

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer - Regulatory & Regeneration

Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee

15 September 2021

Subject: Business Gateway Expert Help, Workshops and Webinars

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to obtain retrospective Committee approval to initiate a procurement exercise to appoint a contractor to deliver expert help, workshops and webinars on behalf of the Business Gateway (BG) service and provide approval to award the contract to the successful contractor.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee is invited to:

- (i) provide retrospective approval to initiate a procurement exercise to appoint a contractor to deliver the BG expert help, workshops and webinars service, and
- (ii) provide committee approval to award the contract for a period of 24 months with an option to extend for an additional 12 months (maximum period is 36 months) to Business Development Advisors Limited. The value of the contract over three years is £128,520 ex VAT. The estimated commencement date of the contract is 01 October 2021

3. Background

- 3.1** The Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee agreed in March 2015 to bring the delivery of the Business Gateway service in-house from 1 October 2015.
- 3.2** The previous contract for Business Gateway expert help and workshops was awarded to the successful contractor (Business Development Advisors Ltd) in February 2018 for the contract value of £147,900 over a 3 year period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021.
- 3.3** The budget for the Business Gateway Workshops and Expert Help Services was approved at the West Dunbartonshire Council on 22 March 2021. The current annual budgeted cost for this contracted element of the Business Gateway Service is £49,300 or £147,900 over the three years of the contract. This is funded through income received from the Scottish Government to deliver Business Gateway services. A Contract Strategy document was also approved on 17 March 2021

- 3.4** A contract notice was published on the Public Contracts Scotland advertising portal on 26 March 2021. Seventeen potential bidders expressed an interest, with three bidders submitting a response by the deadline for the submissions of 12 noon on 16 April 2021.
- 3.5** The retrospective request is due to officers focus being primarily on the delivery of Covid business grants. This has now been resolved through further discussion with procurement and the details of the tendering process which are now contained within this report.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The Business Gateway service provides free advice and support to clients with a new business, running an existing business, or growing their business. The service delivered by Business Gateway falls into three broad categories:
- One to one services, providing one to one engagement with Business Gateway Advisors;
 - One to many services, providing workshops, training seminars and events and web based e-learning materials; and
 - Local discretionary services, targeting advice and support to specific groups within the local area e.g. pre starts, under-represented groups like women, young people, and expert assistance for growing businesses.
- 4.2** Business Gateway Expert Help support provides the opportunity for businesses to access fully funded consultancy support from a specialist who will provide tailored, expert advice in order to develop strategies and provide specialist knowledge in a range of selected business disciplines such as business strategy, financial management, intellectual property, data protection, marketing & sales and sustainable business process improvement.
- 4.3** The contract also includes delivery of a range of Business Gateway workshops and webinars which will provide one to many support on subjects such as Business Planning, Social Media, Website Development and Tax Advice for Businesses.
- 4.4** The three tender submissions were evaluated by representatives from Economic Development Business Support, Corporate Procurement Unit and Finance Services against pre-determined selection criteria forming part of the published tender documents which assessed competence, experience, and capacity. The three tender submissions fully met the selection criteria.

4.5 The three tender submissions were evaluated against a set of award criteria which was based on a price/quality ratio of 30 % / 70 %. The scores relative to the award criteria of the tenderer are as follows:

	Weighting	Business Development Advisers	CJM Project Financial Management Ltd	XFS Limited
Service Delivery /	45%	45%	33.8%	18.6%
Contract Monitoring	30%	30%	24%	6%
Business Continuity,	5%	4.4%	5%	0.6%
Ethical / Sustainabilit	20%	19.0%	18.8%	14.1%
Quality Sub-Total %:	70%	68.9%	57.0%	27.5%
Price Sub Total £	-	£42,840	£47,935	£45,908
Price Sub Total %	30%	30%	26.8%	28%
Total Score	100%	98.9%	83.9%	55.5%

4.6 The contract is for a period of 24 months with an option to extend for a further 12 months. The total value of this contract for the three year period is £128,520, and is within the budget approved by Council of £49,300 per annum.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications related to this project.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 The current annual budgeted cost for this contracted element of the Business Gateway Service is £49,300 or £147,900 over the three years of the contract. This is funded through income received from the Scottish Government to deliver Business Gateway services. The overall contract value is £19,380 less than the budget available over the three years, however according to the Business Gateway operating principals this can only be used for other Business Gateway services within the scope of the funding.

6.2 This procurement exercise was conducted in accordance with the agreed Contract Strategy produced by the Corporate Procurement Unit in consultation with the Economic Development Business Support officers and the provisions of the Council's Contract Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations; and the relevant Procurement Regulations.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 Business Development Advisers Limited has no known links to Serious and Organised Crime which would have significant political and reputational ramifications for the Council. There is a risk that if approval is not given, there will be no formal contract in place for the provision of these elements of the Business Gateway service which will have an effect on the quality of service currently available to local business clients.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 An equalities assessment has been undertaken which has identified that there is no equalities impact.

9. Consultation

9.1 Consultation has taken place with Economic Development, Corporate Procurement, Finance Services and Legal Services.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report contributes to the Council's Strategic Priorities and in particular towards:

- economic growth and employability

10.2 This development will also support the four strategic priorities of the Council's updated Economic Development Strategy (2015-2020):

- Stimulating economic investment and growing the business base;
- Improving the skills of all our people and supporting them into work;
- Creating an inclusive and prosperous place where people choose to live, work and invest; and
- Building stronger partnerships and innovative approaches to delivery.

Chief Officer: Peter Hessett
Service Area: Regulatory & Regeneration
Date: 27 August 2021

Person to Contact: Michael McGuinness, Economic Development Manager
T: 0777 442 8294
Email: Michael.mcguinness@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Contract Strategy EIA Assessment
Wards Affected:	All Wards