

**REPORT TO:** Mersey Gateway Executive Board

**DATE:** 17 November 2011

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**SUBJECT:** Mersey Gateway Bridge – Commencement of Procurement

**WARDS:** All

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The Conditional Funding Agreement with Ministers allows the procurement process for Mersey Gateway Bridge to commence. This report advises members of the procurement actions already taken and provides an overview of the activity planned for the next two years.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Mersey Gateway Executive Board note that the procurement process has commenced.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The procurement process commences with the publication of the Contract Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), which invites interested parties to express an interest in the procurement of Mersey Gateway Bridge. The Contract Notice was dispatched on 20 October 2011 and responses are required by 14 December 2011. The Contract Notice was published in the OJEU on Monday 24 October. The terms of the Contract Notice are drawn to allow the procurement process to develop the most economically advantageous solution (referred to as a bid).

3.2 The invitation to the private sector to express an interest in procurement is supported by a project brief called the 'The Prequalification Document', which is available on the project website, merseygateway.com. The Prequalification Document Appendices contain instructions for candidates wishing to express an interest and responses are required in the form of Prequalification Questionnaire. The project team are using the northwest Local Authorities' procurement portal, 'the Chest', to administer the prequalification process. Candidates must register on the Chest to gain access to the Project portal. Candidates need to register in order to request access to project information (the Dataroom), name their authorised representative, and to receive subsequent prequalification circulars (containing clarifications and responses to queries). Guidance on registering and using the Chest during the prequalification period is included in the Prequalification Document. The prequalification evaluation team (evaluators and moderators) has been identified and the process will use the 'Award' evaluation software proven to provide a robust selection procedure that can stand up to scrutiny.

3.3 The evaluation of prequalification submissions will take place from mid December to the end of January 2012. The aim is to select the three best candidates based on the published evaluation criteria. In February 2012 recommendations are to be reported to this board leading to the successful candidates being informed. The announcement of the prequalification result will enable the selected candidates to mobilise for the Competitive Dialogue process. The dialogue stage is programmed to start in February 2012. Dialogue will start with a series of briefing sessions with bidders and then goes into dialogue proper; the bidders will submit Draft Final Tenders towards the end of the dialogue stage. The Council will evaluate these, close the dialogue, and invite Final Tenders around February 2012. A preferred bidder will be selected on the basis of the Final Tenders. The programme of key procurement events is set out in Appendix 1.

3.4 To enable an efficient Competitive Dialogue to take place the project team are preparing the draft contract documents, including guidance and instructions for the bidders. The documentation will be embraced in the Invitation To Participate in Dialogue (ITPD). The project team plan to complete the ITPD in time for dialogue to commence next February.

3.5 Members are also aware that additional planning applications are being developed (called the Further Applications) with consultation currently taking place. The aim is to enable the Council as Local Planning Authority, to consider the Further Applications so that a decision is available at the commencement of Dialogue.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The project is a key priority for the Council which will deliver benefits locally and across the wider region.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 All substantive implications are reported above and in the report annex.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Mersey Gateway provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all.

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

See above

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Mersey Gateway provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all, including improved cycling and walking facilities.

#### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Mersey Gateway is forecast to deliver road safety benefits for vehicles and facilitate safer conditions for walking and cycling in the borough

#### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Mersey Gateway is a priority project in the urban renewal programme.

### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The procurement process will be supported by robust risk assessment and management with key issues reported to the Officer Project Board and members (as part of a risk escalation management regime).

### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Mersey Gateway provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all.

### **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act