

Report of	Assitant Director Place and Client Services and Assistant Director Communities	Author	Geoff Beales ☎ 506514
Title	Award of contract for Stairlift Equipment		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report requests that Cabinet grant authority to procure a contract with Stannah Lift Service through the Procurement for Housing (PfH) Materials Framework, Lot 6 Stairlifts, to deliver stairlift equipment to residents with mobility issues across the borough, in accordance with statutory duties. The contract aim is to deliver an effective stairlift installation and maintenance regime that will result in continuing to keep people safe and mobile in their own homes for longer.
- 1.2 The contract is to design, deliver and maintain equipment that meets the needs of the individual to access essential areas in their property such as bedroom and washing facilities, as recommended by Essex County Council Social Care. A large proportion of recommended adaptations are for stairlift, which is an area of specialist work that needs to be carried out by a qualified contractor. Each stair lift will need to be individually designed to meet both the individuals' needs and the layout of the home.
- 1.3 The funds will be contained within the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) allocation, and Housing Revenue Account capital budgets for Council owned accommodation, over four years from April 2022.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To enter into the 'Procurement for Housing' Framework.
- 2.2 To award a 4-year contract to Stannah Lift Services under the Procurement for Housing Framework, effective 1st April 2022 for both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account installations under a combined agreement to provide a consistent service for all residents across the borough.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 Under the Council's constitution contracts with a value of over £500,000 require Cabinet approval unless otherwise delegated. Although the Housing Revenue Account contract awards have been delegated the DFG's in the general fund have not.
- 3.2 Since 2017, CBC and Colchester Borough Homes have been operating under the Procurement for Housing Framework which is now due for renewal. Stannah have been reliable and responsive to our requirements and the framework contract also allows us to use alternative contractors if Stannah are unable to provide a specific lift as required by the specification.

- 3.3 The Procurement for Housing Framework enables essential stairlift equipment to be provided into a resident's home by only requiring a quote from the single supplier. This supports both Social Care and the NHS budgets by maximising residents' independence and reducing risks that could lead to admissions to hospital through trips or falls, prolonged stays in hospital or the need for care or increasing the cost of care packages.
- 3.4 Stannah Lift Services have demonstrated their ability to deliver a fast service which is an important consideration when carrying out adaptation works. Stannah are well-known and recognised in the supply and installation of stairlifts and offer a 24-hour 365 day a year repair service.
- 3.5 It is therefore prudent to continue with a specialist contractor in place to facilitate the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grant projects and adaptations to Council owned properties.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Offer an open tender and award. Engaging in an open tender in normal circumstances allows for wider competition but as stairlift contractors are fairly specialised this may not be the best route. This process can also take considerable time to administer and reach contract award.
- 4.2 Multiple bids/tenders for each individual application. Seeking at least two quotes for each application and awarding to the cheapest. This process is known to take longer and increases the time to process applications.
- 4.3 Other Framework Agreements have been considered although none allow for the use of, third party contractors if the principal contractor cannot meet the requirements of the specific lift, which would then take considerable time to procure, affecting the resident.
- 4.4 Continue to operate with two separate contracts for the general fund and housing revenue account, but this does not offer best value to the Council.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 This report considers the contract arrangements the Council has for stairlift installations within the Housing Revenue Account for rented council homes and installations via Disabled Facility Grants for private sector tenants and homeowners.
- 5.2 Prior to 2017, when the existing framework was procured, there existed a county-wide framework hosted by Essex County Council of which CBC was a member since its inception in 2007. Before 2007, CBC and CBH had operated without a framework agreement in place.
- 5.3 Operating without a framework required seeking competitive quotes from at least two contractors with the cheapest contractor 'winning' the tender to deliver the equipment. This practice took more officer time to administer and required the two contractors to visit the resident and provide a scheme and quote, slowing the application process further.
- 5.4 This additional time, to tender individual works, impacts negatively on the resident's independence and often also has other impacts on health and wellbeing. The decision was jointly taken by the service areas to look for a better solution to enable applicants to receive their equipment as quickly as possible.
- 5.5 In 2017 the Council and Colchester Borough Homes joined the Procurement for Housing Framework both with a separate contract for their individual areas of work.
- 5.6 The decision to use the procurement for housing framework has been effective in delivering high quality installations for the two service areas during the current framework period. The contract ends on 31 March 2022 and a new contract is required from 1 April 2022.
- 5.7 It is proposed that the Council enter into a single four-year contract through the Procurement for Housing Framework with Stannah Stairlift Services to deliver stairlift equipment to residents with mobility issues across the borough, in accordance with statutory duties. The framework enables essential stairlift equipment to be provided into a resident's home by only requiring a quote from the single supplier.
- 5.8 Stannah Lift Services have demonstrated their ability to deliver a fast service, which is an important consideration when carrying out adaptation works. Stannah are well known and recognised in the supply and installation of stairlifts and offer a 24-hour 365 day a year repair service. Furthermore, if a stairlift is no longer required but still serviceable they will remove, refurbish and store free of charge until it is required.
- 5.8 The contract will be to design, deliver and maintain equipment that meets the needs of individuals to access essential areas of their home such as bedroom and washing facilities, as recommended by Essex County Council Social Care.
- 5.9 The contract aim is to deliver an effective stairlift installation and maintenance regime that will result in continuing to keep people safe and mobile in their own homes for longer. This will allow them to remain within their existing community and support networks.
- 5.10 The funding for this contract will be contained within the Disabled Facility Grant Allocation to the Council and Housing Revenue Account capital budgets approved in January each year, with the adaptations to Council homes managed by Colchester Borough Homes.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 Implications for Equality, Diversity and Human Right will be considered in all contracts awards. However, it is thought that investment in and the appropriate maintenance the Council's housing stock has overwhelmingly positive implications for tenants and residents of the Borough.
- 6.2 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 6.2 The recommendations will have no disproportionate impact on any protected group. The Equality Impact Assessment for the Council's Housing Investment Programme is [here](#). The Equality Impact Assessment for the Councils Financial Assistance Policy, which includes Disabled Facility Grant, can be found [here](#)

