

**Report of Senior Projects Manager**

**Report to Chief Officer Parks and Countryside**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018**

**Subject: Waiver of contract procedure rules to support the purchase of ground reinforcement for Lotherton Hall car park.**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Harewood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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 Parks and Countryside Service is responsible for the management of Lotherton Hall Estate. In conjunction with Leeds Museums and Galleries, the service has been able to enhance the onsite visitor experience and in turn generate significant revenue streams through the introduction of a coherent admissions policy and secondary spend in the shop and cafe.
2. Due to increased visitors, particularly in the months out of summer the grass car parking at Lotherton is becoming unsuitable and unsafe for regular use. Given the popularity of the site and the extent to which it is used by the public, it is necessary to ensure that parking is available in all seasons.
3. There is a requirement to reinforce the grass field car park. A number of products are available on the market but most involve an invasive installation which would mean taking the car park out of use for an extended period of time while excavation and reinstatement works were underway.
4. One product was identified which can be purchased supply only and installed directly to the surface by site staff. This would avoid any period of closure and resulting loss of revenue. Despite extensive research, it appears that there is a sole supplier for this

system in the UK. It is therefore proposed on this occasion to go to a single supplier who can provide this product.

5. It is therefore requested that the Chief Parks and Countryside Officer waiver contract procedure rules to enable this transaction to proceed.

### **Recommendations**

6. The Chief Parks and Countryside officer is requested to waiver contract procedure rules 3.1, 3.1.6, 3.1.7, 8.1 and 8.2 (in accordance with CPR27) in respect of the requirement to approach a single supplier who can provide the product as necessary.
7. The Chief Officer Parks and Countryside is requested to award a contract to Groundtrax Systems Ltd in the sum of £70,236.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report requests authorisation to waive contract procedure rule 3.1, 3.1.6, 3.1.7, 8.1 and 8.2 (in accordance with CPR27) in order to approach a single supplier without competition for the purchase of grass reinforcement tiles for use at Lotherton hall Estate.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The Parks and Countryside service is diverse, and whilst the core service is delivered in-house, there is a significant requirement within the services annual revenue budget to generate income. One contributing factor towards achieving this income target is revenue generated by admission charges at Lotherton Hall Estate.
- 2.2 Lotherton Hall Estate is jointly run by the Museums and Galleries and Parks and Countryside Services, reporting to the Lotherton Project Board. Since the introduction of a joint admission fee in January 2012, there has been a year on year improvement to the financial position. In the 2018/19 financial year the site is projected to generate income to the value of £753 thousand via admission charges and secondary spend in the shop and cafe.
- 2.3 One of the key factors for this success has been a substantial increase in 'low season' visitors. However, this has led to an issue around the suitability of parking on grass outside of the summer months, with problems of congestion and cars becoming stuck. It is necessary to ensure that the car park remains usable in order to provide continuity of service.
- 2.4 Different options for hard-standing parking have been investigated; the use of tarmac or other hard surface was rejected as the planning permission in place precludes this. A number of grass reinforcement options were examined; most systems require the removal of the existing grass surface, excavation and installation of a sub-base with reinstatement of the reinforced grass surface on top of this, which would mean the car park being inaccessible for several weeks and costs in the region of £150,000.
- 2.5 One company Groundtrax Systems Ltd. was found to supply a product (CellPaveAP) that can be installed straight onto the existing grass to create the reinforced parking required. This would be suitable for installation by site staff without the loss of parking capacity over several weeks. Research into the product reveals that this is new to the UK market with one sole importer. It is proposed therefore on this occasion to go to a single supplier who can provide the most suitable product.
- 2.6 There is financial provision and authority from the Lotherton Project Board to spend revenue on improvements to the car park.

### **3 Main issues**

#### **Reason for contracts procedure rules waiver**

- 3.1 As highlighted above, despite extensive research no other suitable product has been found and no other supplier for this product.
- 3.2 The supplier in question is Groundtrax Systems Limited and the total value of the order to be placed is £70,236.
- 3.3 As demonstrated in the background section of this report Lotherton Hall is projected to generate £753 thousand in income in the 2018/19 financial year. The decision to undertake works to the car park represents value for money in that it will help sustain existing revenue streams.
- 3.4 For clarity it should be noted that there is no appropriate internal service provider who could provide the required products.

#### **Consequences if the proposed action is not approved**

- 3.5 Should this proposed approach not be approved, then it would be necessary to consider closing Lotherton Hall estate when ground conditions were unsafe, or to consider contracting a company to undertake the more disruptive and expensive major ground works.

#### **Advertising**

- 3.6 No advertising was undertaken in advance as only one appropriate supplier was found.

### **4 Corporate considerations**

#### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Consultation was not undertaken in this instance given that the decision being taken did not materially affect the general public and related solely to the improvement of the car park surface.

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

- 4.2.1 A screening document was completed in respect of the decision proposed to be taken within this report and that process established that a full equality impact assessment was not required.
- 4.2.2 In support of the above statement, it is felt that the proposal doesn't affect how services and/or procurement activities are organised, provided, or located. The service is not seeking to change the way in which a service is delivered to the public since the requirement is simply to enable continued use of an existing resource. Furthermore, the changes made will have no discernible negative effects on service users, and will provide only benefits to those using the site.

### **4.3 Council policies and city priorities**

- 4.3.1 The Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 is to be the best city in the UK by 2030. It has specific aims that the economy will be prosperous and sustainable and that all Leeds' communities will be successful, where there are high quality buildings, places and green spaces, which are clean, looked after and respect the City's heritage.
- 4.3.2 The Best Council Plan sets out a vision for the city to be compassionate and caring, helping all its residents benefit from the effects of the city's economic growth. There are specific objectives to Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth and to Become a More Efficient and Enterprising Council. In addition the best council plan sets out a new leadership style of civic enterprise, where the council becomes more enterprising, businesses and partners become more civic
- 4.3.3 The work included within this project will enable the Parks and Countryside to sustain existing revenue streams that are generated by Lotherton Hall as well as providing opportunities to improve service provision which would therefore support future growth in revenue.

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

- 4.4.1 Lotherton Hall generates significant revenue in support of the broader Parks and Countryside service. Given the high footfall and volume of use it is inevitable that supporting infrastructure will require maintenance. It should be noted that the decision taken in this report will support in sustaining this revenue stream moving forward and as such there are clear benefits in terms of value for money and the use of resources.

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

- 4.5.1 No sections of this report are restricted under the access to information rules and nor is the decision to be taken eligible for call in. A waiver of the council's contract procedure rules is required to allow the purchase of a particular product without competition for the reasons outlined in this report.

### **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 There are no significant risks associated with this decision. The rationale for moving forward in this manner is to ensure continuity of provision and a decision not to implement the suggested approach in this report is likely to have implications in terms of service provision and also in terms of cost efficiency and value for money.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Authority is projected to generate £753 thousand income from Lotherton Hall Estate in 2018/19. The use of the site by visitors relies on suitable safe parking being available. It is therefore proposed to approach a single provider for the surface solution as described in this report.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Chief Parks and Countryside officer is requested to waive contract procedure rule 3.1, 3.1.6, 3.1.7, 8.1 and 8.2 in respect of the requirement to approach a single supplier who can provide the surface solution required.
- 6.2 The Chief Officer Parks and Countryside is requested to award a contract to Groundtrax Systems Ltd in the sum of £70,236.

## **7 Background documents**

- 7.1 None