

October 2023

Report of	Head of Governance	Author	Andrew Weavers
Title	Award of Contract for Electoral Printing		
Wards affected	All wards		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council has undertaken a procurement process to tender its requirements for electoral print services for running elections and undertaking electoral registration and this report seeks authority to award a contract to the recommended bidder.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To award a contract to Sciprint Limited for election and electoral registration printing for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for a period up to 3 years with an annual review subject to performance.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 Following evaluation of submitted bids against the scoring criteria and process detailed in the Invitation to Tender, the recommended bidder submitted a bid that met the essential requirements and with the higher overall score. The bid offers the best combination of technical merit specialised experience and pricing. The bid price is within the agreed budget.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 None presented as the Council's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer has statutory duty to undertake these functions.

## **5. Background Information**

- 5.1 The Returning Officer appointed by the Council has a statutory duty for the delivery of elections within the City of Colchester. These include Parliamentary, County Council, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, City Council and Parish and Town Council elections. The Returning Officer is also responsible for the delivery of a range of referendums within the city area.
- 5.2 The Electoral Registration Officer appointed by the Council has a statutory duty to maintain an accurate and complete register of electors within the City of Colchester. This is supported by the completion of an annual canvass of all properties within the city area, amongst other tasks.
- 5.3 Both elections and electoral registration have to be delivered according to legislation and regulations which are prescriptive, and which include specific printing requirements for both functions. Accordingly, the Council when going out to tender for these printing services specified that the successful contractor must be a specialised electoral printer with a proven track record in printing and delivering both election and electoral registration printing. This was particularly pertinent when considering that printing timetables are also prescribed and accordingly reliability of delivery within these timescales is an important factor.
- 5.4 A tender was issued via the BiP Solutions Ltd Delta e-tendering portal on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Expressions of Interest were received from 14 companies. 5 Bids were received on the closing date of 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023.
- 5.5 An evaluation was then undertaken, reviewing cost and technical ability and the recommendation is to appoint Sciprint Ltd. The contract will be for 3 years (4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2026 (prices submitted will be agreed yearly and will not exceed RPI), with the option to extend the contract for up to a further 3 years on a year-by-year basis subject to performance and at the discretion of the Council.
- 5.6 The breakdown of submitted prices for each bidder was checked for completeness and scored in accordance with the methodology in the ITT. The tender prices are shown in Appendix A, showing a like for like analysis, which is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial / business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information).

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, Publicity, Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety, Consultation, Health and Safety and Environmental and Sustainability implications**

- 6.1 None identified.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 The services delivered contribute directly to the Deliver Modern Services for a Modern City Strategic Plan 2023-2026 priority area.

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1 The cost of printing for both elections and electoral registration are a core element of the budget for the delivery of these functions. The price submitted by the successful bidder is within the current budget. However, these budgets are subject to pressures from increases in postage costs which are separate from the printing costs and any savings will be absorbed by increased postage costs.

- 10.2 It is worth noting that in many elections a proportion of printing costs can be recharged to third parties for example Parliamentary and County Council elections.

## **11. Risk Management Implications**

- 11.1 By following a compliant tender process and by implementing the controls and recommendations as set out in this report, the Council is seeking to mitigate against any potential risks or challenges.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A (Confidential) - shows a summary of the tender evaluation scores.

