

Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) Market Consultation: Feedback on Responses Received

The Council would like to thank all parties for their interest in the market consultation for the Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP / the Programme). In particular the Council would like to thank those organisations which returned a questionnaire and / or attended a consultation meeting ('Contributors'). The comments received were much appreciated and will be considered within the Council's ongoing review of how best to achieve its strategic housing and regeneration objectives.

The market consultation was advertised via Sell2Wales and the European Journal. Over 5000 notices informing bidders who may be interested in the opportunity were sent. An information page was also set up on the Council's internet site which has received over 500 hits. The webpage can be accessed via the following link:

www.flintshire.gov.uk/SHARP

Responses were in line with expectations as the number of potential contractors able to provide the Council's requirements is relatively small and specialised. 9 questionnaires were received and 6 consultation meetings were held. A cross section of organisations completed questionnaires, with 2 being received from small to medium enterprises. Publicity attracted national interest with 3 responses from organisations based in Flintshire and 5 from Wales as a whole.

Overall a sufficient number of organisations expressed an interest in the opportunity to satisfy the Council that sufficient bidders would tender should procurement be undertaken. Generally Flintshire was seen by Contributors to have good commercial and strategic potential due to its key location; development scope and the commercial links already held by Contributors in the North Wales region.

However despite this interest it is also important to note that the development market is currently buoyant and that bidders have limited resources with which to tender for contracts. On this basis the Council is mindful of the need to structure the procurement so that the opportunity to tender is viewed favourably by potential bidders at time when they may have many opportunities to select from: in other words that potential bidders 'Choose Flintshire'.

Feedback Received

Generally the outline Programme scope was thought well formed and the outcomes based approach of structuring the procurement around commissioning objectives was endorsed.

A good number of Contributors expressed their ability and willingness to be flexible to meet any and all of the Council's requirements. However Contributors stressed that potential housing and regeneration benefits would be maximised if the Programme was delivered in the context of a long term relationship. This was particularly thought to be desirable to realise the community benefit potential, as bidders would then be able to invest more effectively in the provision of long term programmes for training; apprenticeships and education for example.

Whilst the development of housing in Flint town centre was recognised as the 'anchor' for the Programme, the ability to encompass development sites across Flintshire was seen as a factor which would greatly increase development potential and Contributor interest. This acknowledges the ability of a Flintshire wide Programme to provide a greater mix of housing tenures; increase economies of scale and greater strategic integration in terms of planning and the phasing of development. Contributors also stated that many of these benefits would be further enhanced if it were possible for Flintshire to collaborate with other local authorities and public sector partners in the commissioning of the contract.

Including the scope to commission of community buildings alongside housing was also considered an important feature by many Contributors, as it was seen as increasing the ability to achieve regeneration benefits and create 'holistic' and cohesive communities.

The inclusion of a requirement for funding for affordable housing was seen as least a neutral feature or most commonly, a feature that made the Programme a more attractive prospect.

Additionally, sufficient flexibility and scope was requested to be built into any contract, in order to more easily cope with any changing requirements.

All Contributors expressed a strong willingness to work closely with local communities and with the Council (and its partners,) to achieve community benefits as part of the outcomes of the Programme. All Contributors were very enthusiastic about the extent of the benefits that could be achieved.

Feedback Received on the proposed Tendering Process

Mindful of the fact that bidders often have competing demands on their bidding resources, the Council is committed to ensuring that the procurement is well structured; transparent and efficient: as bidders need to be assured that the tendering process will request the investment of their time and resources prudently and wisely.

Transparency within the procurement process will be maximised to support bidders in the completion of a compliant tender which showcases their capabilities. Specific marking guidance will be provided for each question and maximum word counts will be adopted for answers. The Council will use the Proactis eTendering system to minimise the administrative burden of tender submission. Bidders can register their details on Proactis via the link below:

[Link to Proactis Supplier Registration Portal](#)

The PQQ will follow the standard Welsh Government question set. (However questions will be adapted to meet the needs of the procurement when necessary.) The question set be viewed via the link below:

[Standard PQQ Questions](#)

A full written debrief will be provided to bidders along with the opportunity for face to face debrief meetings.

Generally the tendering process proposed by the Council was broadly welcomed by Contributors. Whilst the procurement timetable was seen as challenging, it was seen as possible providing the procurement remained focused on the key issues. Most concern was expressed around the length of time available for bidder responses and the amount of time that could be made available for dialogue between the Council and bidders.

Contributors identified that a material factor in making sure that the time is used wisely is the number of bidders invited by the Council to participate in the process: as too many bidders can stretch Council resources and limit the time available for dialogue and the preparation of tenders. Contributors also stressed that the Council must ensure to sufficiently refine its requirements prior to advertising the tender, so that potential bidders can determine whether the opportunity is for them: and likewise so that the Council can attract and identify a relatively small but sufficient pool of capable bidders.

Also to ensure that effective progress is made, Contributors emphasised that the Council would also need to provide key information such as confirmed development sites (including feasibility information) and details of the proposed commercial relationship and contract model at an early stage. Plus early engagement with planning requirements was also considered essential.

Overall however, the procurement process and timetable proposed by the Council was considered by Contributors to be feasible.

Once again the Council would like to express its thanks for your interest in the market consultation: further updates will be provided on the market consultation internet page.

Please send any comments in respect of this feedback to: SHARP@flintshire.gov.uk.