

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION ON
SINGLE ADVICE CONTRACT: TENDER EVALUATION.**

1. The decision to award the contract for the Single Advice Contract to the CAB was called in by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, and the call-in was heard on December 4th 2007 at 7.00pm. The public was allowed to stay until confidential items relating to the actual contract figures were discussed.
2. Two key issues arose from the call-in relating to the way that 'residual' advisory services were dealt with, and the overall methodology used to mark quality issues.
3. The status given to 'residual advisory services' not in the single advice contract was an issue. Because this was not in the base contract, it should not be given undue emphasis. O&S was assured that such advisory services were dealt with as only one part of the quality assessment as part of 'signposting', and that a separate mark was given for this category. All four assessors marked all quality issues independently and the final tally was done by the Principal Procurement Officer.
4. The most significant concern related to the scoring overall of quality issues. The methodology accepted was to identify the bidder that scored the most points, and then use this organisation as a benchmark from which to score the others. Since price achieved 60% and quality 40%, then CCP scored highest for quality issues and scored 40% (or 40 marks).
5. The absolute total number of marks available, however, was 187, and CCP achieved 124.75 out of this – or only 26.68 points against an absolute standard. The rest scored as follows:
CHAC – 108.25 or 23.15pts
CAB – 123.25 or 26.36 pts
A4E – 97.25 or 20.8 pts
6. This produced final aggregate scores of 84.28 points for CAB; 83.15 points for CHAC; 80.72 for CCP and 80.29 for A4E. The scoring method made no difference to the final results, but produced much closer scores.
7. It had been made clear by the Borough Procurement Manager that the methodology for calculating scores had been made clear to all applicants prior to the bids being submitted, and so everyone was aware of it.

CONCLUSION.

- The tender evaluation stands.
- There should be further exploration of the best way of assessing quality in any future bids. Quality should be assessed against absolute rather than relative criteria and be made known in advance to all applicants.
- In assessing bids there should be a minimum quality threshold so that, with a 60/40 split such as occurred in this case, the lowest price with the poorest quality doesn't benefit.

John Webster.
Chair Overview and Scrutiny.
5th December 2007