

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE CABINET BOARD

3rd May 2018

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, LEISURE AND LIFELONG LEARNING

MATTER FOR DECISION

Strategic School Improvement Programme – Engagement of External Consultancy Services

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose of Report

- 1 To obtain Member approval to appoint CPC Project Services LLP, by virtue of the Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreement for the provision of management consultancy services, to prepare for the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (“the Council’s) business cases for the delivery of 21st Century Schools Band B Proposals.

Executive Summary

- 2 As part of Welsh Government’s submission requirements for capital funding all Local Authorities have to follow strict guidelines as regards the preparation of detailed business cases in line with HM Treasury Green Book and Five Case Business Model to ensure that the case for investment is rigorously tested and proven in respect of our 21st Century Schools Programme.

3. In order to produce business cases in respect of the Council's Band B 21st Century Schools Programme, there is a wish to appoint CPC Project Services LLP, an organisation who has previously provided all of our Band A business cases to provide these services.

3. By utilising the Crown Commercial Service Framework Agreement for the provision of management consultancy services, the Council would be able to appoint CPC Project Services LLP without having to undertake a procurement exercise, details of which are set out below.

Background

4. The Council is responsible for promoting high educational standards and for delivering efficient primary and secondary education. Having the right schools in the right place and ensuring that they are fit for the 21st century learner is the challenge facing the Council. Achieving this will involve reviewing the number and type of schools the Council has in its area and assessing whether best use is being made of resources and facilities.

5. Implementing the Strategic School Improvement Programme (SSIP) has involved reviewing existing provision and determining the number and type of schools needed to deliver education effectively and efficiently across the County Borough resulting in substantial change involving opening new schools, closing existing schools, merging or amalgamating schools, federating schools and promoting new initiatives that support collaborative working between schools.

6. As part of Welsh Government's submission requirements for capital funding all Local Authorities have to follow strict guidelines as regards the preparation of detailed business cases in line with HM Treasury Green Book and Five Case Business Model to ensure that the case for investment is rigorously tested and proven.

7. In respect of Band A projects services provided by CPC Project Services LLP, were procured by utilising the Government Procurement Services (GPS) (formally called Office Government of Commerce Buying Solutions) Framework Agreement for Management Consultancy and

Accounting Services – Organisations and Change Management
Consultancy – Local Government under Lot RM662/L6.

8. This has now been superseded by the Crown Commercial Services Consultancy Framework Agreement for the Provision of Management Consultancy Services (Reference RM3745). This Framework Agreement permits the Council to make a direct award to a consultant without the need for a procurement exercise to be carried out, provided the Council can demonstrate that the proposed consultant represents the most economically advantageous offer to the Council and why specifically the Council should contract with that consultant without undertaking a tender exercise of those organisations appointed to the Framework Agreement, to which this report aims to provide.
9. The need for additional capacity and relevant expertise to accelerate the process of preparing business cases and to take the Council to a state of full preparedness is crucial to meet the Welsh Government's challenging business case scrutiny process, critical project delivery time lines and release of funding necessary to fulfil the aspirations of our Band B 21st Century Schools' Programme thus ensuring programme delivery dates are not compromised.
10. To date, and with the expertise offered by CPC Project Services LLP, the Council has successfully delivered business cases to HM Treasury standards and in doing so secured Welsh Government financial support for Band A projects worth £123 million.
11. Any delay associated with business case preparedness and release of Welsh Government financial support is likely to impact negatively on delivery of Band B proposals.
12. Educational, financial and operational reputation will be at risk and the Council could find itself having to manage failure in business continuity and service delivery as a result of delayed intervention.
13. Realising early and timely revenue savings resulting from the implementation of the Band B proposals will impact on the ability of the Council to prudentially borrow which underpins the capital affordability of the 21st Century Schools' Programme as a whole.
14. There is clear operational and financial advantage in commissioning CPC Project Services LLP to assist with the delivery of the remaining business cases in that this provides continuity and consistency in the technical

approach necessary to ensure coherent transmission between the various stages of business case development.

15. CPC Project Services LLP has a relevant working knowledge of the Council – its ethos, aims and objectives, which would take time for an alternative provider to acquire and they have a detailed understanding the Council's overarching strategy for schools and is therefore able to offer a reduction in both days and timescales to develop the required business cases. Crucially, through the course of their last contract with the Council, they have developed excellent working relationships across Education, Environment and Finance service areas. Well timed, successful business case submissions will be crucial in assuring that Band B projects are successfully and efficiently delivered

Financial Impact

16. To develop business cases for all Band B 21st Century School proposals, the total cost to the Council will be £169,950, the cost of which will be met by core funding. This cost represents 0.03% of the anticipated cost of all Band B proposals, i.e. £67M

Equality Impact Assessment

17. A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Authority in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment, it has been determined that this function does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impact

18. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impact

19. As a Local Authority, the Council is able to utilise the Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreement for the provision of management consultancy services which enables the Council to make a direct award without requiring a tender exercise. The Framework Agreement sets out the terms and conditions for the appointment and advice will be sought from the Head of Legal Services to ensure these arrangements are compiled with when a formal contract is drawn up.

Risk Management

20. Failure to meet the timescales set by Welsh Government for the production of appropriate and detailed business plans could see application for funding via the 21st Century Schools Programme being missed or applications rejected, meaning the Council will be unable to proceed with its proposals

Consultation

21. There is no requirement for consultation on this matter.

Recommendation

22. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning to enter into a contract with CPC Project Services LLP on the terms and conditions set out in the Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreement for the provision of management consultancy services for the production of business cases in respect of Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

23. To ensure the Council can meet timescales and the standards set by Welsh Government for the production of business cases in respect of Band B Schools as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

Implementation of Decision

24. The decision will be implemented after a 3 day call in period.

Appendices

25. None

List of Background Papers

26. None

Officer Contact

Mr Aled Evans
Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
Tel 01639 763298
Email a.evans@npt.gov.uk