

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 30 September 2014

Subject: Call-In and Urgency – Waiver of Contract Standing Orders for the urgent purchase and installation of a new sewage treatment plant at Walls Green, Willingale

Portfolio Holder: Councillor D Stallan (Housing)

Recommending:

To note that the Chairman of the Council agreed that the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder, to waiver Contract Standing Order C3 (2) 'Contracts Not Exceeding £25,000' with regards to obtaining three written quotations for the urgent installation of a new sewage treatment plant at Walls Green, Willingale, CM5 0QW, should be treated as a matter of urgency and should not be subject to call-in.

1. The existing sewage treatment plant (STP) at Walls Green, Willingale, is 34 years old and well past its life expectancy. The plant is not working due to the recent failure of the shaft and associated bearings. This is a serious and urgent situation as the failure of the plant poses both a public health and environmental risk. In addition, there is the potential for the Council to be prosecuted if the required environmental discharge consent is breached.
2. The Council has a responsibility to maintain sewage treatment works and pumping stations that are either on Council owned land or where the Council has an established maintenance duty, such as for Council housing. The Council, utilising a contractor, currently maintains seventeen sewage treatment works and nine pumping stations across the district.
3. A tender process was carried out in 2013 and was awarded on a cost - benefit basis. The successful bidder was Binders Limited, one of the major companies in the country providing this type of service.
4. The STP at Walls Green serves a total of five properties; two of these are privately owned. The sale agreement commits these households to contribute their proportion of the costs towards the upkeep and maintenance of the STP.
5. The STP is currently not working due to the failure of the shaft. This has had an impact on the bearings and other elements of the plant. As the associated repair costs are significant and the plant is well past its life expectancy, it is considered prudent to replace the plant rather than carry out the repairs. There is an anticipated 4-6 week delivery lead time. The Council's contractor has said that he will try to get the new plant delivered in the shortest time possible. Whilst the plant is not working the Council will need to pay for the waste liquid to be tankered off site. The failure of the plant poses both a public health and environmental risk.

6. The Council's term contractor has provided a quote for the purchase and installation of new plant. The predicted costs trigger Contract Standing Order C3 (2) 'Contracts Not Exceeding £25,000' with regards to obtaining three written quotations. In the interest of getting the work done as quickly as possible and given that the contractor is the Council's term contractor and has provided a quote for the work that is considered both reasonable and value for money, a waiver of Contract Standing Order C3 (2), is sought.
7. The Chairman of the Council agreed to waive the call-in procedure as any delay would likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's interests because the failure of the plant poses both a public health and environmental risk and the potential for the Council to be prosecuted if the required environmental discharge consent was breached.