

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Portfolio Holder Advisory Group on Leisure Management **Date:** Thursday, 14 January 2016

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 6.30 - 7.10 pm

Members Present: H Kane (Chairman), G Chambers, R Jennings, P Keska, R Morgan, G Shiell, E Webster and J H Whitehouse

Other Councillors: -

Apologies: -

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), J Nolan (Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)), J Warwick (Assistant Community Health & Wellbeing Manager) and G J Woodhall (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance: R Thompson (Consultant)

9. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Group noted its Terms of Reference.

10. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

(1) That the notes of the last meeting, held on 17 September 2015, be taken as read and agreed as a correct record.

11. EVALUATION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

There was no public discussion on this item.

12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

(1) That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below as it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act indicated and the exemption was considered to outweigh the potential public interest in disclosing the information:

| <u>Agenda Item</u> | <u>Subject</u> | <u>Paragraph No.</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
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13. EVALUATION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

Before the Group considered the report, D Macnab reported that the current contract with Sports & Leisure Management Limited (SLM) had been extended for a further year with a three month break clause. R Thompson from RTP Consulting then presented the report on the evaluation of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaires for the procurement of the Leisure Management Contract.

R Thompson reported that the Pre-Qualification process had been undertaken and this had resulted in the submission of five Questionnaires, all of which had been evaluated by the Officer Project Team which had included R Thompson as the Council's consultant. The Questionnaires had requested the bidders to provide information on their organisation and economic and financial standing, along with information on health & safety, background and experience, and environmental approaches. In addition, there were six project specific questions included. All of the bidders were well established operators in the Leisure Management industry with significant experience, and all had scored 80% or more when their Questionnaires were evaluated. Consequently, the Council could be confident that the bids were from organisations who had the ability to deliver the contract, and it was being proposed that all five bidders should progress to the next stage, the Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions (ISDS). The ISDS stage was scheduled to begin in mid-January 2016.

In response to questions from the Members present, R Thompson explained that the Questionnaire was based on a standard model used by local authorities, but tailored to meet the Council's requirements, and was scored by the Officer Project Team as objectively as possible. Cllr Whitehouse requested sight of the documentation that the Questionnaires were based on, and this was agreed. R Thompson stated that site visits would be organised for the next stage of the process, but references had been included as part of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire. D Macnab added that, during the procurement process for the current contract, sites similar to those owned by the Council had been selected for visits and it was intended to follow the same process for this procurement exercise. Members of the Group would be invited to attend the site visits.

R Thompson presented the current version of the Project Plan for the procurement of the new Leisure Management contract and highlighted the principal milestones to the Group.

R Thompson advised the Group that the next stage of the process was the ISDS, which would include competitive dialogue sessions with the bidders during February and March 2016, with the bids due for submission in April 2016. After the bids had been evaluated by the Officer Project team, the Invitation to Submit Final Tenders (ISFT) stage would commence, which would also include further competitive dialogue sessions with the bidders. The final tenders were due for submission in July 2016. The recommendation of the Group as to the preferred bidder would be submitted to the Cabinet on 1 September 2016 and the Council on 27 September 2016 for approval, and the new contract was scheduled to start in either December 2016 or January 2017.

The Portfolio Holder opined that the Council was fortunate to have received bids from five excellent companies, and supported the recommendation from the Officer Project team to progress all five to the next stage. R Thompson added that Leisure Management was a niche market with only around ten companies involved, and the receipt of five bids by the Council was typical for this sort of procurement exercise.

D Macnab reminded the Group that there was no need to seek approval from the Cabinet for the decisions made by the Group at this stage and the successful bidders would be informed the following day. During the recent review of the procurement and initial operation of the Waste Management Contract by Members, there had been no criticism of the competitive dialogue process which prevented its use for this procurement exercise. R Thompson reassured the Group that Members would be briefed on each bid before the Member interviews took place during the ISFT stage, which would highlight the strong and weak points of each bid.

Resolved:

- (1) That the results of the evaluation of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaires received by the Officer Project team be noted;
- (2) That the documentation upon which the Pre-Qualification Questionnaires were based be distributed to the Members of the Advisory Group; and
- (3) That the following companies be progressed to the next stage of the procurement process, the Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions:
 - (a) Fusion Lifestyle;
 - (b) GLL;
 - (c) Parkwood Leisure;
 - (d) Places for People Leisure; and
 - (e) Sports & Leisure Management Limited (SLM).

14. MATTERS ARISING

In relation to the notes of the last meeting, D Macnab reiterated that most schools had little interest in managing a swimming pool due to the high costs of maintenance involved. Cllr Whitehouse enquired whether Ongar Swimming Pool could be offered to a Community Group to manage? D Macnab stated that Officers would be reluctant to recommend the closure of a facility if a Community Group could take it over; however, Ongar Swimming Pool was aging and needed significant maintenance.

Cllr Whitehouse also felt that consideration should be taken of the frequency of the public transport service and not just the time taken to journey to a Leisure facility, as had been assumed at the previous meeting. It was highlighted by J Warwick that the majority of the users of Epping Sports Centre used their cars to travel there.

15. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Group noted that there were meetings scheduled for 8 February 2016 and 11 April 2016.

D Macnab reported that the competitive dialogue for the Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions (ISDS) was due to start on that date, and that there might not be anything substantial to report to the Group. Cllr Kane suggested that the next scheduled meeting be either deferred to a date in March, or cancelled and the Group would convene again on 11 April 2016. The Group felt that it would be better to cancel the next scheduled meeting in February and meet again in April 2016.

Resolved:

- (1) That the next scheduled meeting of the Group on 8 February 2016 be cancelled.

CHAIRMAN