

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	11 JUNE 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	14
TITLE:	CONTRACT AWARD - MEASURED TERM CONTRACTS FOR SMOKE DETECTORS IN DWELLINGS AND COMMUNAL AREAS IN RBC HOUSING BLOCKS & FIRE ALARM INSTALLATIONS TO COMMUNAL AREAS		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	JAMES CURNOW	TEL:	0118 9373967 / 73967
JOB TITLE:	SENIOR ELECTRICAL ENGINEER	E-MAIL:	James.curnow@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report seeks approval for the award of a 'measured term' contract (MTC) for the provision of smoke detectors within dwellings and communal areas in Council housing blocks and a measured term contract for fire alarm installations to communal areas. These contracts relate to the repair and maintenance of the Council's Housing Stock and will further improve fire safety in Council blocks of flats, installing measures which exceed statutory requirements.
- 1.2 No volume of expenditure is guaranteed under these contracts as annual expenditure will depend on the actual level of work that is required during the course of the year. However, based on expenditure records, typically the total expenditure on the contracts is estimated to be circa £650,000 and £350,000 respectively per annum.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Policy Committee provide delegated authority to the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services to award the Measured Term Contracts for Smoke Detectors in dwellings and communal areas in RBC housing blocks and Fire alarm installations to communal areas.

3. MEASURED TERM CONTRACTS FOR WORKS TO COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK

Background

- 3.1 Despite the Council's blocks differing in design to Grenfell Tower, in 2017 the Council appointed an external qualified Fire Engineer (Fireskills) to carry out a review of practice in the areas of management, fire safety measures and safety advice to tenants in high rise and some other flatted blocks. This reported to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee in March 2018.
- 3.2 FireSkills were asked to provide a professional view on whether additional fire precautions were advised in any of the building types surveyed, to improve the fire safety standard in the context of recent incidents nationally and the learning from those. Overall FireSkills noted that the Council's Housing Service has a 'forward facing and proactive fire safety strategy' and whilst the Council is fully compliant with current legislation, FireSkills have recommended that the Council consider implementing a number of additional measures. These include range of measures including:
- a. Additional smoke and/or heat detectors for some block types, for example where access/exit is via a lounge and in properties with 'stacked windows'.
 - b. In blocks where the flat front doors open directly onto the enclosed escape staircase, installation of communal smoke detector systems is advised at each landing level.
 - c. In sheltered accommodation, ensuring that a smoke detector or heat detector is allowed in all habitable rooms as well as the main exit corridor of the flat

Contract for Works

- 3.3 Housing Property Services proposes to invite tenders for 1 'measured term' contract (MTC) covering smoke detectors in dwellings and communal areas in housing blocks and 1 'measured term' contract (MTC) covering communal fire alarm installations. There is no existing contract in place - currently a low volume of installations of smoke detectors have been managed in-house linked to annual gas servicing. However, this is a major programme of upgrading systems following an external review of fire safety in Council housing.
- 3.4 The MTC for the smoke detectors will be tendered on the basis of a fixed price installation per smoke detector and against the Housing Property Services Schedule of Rates for additional electrical works. Contractors will be invited to provide an inclusive price per detector as well as a percentage increase or decrease against the published Schedule of Rates for additional

electrical work. The MTC for Fire alarm installations to communal areas will be tendered via a framework.

- 3.5 Reading Borough Council's Housing Property Services manage the day to day repairs, planned maintenance and voids repair works for approximately 5,600 Council properties which are let throughout the Borough. Elements of this work are sometimes sub-contracted out through the use of MTC's which are put in place to manage peaks in workload at times when there is not enough capacity within the in-house teams or to provide specialist services.
- 3.6 In each case the ability to carry out the work covered in the MTC using existing resources, or employment of additional staff to carry out the work has been examined and found to be either uneconomic due to the level of spend and nature of the work, or the capacity/specialist skills not being available internally. Therefore it is more efficient and cost effective for the service to sub contract the work in this way rather than employing additional staff who would be surplus to requirements outside of peak times.
- 3.7 Where it is feasible to do so, work is allocated to other RBC internal teams. Internal teams will always be offered relevant work before approaching specialist framework contractors.
- 3.8 MTC's are normally put in place for a 4 year period, however, these works are intended to be carried out within a 2 period. The proposed works are not included in the scope of any current arrangement.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 The contract will support the achievement of the Council's strategic aims of 'providing homes for those in most need' and 'remaining financially sustainable to deliver service priorities' by using a cost effective means of delivering improvements to the Council's Housing Stock.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 5.1 It is intended as far as possible to ensure that the successful tenderers pay the living wage to all employees working on Reading Borough Council properties. Tenderers are advised that the Council's current Low Wage policy expects the payment of the Living Wage rate set independently by the Living Wage Foundation and updated annually in the first week of November each year. All providers appointed are expected to pay a living wage in accordance with this policy to all staff working on Reading Borough Council contracts. The UK Living Wage for employees outside of London is currently (November 2016) £8.45 per hour.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 There is no Equalities Impact Assessment required for these contracts.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Measured Term Contracts will be awarded using the Joint Contracts Tribunal "Measured Term Contract - 2011".

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No volume of expenditure is guaranteed under these contracts as annual expenditure will depend on the actual level of work that is required to be sub contracted during the course of the year. However, based on expenditure records, typically the total expenditure on each contract across its 2 year lifespan is expected to be as follows:

- Smoke Detectors in dwellings and communal areas in RBC housing blocks £1,300,000 (£650,000 per annum).
- Fire alarm systems to communal areas £700,000 (£350,000 per annum)

8.2 The budget for these contracts is included within the existing Housing Revenue Account repairs and maintenance budget as agreed by Council.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None applicable.