

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy & Resources
DATE	15 September 2015
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Exemption from the Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts and Procurement for the purchase and installation of early learning and childcare furniture for new nurseries
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/15/045
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to make Members of this Committee aware of a request, under Standing Order 1 (6)(b), for an exemption from the Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts and Procurement in relation to the contract for purchasing and installation Early Learning and Childcare furniture for the additional nurseries opening between August 2015 and February 2016. The exemption request was approved on 31 July 2015.

The report fulfils the Standing Order 1(6)(b) requirement that "Any contract made on behalf of the Council under this paragraph shall be reported to the appropriate Committee of the Council by the Commissioning Officer as soon as practicable."

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report and the reasons behind requesting the exemption from the relevant standing orders.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this exemption. The contract to supply the nursery equipment relates to five separate orders of £25,000, a total of £125,000. This will be funded from the capital funding allocated to the council to fund the increase in early learning and childcare entitlement.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Standing Orders Exemption was granted by the Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Procurement. This exemption approved the request to purchase the room design service, the purchase and the installation of furniture and equipment for five new nursery classes to allow us to fit out the nurseries when each element of the capital works programme is completed.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 Aberdeen City Council currently provides 3119 early learning and childcare places in local authority nurseries and secures an additional 1236 places from voluntary and private partner providers. As a result of the growing number of under fives in the city we are required to increase the number of places to allow us to meet every child's statutory entitlement to 600 hours of early learning and childcare.
- 5.2 The Early Learning and Childcare Team has secured additional capital funding to expand local authority nurseries and to secure additional places from partner provider nurseries. The programme of capital works will be completed over the next six months to allow us to extend five local authority nurseries.
- 5.3 The capital works have been completed ahead of schedule for three nurseries and this enabled us to provide 60 additional places for the start of the school term. Two nurseries will be completed during the autumn term.
- 5.4 The Commissioning Officers considered a range of suppliers who would be able to deliver the required furniture by the start of term. They considered the service offered by the supplier, the quality of the equipment, guarantee offered and delivery timescales. Only one supplier, Community Playthings, was able to provide the standard and range of equipment we required and would be able to deliver it within a two weeks to allow us to meet the 17 August deadline.
- 5.5 Community Playthings furniture is durable, long lasting and safe for young children. The furniture is made of natural wooden materials which are shown to have a calming influence on children and helps to create a positive learning environment for our early learners.
- 5.6 In addition to supplying the equipment and furniture, Community Playthings design the layout of the playrooms, deliver and provide an installation service. This avoids the additional time and expense of employing tradesmen to install the equipment. Finally this company provides a ten year guarantee. Therefore overall the costs are considered to be good value.

6. IMPACT

- 6.1 The exemption approval has allowed us to respond to the increase in demand for early learning and childcare place in our local authority nurseries and to open and equip the new nurseries for the start of the academic session 15/16. This ensures that an increasing number of families are able to secure their statutory entitlement to the 600 hours of early learning and childcare.

It has also ensured that the council is able to fulfil its statutory duties

Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment:

The proposal will benefit children and their families. The proposal will not impact on equalities and human rights.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 7.1 The Standing Orders Exemption request noted Legal advice as follows:

'The aggregate expenditure for the furniture is estimated to be £125,000 this is below the OJEU threshold and therefore does not result in the Council potentially being in breach of their procurement obligations under the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

It also appears that given the timescales involved there are no other suppliers capable of providing the required items while it would have been preferable for the Service to have suitably procured this in advance if this matter is not foreseeable the procurement risk would be nil otherwise there would still exist a potential procurement risk although this would be low.'

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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