

Committee Report:

Review of Consultancy Proposals

Date: 2nd Sept 2025

To: FGP Committee

From: Andrew Briggs – Ops Manager

Subject: Consultancy Proposals

Council Priority: Democratic / Fair – Provide a high standard of services and facilities.

1. Purpose

To consider the appointment of a procurement consultant to support delivery of the Council's PWLB funded capital programme, ensuring compliance with procurement law, value for money, and effective project mobilisation.

2. Background

The Council is progressing a large scale capital programme, including compliance and refurbishment projects across multiple sites.

Officers face limited capacity to run complex procurement processes while ensuring compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) and the transition to the Procurement Act 2023 (PA2023).

Failure to manage procurement correctly exposes the Council to:

- Legal challenges for non compliance
- Project delays and increased costs
- Audit and scrutiny risks

To mitigate this, external procurement consultancy support was sought to manage:

- Route to market advice (frameworks, direct award, or competition)
- Drafting of tender packs, specifications, and evaluation criteria
- Publication and management of clarifications via Find a Tender and Contracts Finder
- Evaluation moderation and award recommendation
- Ensuring compliance with Council Standing Orders and statutory requirements

An RFQ was issued in July 2025. Three responses were received.

3. Options Considered (Consultant Proposals)

Option A

- Cost: £26,000 (25 days @ £1,040/day), additional days £936/day.
- Consultants: Gemma Waring or Sharon Croome.
- Approach: Detailed workplan including documentation, clarifications, moderation, and contract award.
- Strengths: Highly experienced, full coverage of procurement cycle, robust tools/templates.
- Weaknesses: Significantly higher cost than alternatives.

Option B

Cost: £10,000.

Concerns Identified:

- Company only incorporated on 21 August 2025 (same day verification was requested).
- No trading history or filed accounts.
- Reference discrepancies in project values and contacts.
- Uses a generic Outlook email address, not a professional domain.
- Minimal web presence and unclear trading capacity.
- Assessment: High risk and non-compliant. Not recommended for appointment.

Option C

- Cost: £7,500 (25 days equivalent, £300/day).
- Approach: Emphasis on compliance and legal robustness in tendering.
- Strengths: Lowest cost option, experience in compliance-heavy projects.
- Weaknesses: Proposal less detailed on documentation and award stage support.

4. Evaluation

Consultant	Cost (excl. VAT)	Strengths	Weaknesses
A	£26,000	Highly experienced; strong compliance assurance; proven track record.	High cost compared to alternatives.
C	£7,500	Cost effective; covers key scope; flexible approach.	Smaller provider; less capacity than larger firms.
B	£10,000	Low cost	Newly incorporated; no track record; references not verifiable; high risk.

5. Procurement & Compliance Considerations

- All three suppliers can be directly appointed under Council Standing Orders (under procurement thresholds).
- Three quotes obtained ensures compliance with local rules for spend <£213,477 (current works threshold).
- Consultant will ensure compliance with PCR 2015 / PA2023 during tendering of capital projects, reducing legal risk.
- The appointment of a procurement consultant must support the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. By ensuring procurements are run fairly and transparently, the consultant will help widen access to opportunities, particularly for SMEs and local suppliers. The consultant will be required to embed these principles into tender documentation and evaluation, ensuring that procurement outcomes reflect the Council's social value commitments and equality obligations.

It is essential that any appointed consultant provides robust assurance against procurement challenges. Engaging a newly incorporated, unproven company (such as company B) poses significant risks: noncompliance, reputational damage, and potential project delays.

Both A & C provide evidence of experience and compliance knowledge, though at different cost levels.

6. Financial Implications

- Consultancy funded from PWLB capital programme support allocation.
- Contractor B – High Risk.
- Contractor A would exceed budget provision.
- Contractor C offers lower cost but less comprehensive assurance.

7. Risks

- No appointment → risk of noncompliance, project delay.
- Lowest cost appointment - risk of inadequate support at key stages.

Risk Register

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Consultant lacks capacity	Medium	High	Due diligence on resources and availability.
Non-compliant process	Low	High	Consultant ensures PCR 2015/PA2023 compliance; officer oversight.
Cost overrun	Medium	Medium	Fixed fee arrangement: cap days unless extension agreed.
Poor quality deliverables	Low	High	References and accreditations to be verified before appointment.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that Council:

- Note the three quotations received.
- Exclude Contractor B on the grounds of noncompliance and high risk.
- Consider Contractor A (higher cost, stronger compliance track record) and Contractor C Ltd (cost effective, smaller scale) as the two viable options.
- Proceed with Contractor C.
- Allow up 5 day contingency cost of £1,500 (£300.00 pr day).

Project Timeline

Subject to Council approval, the following indicative programme will apply:

Milestone	Date
Council approval of appointment	Sept 2025
Consultant due diligence completed	Sept / Oct 2025
Contract award and mobilisation	October 2025
Preparation of procurement documentation	Oct–Nov 2025
Publication of first tenders	Late Nov 2025
Evaluation and moderation	Jan 2026
Award	Jan - Feb 2026
Mobilisation	Feb-Mar 2026
Programme delivery commences	Mar - Apr 2026

Due Diligence Checklist

Requirement	Evidence Required	Status
Professional accreditations	MCIPS, ISO, Cyber Essentials	☐
Public sector references	2 contactable referees	☐
Insurance certificates	PI, PL, EL	☐
GDPR compliance	Data protection statement	☐

Appendices

- **Appendix A** – Consultant CVs
- **Appendix B** – Proposals