



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Delegated authority to go out to tender for the print of City Matters
Date:	13 February 2015
Reporting Officer:	Eamon Deeny
Contact Officer:	As above

Relevant Background Information

Annually, the council publishes and distributes five editions of City Matters, the residents' magazine, to 130,000 households in Belfast. The editorial, design and advertising elements of City Matters are managed in-house. External costs include distribution and print.

Even with the rise in the use of digital communications, City Matters remains the top vehicle for disseminating information to the public. Over two-thirds of our residents in the council's 2014 public survey said they read City Matters - more than double the amount of people who view our website at 26%. The survey also reflected that the publication was the main contributor in the increase in residents who said the council keeps them informed about the services it provides.

The format of the magazine encourages feedback from the public and we receive an average of 1,000 feedback forms for each edition.

City Matters has also received consistent external recognition - It has been rated 'Best Newspaper or Magazine' by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations in Northern Ireland, achieving gold status in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2013, and silver in 2007, 2009 and 2014.

It adheres to plain English standards and is produced in accessible formats, including Braille. It is also available for download from the council's website.

Current position

The printing contract for City Matters ends in June 2015. W&G Baird is the current print provider and was appointed in June 2012 for a period of three years.

We need to go out to tender for the **printing element** of City Matters for a maximum period of four years, subject to satisfactory performance.

With local government reform taking place this year, the Belfast City Council boundary will expand to take in 21,000 households from the Lisburn, Castlereagh and North Down areas. These changes that local government reform brings mean it's more important than ever that we communicate with our residents on an ongoing basis.

Key Issues

Costs of City Matters

The cost of printing City Matters has increased as a result of the increased number of households joining our council boundary. However, the distribution costs have decreased as more of our original boundary areas have become full post code areas and can be serviced more effectively by Royal Mail's door-to-door service.

The main costs of City Matters are as follows:

Costs		Print	Distribution	Total
Before LGR 130k households	Per edition	£23k	£15k	£38k
	Per year	£115k	£75k	£190k
New council 151k households	Per edition	£27k approx	£13k	£40k
	Per year	£135k	£65k	£200k

We have an annual income stream of £20,000 from external advertisers.

Evaluation of tender

Evaluation of the tender will be based on an appropriate price quality ratio, using evaluation criteria agreed in conjunction with central procurement services.

Resource Implications

Financial

The cost for the print tender is covered in the estimates for 2015-16.

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendations

The committee is asked to approve:

- Putting out a tender **under the scheme of delegation** for the print of City Matters for a contract of a maximum of four years.
- Extend the current print contract for one edition, if required, to allow for any delay in the procurement process.

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

None