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The Strategic Plan sets out clearly the Council's priorities. The budget process has been designed to ensure that resources are allocated to meet these priorities.
- 7.2 This decision particularly contributes to the following Strategic Plan 2021-2023 priority areas:
- **Responding to the Climate Emergency**
 - Reduce carbon emissions to help achieve a zero-carbon footprint for Council services for 2030
 - Environment and sustainability imbedded in all Council decision making and the adaption and recovery from Covid-19
 - **Tackling the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people**
 - Support people to live in healthy homes that meet their needs
 - **Increase the number, quality, and types of homes**
 - Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency
 - Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people
 - **Prevent households from experiencing homelessness**
 - Work with partners to deliver the 2020-23 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan
 - Intervene early to prevent homelessness and work in partnership with other organisations to sustain people's accommodation

- Tackle rough sleeping in the Borough
- **Enable economic recovery from Covid 19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth**
 - Ensure our Borough becomes stronger post Covid 19 by supporting businesses to recover, adapt and build resilience
 - Develop opportunities to ensure the new economy is greener, sustainable, and more resilient
- **Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester help businesses to flourish**
 - Encourage green technologies and innovative solutions to the Climate Emergency
 - Maximise the social value benefits derived from third party contracts
 - Ensure the Council's assets continue to contribute to economic growth and opportunity

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Adaptations to housing stock and residents' properties are responsive and based on residents' need on a case-by-case basis. Services are not provided on a continuing basis and so no particular consultation was carried out with affected residents.
- 8.2 Tenants and residents are consulted on planned installations of stairlifts and are asked to agree the final plans.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 All CBC residents are notified of major contract awards via the Resident Newsletter. Affected tenants are notified well in advance of works taking place and consulted about the specific impact on them and their household. Once awarded, CBH will refresh/renew the advice given to residents about requesting an adaptation.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 The budgets for the Housing Investment Programme were presented to Cabinet on the 26 January 2022 and will be within the 30-year HRA Business Plan and approved budget for 2022-23.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 The purpose of the adaptations service is to meet the needs of tenants who become disabled and ensure they can continue to access and enjoy their home. Therefore, this contract has only positive outcomes for tenants' Health and Wellbeing.
- 11.2 It is broadly expected that individuals where these works will take place will be positively affected by the completion of the works.

- 11.3 The works allow residents to continue to remain in their home and continue to live within their community and existing support networks.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no Health and Safety Implication in the award of this contract.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 There are no Risk Management Implications in the award of this contract.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The key Environmental and Sustainability impacts operated by Stannah is their approach to recycling which contributes towards the Council's strategic objectives.
- 14.2 Stannah currently have a recycling scheme in place. If a stairlift is no longer required but still serviceable they will remove, refurbish and store free of charge until required by either CBC or CBH. Stannah will then reinstall at a reduced cost to the Council. This is environmentally responsible, but it also ensures that the Council's financial resources are effectively used.