

Title: DMC Bid Process Revision

Information/Discussion Report – Information

Recommendations: The DMC is asked to note the report and the work in train to improve the DMC Budget management, bidding process and monitoring.

Report Summary: This report provides a progress update on a review of the process for allocation of, management and monitoring of the DMC budget and bidding process.

1. Background

- 1.1 Responding to feedback from DMCs, officers committed to working collaboratively with DMC chairs to review and consider ways the DMC budget and bidding process can be improved.
- 1.2 The agreement to transfer administration of the DMC budget and application process from Landlord Services to the Tenant Participation (TP) team in the summer, presents a good opportunity for a review. Moreover, the bidding process was last reviewed almost 5yrs ago, and changes to Housing Management and Repairs and Improvements can be built into the process.
- 1.3 The scope of the review includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1.3.1 Simplification of the application form and guidance
 - 1.3.2 End to end monitoring of bids from expression of interest to completion of delivery
 - 1.3.3 Support for TRAs in bid completion including consultation
 - 1.3.4 Equity, transparency and consistency in the application of the process
 - 1.3.5 Expected standards for TRAs applying for larger bids
 - 1.3.6 A service standard agreement between DMCs and all involved officers
 - 1.3.7 Interface with linked teams i.e. Repairs, Capital Works, Landlord Services
- 1.4 DMC chairs, TP and finance officers recently met for discussion revolving around the points of item 1.2 above.
- 1.5 There was healthy and rich discussion that lent itself well to establishing an improved process and outcomes, that would at a minimum remove barriers through seamless systems and a relational approach.

2. Current Arrangements

- 2.1 Each DMC has an annual budget of circa £135-140k annually for distribution to TRAs, or via officer bids where there is no TRA, for estate and other communal improvements. *This responsibility will be transferred to TP in summer 2024.*
- 2.2 Bids are voted on by DMC representatives following assessment by the housing teams and are presented by the Neighbourhood Housing Manager with support from the requesting TRA.
- 2.3 The process is initiated by TRAs expressing an interest or idea with the neighbourhood housing manager who advises on viability. If deemed feasible, the application process begins with necessary checks, quotes obtained, and consultation undertaken as appropriate in accordance with the guidance.
- 2.4 If the application process is satisfied, the bid is presented at the next scheduled DMC for a vote.
- 2.5 If approved, officers will make arrangements for payment or request a purchase order (PO) that authorises the contractor or supplier to carry out works.
- 2.6 Feedback from DMC chairs and representatives indicate; this process has not been consistently applied; there is significant onus on TRAs; payment is often late or delayed; bids made for works that should be done by the council and/or H&S issues; guidance is not easy to follow; no encouragement to use local suppliers/contractor that can be more cost effective.
- 2.7 Equally, it was felt there should be; a requirement for TRAs with funds to contribute or match fund when making a bid; effective monitoring and evaluation of project and spend; better checks of TRA governance and any consultation; a cap on time allowed for delivery

3. Progress Made

- 3.1 As intimated earlier there was rich discussion between officers and DMC chairs, with a number of practical suggestions made to include;
 - 3.1.1 DMC committee approval of bids (subject to spend) up to the value of £5K
 - 3.1.2 Guidance to include service standard agreement that spells out a timeline for each stage of the bid.
 - 3.1.3 Guidance on how non-council contractors and supplier can be used
 - 3.1.4 DMC chairs/committee having sight of all bids for comment at first submission including any officer bids. Minimum 20 working day rule to be applied.
 - 3.1.5 Application workshops offered to reps bi-annually
 - 3.1.6 Named officer for bid/s (likely to be TP officer for DMC)
 - 3.1.7 Improved interface with linked team in the process and recording of works for impact consideration on future major works and maintenance.
- 3.2 Finance colleagues have developed a system for recording, tracking and monitoring the bid process end to end. This system would be further developed to provide reports and analysis to DMC and inform officer of service trends

- 3.3 Work is in train to ascertain status and complete all outstanding bids and clear fund held on reserve.
- 3.4 The TP team has been made aware of its new responsibility and is gearing up for the transfer.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 All agreed good progress has been made, with minimum move away from the current process but introduction of measures to both streamline and increase robustness of the process.
- 4.2 DMC chairs have asked for a follow up meeting to prepare the revised guidance, application form and the monitoring system to be included in the proposal before presenting to TRAs/ reps for feedback and adoption.
- 4.3 Further work will continue over the coming month for an updated proposal shared at the September DMC round.

Report Ends