questionnaires were received, checked and verified and all five organisations were sent the full Invitation to Tender Pack in May 2012.
- 4.5 Only one tender return was received at the tender close date of 26 June 2012 from the existing contractor, Business Development Advisers Ltd. This was scored using the agreed scoring matrix and resulted in Business Development Advisers Ltd achieving a score of 85.44%. The scoring panel concluded that the tender submission offered a comprehensive, value for money service delivery offer.

5. People Implications

- 5.1 There are no personnel implications for the Council as the current contractor is the preferred bidder. If a change of contractor was indicated, staff currently employed to deliver Business Gateway services would transfer to the successful contractor on their existing terms and conditions of employment as provided for in the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE).
- 5.2 West Dunbartonshire Council will continue as Lead Local Authority for Dunbartonshire, receiving the annual funding as part of the block revenue grant and will monitor and report on performance to the Business Gateway National Unit in CoSLA.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The funding for Business Gateway Service Delivery has been confirmed by Scottish Government for the full five year period, October 2012 – September 2017. WDC, as Lead Local Authority for Dunbartonshire, receives the funding on an annual basis through the block revenue grant allocation.
- 6.2 The tender has been checked and the annual cost is within the budget held by the Council for this service.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1 All risks have been fully considered in the contract documentation including financial risk, health and safety and public and professional liability. Examination of recent accounts shows that the preferred bidder is in a satisfactory position to meet the requirements of the contract.
- 7.2 Business Development Advisers Ltd has delivered Business Gateway Services across Dunbartonshire since 2007. In that time, their performance and service quality has been of a high standard. This appointment would ensure continuity of service.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out to ensure that the council can continue to provide a fair and sustainable service to West Dunbartonshire residents.
- 8.2** The main findings from the Equalities Impact screening exercise are as follows:
- The procurement exercise has complied with the full OJEU process.
 - EHRC guidance (the Essential Guide to the Public Sector Specific Duties) has been taken into consideration.
 - WDC Equality and Diversity guidance on procurement has been considered.
 - Programme documentation has been developed with consideration of Equality, Health & Human Rights obligations Under the general and specific duties.
 - No likely significant negative impacts were identified during the impact assessment

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The Business Gateway service has been the subject of a national evaluation conducted by Ekosgen published in June 2011. The overarching conclusion from the report was that there was no need for wholesale change as the Business Gateway service was delivering business benefits and that the transfer of Business Gateway services to local authorities had been achieved relatively smoothly.
- 9.2** The evaluation report highlighted that the Business Gateway service post September 2012 should maximise the impact of the service for customers and the economy and should offer value for money, relevant and appropriate to customer need. It reinforced a need for local flexibilities and for the service to be able to adjust to market conditions.
- 9.3** The commissioning arrangements for the Business Gateway service post September 2012 have also been the subject of a recent inquiry conducted by the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee at Holyrood. This inquiry sought the opinions of Business gateway users, providers and other stakeholders in order to make recommendations on the Business Gateway contract renewal process. Where appropriate their recommendations have been incorporated into the new service delivery model.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The Business Gateway service contributes directly to the Council's strategic objective of social and economic regeneration of the area by offering information, advisory services and training to new and existing local businesses to help improve their growth and employment prospects. The services are fully aligned to the aims and objectives of the Council's Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (2011 – 17).

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Date: 3 August 2012

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Appendix: None

Background Papers: Report to HEED Committee 7 March 2012

Wards affected: All wards