

**Report of: Trading and Operational Support Manager**

**Report to: Chief Officer Parks and Countryside**

**Date: 12 July 2017**

**Subject: The Arium, Leeds Parks Nursery Website – Waiver of Contracts Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### **Summary of main issues**

1. The Council is currently in the process of relocating its horticultural nursery from the current Redhall site to a new purpose built site at Whinmoor that will consist of a new plant nursery, a café and shop.
2. In order to meet the Council's aspirations for this new nursery to become a key visitor attraction and interpretation and education centre, there is a service need to procure a new website for the promotion of this new visitor attraction.
3. A dedicated website for the Arium, will enhance the visitor attraction and overall experience at Whinmoor. The contract value is estimated to be £20k and can be met as part of the Parks and Countryside service business plan for the Arium.

### **4. Recommendations**

The Chief Officer for Parks and Countryside is recommended to note the contents of the report and gives approval to use the authority set out in Contract Procedure Rule (CPR) 1.3 to waive Contracts Procedure Rule No 8.1 and 8.2 – Intermediate Value Procurement – to procure a new website for the Arium using the Council's existing framework and to award the contract following a competitive procurement exercise.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To request the Chief Officer of Parks and Countryside to note the contents of this report and to approve the waiver contracts procedure rule 8.1 and 8.2 - Intermediate Value Procurement – to procure a new website for the Arium using the Council's existing framework.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 The current service and role of the nursery is not widely advertised to the public including the plant production, community engagement and a centre for horticulture excellence and training.
- 2.2 The nursery produces around two million bedding plants and approximately 250,000 edibles per year, with close to 90% of production done from seed, on a footprint of 6.5 acres.
- 2.3 In October 2015 Executive Board agreed the injection of £6.5m into the capital programme to complete the process of decanting the service from its long term base at Red Hall. This included the development of a new glasshouse for the cost of £4m.
- 2.4 The area includes space for the development of an onsite retail which is vastly improved in terms of accessibility and has capacity for the inclusion of a kitchen and café facility to support this new visitor attraction facility.
- 2.5 The new premises are expected to attract a greater footfall and will provide a wider range of facilities and as such, there is a clear service need for a bespoke website to promote and publicise what will be a key recreational facility and visitor attraction.

## **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The new site at Whinmoor will consist of a new plant nursery, a café and shop and the service has received a Government Enablement Grant for 2 years to sell only surplus plants and horticultural items so it needs to build a customer-base from sales of plants and horticultural items regardless of the café business. A dedicated website will enable the service to formalise the customer base.
- 3.2 The current nursery has only had a presence on the existing Leeds.gov.uk website which is not actively being promoted and can be difficult for some to navigate through within the large context of the Council's main website.
- 3.3 Having a bespoke and dedicated website for the Arium will also enable the service to meet the Council's aspirations for this key visitor attraction by engaging more with local communities and for the promotion of this facility as a place of education, interpretation, training and horticultural excellence.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Key service providers, Users, ICT and the relevant Chief Officer have all been consulted.

## **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 The Council's procurement tender process will set out and follow established procedures to identify any gaps in relation to equality and diversity, cohesion and integration to ensure that these are taken into consideration for the website design.

## **4.3 Council policies and best council plan**

4.3.1 The waiver of the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules in relation to the procurement of a website and this report draws attention to co-ordinated working that demonstrates a contribution towards the following priorities contained in the City Priority Plan:

- Best city for communities
- Best Council Plan 2015 to 2020
- Vision for Leeds 2011 – 2030

## **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The procurement exercise will be carried out by the LCC Marketing team with Parks and Countryside service working in close liaison and the contract value is estimated to be £20k.

4.4.2 Carrying out a competitive procurement exercise for the creation of a new website for the Arium will ensure that the Council achieves best value for money by identifying the most appropriate and suitable system to meet its needs.

## **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.5.1 The decision to waive Contract Procedure Rule 8.1 and 8.2 is an intermediate value procurement and will be a significant operational decision and is therefore not subject to call in. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information rules.

4.5.2 Although there is no overriding legal obstacle preventing the waiver of CPR 8.1 and 8.2 the content of the report should be noted. In making their final decision, the Chief Officer of Parks Countryside should be satisfied that the approved course of action represents best value for the council.

## **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 If a new website is not procured and the facility is not well publicised, there is a real business risk to the Parks service and the potential of reputational risk to the Council having invested £4m for a new nursery.

4.6.2 If the website is not user friendly or interactive or easily accessible, it could have an adverse effect on the overall business plan for the Arium and put visitors off from using this key recreational facility.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The new facility is more efficient in design, accessibility and production and allow for the growth of the same number of plants on a much smaller covered footprint of 4.3 acres, 2.2 acres less than the existing growing area at Red Hall.
- 5.2 Transferring the retail facility and creating a new café at Whinmoor will also support and develop the key visitor attraction and education centre that will help contribute towards the service meeting its income targets and engaging with local communities.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Chief Officer for Parks and Countryside is recommended to note the contents of the report and gives approval to use the authority set out in Contract Procedure Rule (CPR) 1.3 to waive Contracts Procedure Rule No 8.1 and 8.2 – Intermediate Value Procurement – to procure a new website for the Arium using the Council’s existing framework and to award the contract following a competitive procurement exercise.

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council’s website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.