

LEADER

A record of decisions made by the Executive Cabinet Member with responsibility for Strategy, Town Centre Regeneration, External Relations, Strategic Budget, Public Service Reform, Partnerships with Public, Private and Voluntary Sectors at a Strategic Level, Corporate Support Services, Financial Services and Budget Development, Registration Services and the Coroner's Service:-

THURSDAY 16TH DECEMBER, 2021

Following consideration of the matters detailed below in the presence of:-

Councillor Cox	- Executive Cabinet Member – Leader
Councillor Peel	- Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Hayes	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Sanders	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Allen	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson

Officers

Ms. S. Johnson	- Deputy Chief Executive
Mr. G. Brough	- Director of Place - Development
Ms. H. Gorman	- Borough Solicitor
Mr. P. Whittingham	- Assistant Director Economic Development
Ms. N. Graham	- HR Manager - Operations
Mrs. V. Ridge	- Democratic Services Manager

33. INTENTION TO AWARD AGENCY CONTRACT AS PART OF GM COLLABORATION

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report which sought the Executive Cabinet Member's approval to join the Greater Manchester collaboration of councils and other public sector partners in contracting for agency provision from February, 2022 when the collaborative contract expired.

The Executive Cabinet Member was reminded that in 2016 nine of the ten Greater Manchester Councils along with other partners undertook a tender exercise to source a managed service provider. The collaboration awarded the contract to Reed on an initial two-year basis with options to extend by up to a further two years. The expiry date should have been 28th January, 2021 however due to the pandemic, procurement rules had allowed a further twelve month extension to allow re-tender activity to take place.

In this regard, the report advised that following a robust tender process, led by Oldham Council and STAR procurement, the GM Councils and partners agreed to re-award the contract for the next three years to Reed. It was felt that this was the most wide-ranging bid, with clear consideration given to the challenges of the market and how Reed would change their delivery model to meet the demands of the collaboration and work in a much more partnership-focussed role with Councils.

With regard to the financial situation, it was stated that there were no implications associated with this proposal as fees would remain the same as under the current contract terms and there were no additional system access/usage fees to be considered.

The Executive Cabinet Member AGREED to continue in the Greater Manchester collaboration for agency provision via Reed initially on a three-year contract with provision to extend for up to four years.

34. TOWNS FUND THE WELLSPRINGS – OPERATING MODEL

The Director of Place – Development submitted a report which sought the Executive Cabinet Member's approval to go out to

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the market to procure a Managing Operator to oversee the operation of the Wellsprings building on completion of the refurbishment of the building.

The Executive Cabinet Member was reminded that Bolton was one of the 101 towns invited to apply for up to £25 million of investment through the Towns Fund to develop a Town Deal. The Council had successfully made progress by establishing a Towns Board which had met regularly on a virtual basis, undertaking community and stakeholder engagement to inform the priorities of the Towns Fund as set out in the Investment Strategy and submitting a Town Investment Plan (TIP).

It was stated that the TIP focussed on four projects, one of which was The Wellsprings. The TIP was submitted in October, 2020 with a funding ask for the full £25 million and the Council received notice in March, 2021 that the Bolton TIP had been selected to go forward into the next phase of assessment and was to be awarded £22.9 million. As a result, reprofiling of funding against each project had been undertaken.

In terms of The Wellsprings, this project sought to create a modern, highly flexible working environment, where new and existing Bolton businesses in the Creative and Digital sector were nurtured and supported to allow them to innovate, grow and reach their full potential. To do this major refurbishments works would need to be undertaken and these works had been procured through the Clear Sustainable Futures Framework and would be overseen by Clear Sustainable Futures and Corporate Property Services whereas, it was suggested that the procurement of the Managing Operator was undertaken through the Council's Corporate Procurement Team via Chest in line with Standing Orders relating to Contracts.

The Executive Cabinet Member was advised that, although the Council wished to seek a Managing Operator to secure occupants, oversee the day-to-day management of the Wellsprings and provide the wrap around support to businesses, the Council wished to retain its ownership of the building and have some influence on the outputs and outcomes the project would provide as well as the types of businesses

that would take up space in the building. It was stated that there were a number of options open to the Council in terms of how the management arrangements could work and these were detailed in the report.

In this regard, it was advised that the preferred option was to undertake a procurement exercise to secure an operator through the CHEST. This would ensure that an open and transparent tender process was undertaken, ensuring value for money. However, it was pointed out that the risks were that this would not be completed in the timescales required for the detailed design work to commence in March, 2022.

In terms of the financial implications, the report stated that dependent on the delivery model chosen, there might be implications for the Council in terms of payment of a management fee to the Managing Operator. The project also had the potential to generate an income stream for the Council in terms of profit share with the Managing Operator, however, consideration would need to be given to any VAT liability arising out of the income generated from operation and the VAT status of the building prior to commencement of works.

The Executive Cabinet Member AGREED –

**(i) To delegate authority to the Director of Place –
Development to:-**

- a) Procure a Managing Operator to manage the Wellsprings on the Council's behalf by way of a tender exercise via existing approved procurement routes; and**
- b) Appoint the successful provider following completion of a tender process**

(ii) To delegate authority to the Borough Solicitor to carry out all necessary legal formalities.

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