

## **North Somerset Council Decision**



**Decision Of: Director of Adult Social Services  
In Consultation With: Head of Procurement & the  
Section 151 Officer**

**Directorate: Adult Social Services**

**Decision No: ASC71 (2023/24 Scheme)**

**Subject: Extension of Bathing Adaptations Framework**

**Key Decision: Yes**

### **Reason:**

Total framework value is over £500,000.

### **Background:**

The council assists elderly and disabled residents remain independent in their homes through major adaptations which in the main provide access e.g., stairlifts, and bathing adaptations.

The Corporate Plan sets out the council's vision and overall priorities; this framework supports the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing, and Quality Places objectives. A framework to deliver bathing adaptations helps disabled residents with essential adaptations to remain independent at home.

The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 commits to transform the delivery of adaptations for disabled people by improving service quality and value for money.

The Health and Well-being Strategy 2021 - 2024 highlights the importance of timely adaptations in the prevention of long-term care needs.

### **Decision:**

To approve the extension of the framework for Bathing Adaptations to support the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant programme for 24 months (12+12) currently ending 31 March 2024.

## **Reasons:**

### **Introduction**

Through the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme, the council assists elderly and disabled residents to remain living safely and independently in their own homes. The grant can be used to fund a range of adaptations including the provision of bathing adaptations. The use of procured contractors to deliver adaptations is a key recommendation of the good practice guidance, and has considerable operational advantage in providing good value, quality adaptations, within defined contract timescales.

In March 2019, the Executive agreed a Commissioning Plan (Minute ref: EXE80) to procure a Framework to deliver Bathing Adaptation Works as part of the Disabled Facilities Grant. The Procurement Plan was agreed by the elected member for housing in September 2019 (Ref: PC56 2019/20) and the opportunity advertised on the procurement portal, with a closing date of 20/01/2020.

The aim was to establish a rotational framework of up to eight contractors, and it was recommended that following the evaluation process the top eight contractors be awarded a place.

Tenders were evaluated on 100% Price. Quality was assessed via pass/fail questions and also through method statement answers including customer service, works programming, safeguarding and conflict resolution. Contractors who scored 3 or above (out of 5) for all questions passed the minimum quality requirement were allocated a place on the framework.

We received 15 tenders, nine of which passed the minimum quality threshold. One company did not meet the price requirement and therefore the top eight were awarded a place on the framework.

### **Use of Exception**

This contract has run successfully for the past three years.

Since 2020 demand for skilled contractors has increased but having the framework in place has allowed the delivery of bathing adaptations to continue despite the pressures on the construction market. The fixed schedule of rates has delivered good value for money with the annual uplift still offering a fair price to the contractors.

All of the suppliers on the framework are SME's and local.

The Service leader for private housing retired in July and has not been replaced, the team have moved to a new directorate with the overall staff resource reduced. This, combined with difficulties recruiting to vacant posts and an increase in enquiries for Disabled Facilities grants, has put pressure on staff time and led to an increase in the waiting list and waiting times for delivery of adaptations.

It is requested that the framework is extended instead of going out the market as our current rates are fixed (with annual uplift). An extension of this Bathing Adaptation Framework would be a time and cost saving and would allow staff time to be focused on delivery and reduce the waiting list and waiting times.

As a Works Framework, below threshold, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 do not apply and therefore an Exception to CSOs is requested.

**Exception used:**

- 6.3.1 quantifiable and significant cost and efficiency savings can be achieved through seeking an alternative route.

**Options Considered:**

Other options were fully considered:

- To approve an extension of the rotational framework;
- To do nothing and work with the client to obtain 2 quotes for each job. This approach is more cumbersome for the client and subject to variations in pricing and timescales dictated by the market (not best practice);
- Contract with a single supplier. The previous contract (that was terminated before this framework was set up) was with a single contractor who failed to deliver. The use of a framework gives a more resilient solution to service delivery, if one contractor fails. A framework also acts to stimulate the local contractor supply market, supporting local, SME contractors.

Having considered all options, extending the rotational framework was found to have the most operational advantages for service delivery.

**Financial Implications:**

**Costs:**

The value of this framework is in the region of £1,400,000 which when split over two years equates to an annual cost of £700,000 per annum.

**Funding:**

**Costs and funding**

The value of this framework is in the region of £700,000 per annum which will be met from the council's capital programme. This work is currently funded using annual DFG allocation through the Better Care Fund.

**Legal Powers and Implications:**

The Disabled Facilities Grants is a mandatory grant, introduced by the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Good practice guidance encourages Local Authorities to use schedules of rates and framework agreements to help streamline and speed up service delivery.

The framework will continue on the existing terms and conditions.

**Climate Change and Environmental Implications:**

All contractors were asked to consider social value and climate emergency considerations as part of their submission. We received a positive response from the contractors - many

of them use local labour and supply chains as well as working towards reducing carbon emissions from transport.

**Consultation:**

Initial market research was carried out with local contractors and the response for this style of framework (rotational framework) was positively received.

Internal consultations with occupational therapy colleagues have taken place throughout the process. The framework was designed in consultation with Procurement and Legal services.

**Risk Management:**

An overall risk rating of LOW has been determined, applying the principles of the corporate risk scoring matrix.

Mitigation of identified risks are supported by a thorough risk assessment completed by the Commissioner and the Procurement Team, against each individual activity, and will be monitored and mitigated throughout the procurement process and subsequent framework/contract monitoring.

**Equality Implications:**

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes

No negative impacts were identified. The framework will support elderly and disabled people to live safely and independently in their own homes therefore the impacts are positive.

**Corporate Implications:**

Corporate implications as outlined in the report.

**Appendices:**

N/A

**Background Papers:**

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and other Adaptations: External review, December 2018.

<https://www.foundations.uk.com/media/5665/dfg-review-2018-main-report-final-nov-2018a.pdf>

Executive Report – Bathing Adaptations Contract 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27897.pdf>

Award of Contract – Bathing Adaptations P&C 58 (2016/17 Scheme)

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/16-17-PC-58.pdf>

**Signatories:**

**Decision Maker(s):**

Signed:



Title: Director of Adult Social Services

Date: 12 February 2024

**In Consultation With:**

Signed:



Title: Head of Procurement

Date: 12 February 2024

Signed:



Title: Section 151 Officer

Date: 12 February 2024

**Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable: Decision has been amended to reflect the change of Directorate to Adult Social Services. This is the only amendment.**