

**Report of:** Facilities Management Business Manager

**To:** Executive Board

**Date:** 19th March 2007

**Item No:**

**Title of Report :** Award of Contract for the supply and laying of playground surfaces to support the refurbishment of Oxford's playgrounds



### Summary and Recommendations



**Purpose of report:** To request major project approval to award a contract to supply and laying of playground surfacing to Oxford City Council.

**Key decision:** YES

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Stephen Tall, Better Finances  
Councillor Alan Armitage, Healthier Environment



**Scrutiny Responsibility:** Finance Scrutiny Committee

**Ward(s) affected:** All



**Report Approved by:**

Councillor Stephen Tall

Councillor Alan Armitage

Mark Luntley, Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Sharon Cosgrove, Strategic Director for the Environment

Chris Kaye, Finance and Asset Management

Lindsay Cane, Legal and Democratic Services



**Policy Framework:** Oxford City Council Corporate Plan

Be an effective and responsive organisation, providing value for money services.



## **Recommendation(s):**

**That the Executive Board agrees to:**

- 1. Grant major project approval for a project under which one supplier is appointed, as and when required, to replace the playground surfaces in Oxford, which Oxford City Council is responsible for.**



**To award a contract to Playtop Ltd to carry out this work. This supplier has been selected as a result of restricted tender process in accordance with the Council's Constitution and contract procedure rules.**

**The contract will be for 2 years starting on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 with an option to extend for up to 1 further year.**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1** The Council manages 97 play areas in the city and a large number of these require modernisation works, which include the replacement of the playground surfacing. The Council has in place a programme of work to replace the playground surfaces of at least 13 play areas and has in the budget the following amounts.
  - 2007/8 £90K
  - 2008/9 £150K
  - 2009/10 £150K
- 1.2** In addition the Council has been awarded £268k by the Heritage Lottery Fund to support improving safety at our playgrounds. Part of this funding will also be used to replace some playground surfacing.
- 1.3** Up until now, each time there has been a requirement to replace a playground surface, quotes have been obtained and treated as separate purchases. To support the streamlining and improvement of our procurement arrangements a tender exercise has been undertaken jointly by the procurement team and parks services with the objective of putting in place a single contract with one supplier to supply all of our playground surfacing requirements for the next 2 years with an option to extend up to 1 further year.

## **2 Tender process and evaluation**

- 2.1** An advertisement was placed in the local press, our website and other national websites as well as in a professional journal in September 2006. This contract attracted a lot of interest both locally and nationally. Twenty-four expressions of interest were received and

seven suppliers were shortlisted and invited to tender. Five tenders were received and evaluated by a panel of officers. The evaluation considered a wide range of criteria including whole life costing arrangements, service provision, arrangements for recycling the rubber surfacing and the surfacing content as well as the price.

- 2.2 The panel agreed unanimously to recommend that the Council award a new playground surfacing contract to the tenderer that scored the highest marks. This tenderer is Playtop Ltd who are based in Nottingham. The company has robust environmental systems and work closely with Nike as they grind the soles of old Nike trainers into the black rubber of the surfacing material.
- 2.3 Playtop play surfaces have a longer expected life and their surfacing laying system is recognised for being more vandal proof. The use of Nike trainers being used within the surfacing is unique to Playtop.
- 2.4 Playtop pay a royalty for each m<sup>2</sup> to Nike who use this as part of a community fund which can be accessed by local groups to improve local play facilities. Playtop has already suggested that they be allowed to put old trainer collection points in our Leisure Centres to encourage trainer recycling.
- 2.5 Playtop have offered pricing which will provide cost reductions on current pricing particularly for 2 colour play surfacing which can be used to brighten up our play areas.

### **3 Other Options**

- 3.1 The Constitution and Procurement Strategy advises that the Executive Board considers what other options are available before giving major project approval and awarding a contract over 100K. These are as follows:-
  - Continue with existing spot/quote purchasing arrangements. This would not comply with the spirit of the Contract regulations as would be seen as artificially reducing the Council's spend to avoid tendering.
  - Set up a framework agreement with a number of suppliers. This is unlikely to result in financial savings or enable the Council to achieve process efficiencies.
  - Use a contract set up by another organisation. There are no other contracts available that the Council could join.

The award of a contract will provide both additional financial and efficiency savings.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The fixed pricing offered by Playtop will provide 12% savings based on 2006 prices paid by the Council as well as a better quality surfaces with a longer life expectancy. On a possible spend of £500K (the planned spend plus a proportion on the HLF approved funding) the Council will achieve financial savings of at least £60k. This will be used to re-surface more playground areas.

#### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no additional legal implications as this contract has been tendered in accordance with the Council's contract procedure regulations.

#### **6 Staffing Implications**

- 6.1 There are no staffing implications. The new arrangements will enable the parks team to work more closely with the supplier and will eliminate the need to obtain quotes from a range of suppliers for each job.

#### **7 Other means of achieving this objective**

- 7.1 Other means of achieving this objective are explained in paragraph 3.

#### **8 Recommendation**

- 8.1 Executive Board is asked to approve the award of a 2 year (plus 1) print contract to Playtop and to grant major project approval.

#### **Appendices -**

Appendix 1 – Tender Scores