

**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009

**Item No:**

**Report of:** Head of City Works

**Title of Report:** Arboricultural Services Framework Agreement for Oxfordshire County Council

### Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To seek project approval to enter into a framework contract for the provision of arboricultural services to Oxfordshire County Council for up to three years.

**Key decision:** Yes

**Executive Lead Member:** Cllr Bob Timbs

**Report to be approved by:**

**Executive Director:** Tim Sadler

**Board Member:** Cllr Bob Timbs

**Finance:** Andy Collett

**Legal:** Lindsay Cane

**Policy Framework:**

Oxford City Council Corporate Plan: Improve the local environment, economy and quality of life.

**Recommendation(s):**

- That the City Executive Board give project approval for Oxford City Council to enter into framework contract with Oxfordshire County Council for Arboricultural Services within Oxford City for up to three years.
- That the City Executive Board notes that the potential value of the work to be charged to the County Council is likely to exceed £100k over the three years.

## **Background/Introduction**

1. Oxford City Council has had informal arboricultural maintenance arrangements with the County Council for a number of years under powers set out in the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970.
2. Last year the County Council formally tendered their arrangements for Arboricultural Services under a framework agreement. The agreement was split into "Lots", one of which, Lot 3, was for services within the Oxford City Council boundary.

## **Contract Information**

3. City Works submitted a successful tender for Lot 3 of the framework Contract which included work for the following:
  - All highways
  - Property – schools etc
  - Countryside
4. The Framework Contract enables the Council to undertake work within the area as one of five Framework Contractors approved by the County Council. If the Council has the capacity to undertake the work it can do so in accordance with rates submitted in the tender. However, if it does not have the capacity, the County Council will award the work to the next contractor on the list.
5. The Contract price is agreed under the Schedule of Rates submitted in the Tender which is subject to review with Retail Price Index (RPI) after the initial fixed rate period of 12 months.
6. As part of the tender submission, the City Council's Tree Policy (February 2008) was approved for use under the agreement and all work will follow procedures adopted under this Policy.
7. The Contract term is for 2 years plus an option for the County Council to extend for a further year.

## **Benefits of this Contract/Agreement**

- Provides additional revenue income for the authority within its boundary.
- Makes more efficient use of fixed costs and associated machinery and equipment.
- Increases productivity on site.
- Utilises spare capacity.
- Forms closer partnership working with the County Council.
- Can refuse work if no capacity exists.
- Flexible arrangement.

## **Capacity**

8. The City Council's tree team undertake works on land across the entire city and Oxfordshire County Council's land is often immediately adjacent and this allows the tree Team to enter into extra works generating increased revenue and economies of scale. This has been the working arrangement for many years on an informal basis.
9. Existing resources will be used wherever possible to ensure that the optimum output is maintained. No additional vehicles or machinery will be required to perform additional works. Some labour adjustments may be necessary in accordance with resource availability, however these would be covered by the income from the County. This will assist the City Council in providing a joined up work programme and create a seamless service for the public with a single provider. This will ensure that works are completed to the same standard and at the same time to avoid disruption and unnecessary set up costs.

## **Equalities issues**

10. There are no implications contained within the attached documents that are prejudicial against any individual or group.

## **Climate Change Implications**

11. Removal of trees is a controversial issue and this has been addressed by following the Council's Tree Policy adopted in February 2008, which makes reference to a tree planting/replacement programme.

## **Legal implications**

12. Where the implementation of the matters set out in this report require the Council to purchase goods or services, (eg any special access equipment) the Council would follow all relevant procurement procedures.

## **Financial issues**

13. The Council can anticipate covering its overheads and creating economies of scale in its service provision as a result of entering into the contract.
14. Contract value is expected to be in the region of £30-40k per annum.

## **Risk Management**

15. In order to effectively manage risks associated with contract delivery the Council has fixed prices for the first 12 months, and a mechanism to review costs thereafter. The Council is obliged to carry out work issued within a six week period, although any capacity issues will be discussed by means of regular meetings with the County. The nature of

the Framework Agreement spreads the risks for both parties to the contract.

### **Recommendations**

- That the City Executive Board give project approval for Oxford City Council to enter into framework contract with Oxfordshire County Council for Arboricultural Services within Oxford City for up to three years.
- That the City Executive Board notes that the potential value of the work to be charged to the County Council is likely to exceed £100k over the three years.

### **Name and contact details of author:-**

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**Background Papers:** Tree Policy (February 2008)