

Authority to Procure a Framework Contract for Woodland Creation and Tree Planting Services in Line with CPR 3.17

Date: 6/12/24

Report of: Woodland Creation Senior Project Officer

Report to: Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Greenspaces

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report seeks authority to carry out a procurement for a new framework contract to provide woodland creation and tree planting services on behalf of Leeds City Council to help support the target to plant and manage 50 hectares of woodland each year.

A direct award was granted to two contractors in December 2023. The target is for this contract to begin once by 1st May 2025.

Recommendations

- 1 That the Chief Officer Climate, Energy and Greenspaces is recommended to grant authority to procure the woodland creation, tree planting, establishment management and maintenance. The contract is estimated to start on 1st April 2025 and expire 31st March 2030, with the estimated cost to the Council being £400,000 per annum. It is anticipated that the contract value will be in the region of £1,600,000 over the duration of 4 years.

What is this report about?

- 2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the procurement of outsourcing some forestry planting contract work to deliver our corporate responsibilities to address the climate emergency and becoming net zero. Climate Energy and Green Space service has been delivering the woodland creation initiative since 2020. In December 2023 a Direct Award was granted to two contractors to support the planting and maintenance of woodland and trees across Leeds.

The service is seeking to supplement internal resource with private sector contractors to provide additional capacity to meet the workload after the current Direct Award has expired in March 2025. Additional capacity will support in the establishment management of sites whilst at a critical stage of development.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 3 Procuring private forestry contractors will relieve internal resource pressures to enable the service to deliver on the establishment management of previously planted and prepared woodlands and planting and maintenance of new woodlands and trees. This will in turn ensure that we meet the UK Forestry Standards (UKFS) required.
- 4 The procured contract will utilise the successful funding received through White Rose Forest partners to enable the high standard of establish management required for UK Forestry Standards (UKFS) and successful community woodlands for the communities of Leeds in the future. It will prevent possible future clawback of funding if we are not meeting these standards.
- 5 The successful delivery of the project will increase tree canopy targets in the city, address the climate emergency through carbon sequestration and increasing biodiversity. It will meet the targets of the Parks and Green Space Strategy and contribute to Zero Carbon. In addition, the project supports positive Health and Wellbeing of those most likely to experience poverty in the city and provides opportunity to improve mental and physical health providing woodlands and green spaces where people can live healthy lives for longer.
- 6 At the outset of the development of the Woodland Creation Initiative and Executive decision for the program an Equality Diversity and Cohesion and Integration screening exercise was carried out (attached in appendix).

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

- 7 The arrangements described in this report supports two pillars of the Best City Ambition supporting Zero Carbon through successful woodland creation across the city and the positive Health and Wellbeing of the citizens of Leeds including those most likely to experience poverty in the city and improve their mental and physical health as we provide woodlands and green spaces where people can live healthy lives for longer in the future.
- 8 The arrangements described in this report support the financial management of services enabling the delivery of the council's strategic targets for woodland creation and increasing tree canopy in the city.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: **All Wards**

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 9 All wards across the city are affected by this proposal. The woodland creation scheme works with all local ward members on developing and creating woodlands and tree planting in their ward.

- 10 Consulting and engaging local ward members is integral to the woodland creation scheme and they are updated regularly on schemes and the establish management of all schemes is described throughout.
- 11 Consultation with the public is carried out at the formation stage of developing woodlands across the city and the Commonplace platform has been utilised successfully since 2022. Engagement with the public on Commonplace has seen over 12,000 visits in 2022 and 2023. Residents living close to a proposed woodland also receive letters with details of the scheme and methods to contact the Council and have their views heard

What are the resource implications?

- 12 There are no financial implications associated with the decision to authorise a procurement. Full details regarding the financial implications of the contract will be reported in a subsequent decision to award report.
- 13 The procurement will result in framework contract being established with a number of contractors that are considered suitable for meeting the council's needs.
- 14 Contract Management will be carried out by the Climate Energy and Green Spaces Services as the largest user of the current contract. The service has agreed to manage this contract and will receive the rebate value from this contract to support the management of this.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 15 The risk in any procurement is a lack of interest and receiving a low number of bids. This risk will be mitigated by carrying out an Expression of Interest to alert the market to the upcoming tender and ensuring throughout the tender period that bidders are engaged and supported to enable a bid to be submitted.
- 16 Due diligence checks will be undertaken on the contractors bidding for the contract to ensure their financial position and stability, insurance certification, health and safety policies and that they are adhering to woodland creation and management laws and regulations

What are the legal implications?

- 17 The tender will be carried out in line with the Council's CPRs and Public Contract Regulations 2015. Procurement and Commercial Services (PACS) will provide support to ensure compliance is adhered to.
- 18 The value of the decision makes the Authority to Procure a Key Decision and as such is subject to call in. This procurement was added to the list of forthcoming key decisions on 11th November 2024. The decision can be taken on or after 10th December 2024.
- 19 The decision to award the contract will be treated as a consequence of this key decision and will therefore be a publishable Admin Decision which will not be subject to call in.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 20 Existing frameworks and contract arrangements have been explored to see if any cover the requirements of the Council, however none cover the needs of the Council and as such there is a requirement to carry out an open tender to the market.

How will success be measured?

21 Success will be measured by procuring a contract that meets the needs of the Council whilst offering value for money.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

22 It is intended that tender documents will be published in February 2025 with the contract awarded in March / April 2025 to enable the contract to commence on the 1st May 2025.

23 26 The Project Manager and Senior Project Officer, Woodland Creation Climate Energy and Green Spaces will be responsible for the implementation and contract management of the service..

Appendices

- EDCI

Background papers

- None