

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S  
REPORT TO CABINET**

**16 January 2024**

**Report Title: Award of contract for the supply of Bedding Plants and Hanging Baskets**

**Submitted by: Service Director - Sustainable Environment**

**Portfolios: Sustainable Environment**

**Ward(s) affected: All**

<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	<b><u>Key Decision</u></b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
To update Cabinet on the procurement exercise undertaken for the supply of bedding plants and hanging baskets from April 2024 following the end of the current supply contract.			
<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>			
That Cabinet:			
1. <b>Awards the contract to supply the Council with bedding plants and Hanging Baskets to Boverton Nurseries to commence from April 2024 for a period of 4 years up to April 2028.</b>			
<b><u>Reasons</u></b>			
The Council has had a contract with a bedding plant supplier since November 2019, following a competitive tendering exercise. The current contract is due to expire on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024. A procurement exercise has been undertaken to ensure seasonal provision of bedding plants are maintained. Bedding plants are an important feature of our existing grounds maintenance offer to Newcastle and Kidsgrove Town centres in addition to Bradwell Crematorium.			

**1. Background**

- 1.1** The provision of good quality bedding plants, hanging baskets and floral troughs is required to ensure we are able to create colourful floral displays within a number of key locations within the borough and town centres. The floral displays created are a key component to sustaining the attractiveness of our town centres, strategic gateways and crematoria.

- 1.2** Our approach to creating attractive bedding schemes has gained considerable recognition concerning our approach to achieving consistent and significant success in Britain in Bloom playing crucial role in our achieving a gold standard in Britain in Bloom for the past 19 years. Our annual plant bedding displays also support our approach in achieving green flag status for the Queens Gardens. Perhaps more significantly we receive regular compliments from our residents with regards to the attractiveness of our bedding schemes, underpinning the pride our residents have within the borough and with Newcastle Town Centre in particular.
- 1.3** Expenditure for the purchase of annual bedding plants; hanging baskets and floral troughs has for several years been within the £50,000 budget. Cost savings have been achieved by closely reviewing the number and location of bedding plants with reductions being made with our formal parks in particular, where no bedding plants are now used. Further reductions have been achieved in reducing annual plant use concerning our bereavement services with annual plants and baskets now being displayed at Bradwell Crematoria only. We have additionally introduced more sustainable planting, including wildflower schemes in key locations with excellent effect most notably on our roundabouts to Newcastle Town Centre, Queens Gardens and Keele Cemetery.
- 1.4** Further expansion of herbaceous planting use is currently being planned with a phased introduction to a number of locations and is anticipated to reduce the number of bedding plants being purchased over the next five years.
- 1.5** Our current contract has expired which has enabled us to undertake a mini tender to test market conditions with regards to the number of nurseries that can supply our plant needs, the quality of provision, sustainability of businesses and the value and variety of plant units available.

## **2. Issues**

- 2.1** The Council has had a contract with the current bedding plant supplier since November 2019, following a competitive tendering exercise. The contract was offered and accepted on the basis of it expiring on 31st March 2024. As this contract is due to expire it has been necessary to retender to ensure seasonal provision of bedding plants.
- 2.2** A procurement exercise has been undertaken with only one submission being received. The submission being from our incumbent supplier, Boverton Nurseries.
- 2.3** The price increases reflected in the submission, of approximately 10%, for this contract opportunity, in comparison to the tender submission in 2019 are modest and are considered to achieve good value. Should we continue to procure high volumes of bedding plants (which is scheduled to reduce over the next three years) expenditure will be achieved within our £50,000 annual budget.

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the award of the contract to supply the Council with bedding plants and Hanging Baskets to Boverton Nurseries to commence from April 2024 for a period of 4 years up to April 2028.

### **4. Reasons**

- 4.1 The current contract for the supply of bedding plants and hanging baskets will expire at the end of March 2024. There is a wish to continue using bedding plants and hanging baskets in key locations within the borough, with a view to a continued move to more sustainable planting schemes as we move forward.

### **5. Options Considered**

- 5.1 To move away from traditional bedding plants, to perennials and other more sustainable planting. However, such a move in one season would still require significant investment and planning, and it is considered a longer-term approach is required to how formal flower and plant displays are delivered in the future.

### **6. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The council must comply with Public Procurement Directives, deliver a transparent procurement process and evidence value for money solutions

### **7. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 It is considered that there are positive equality impacts for residents and visitors who are able to appreciate the floral displays

### **8. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The procurement process confirmed an annual fee of up to £48,707.50 in value for the supply of bedding plants, hanging baskets and railing troughs for delivery on an annual basis commencing from April 2024.
- 8.2 The cost of the provision is within budget, being met from within the approved General Fund Revenue Programme for Streetscene.

### **9. Major Risks & Mitigation**

- 9.1 There is a risk to the Council of not being able to source and take delivery of sufficient quality and quantity of bedding plants should the contract not be awarded to Boverton Nurseries.

## 10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

10.1 The Council has a very strong ethos in supporting its green spaces, and ensuring its town centres and parks are designed and maintained to a high standard, which has been recognised through its Britain in Bloom awards, and green flag status in a number of locations. These awards recognise the Councils commitment to sustainability goals as well as biodiversity, and nature recovery initiatives, which this procurement exercise supports.

10.2 This report supports the following UNSDG goals



## 11. Key Decision Information

11.1 The report is a key decision given the projected spend over the contract period up to the end of March 2028.

## 12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 None

## 13. List of Appendices

13.1 None

## 14. Background Papers

14.1 None