

OFFICER DECISION RECORD SHEET

PART I

PART II reason: N/A

Name of decision maker: Nigel Howcutt
Assistant Director, Finance and Resource

Service Area: Financial Services

Title of Decision: To appoint the provider of interim professional Finance staff.

Decision made and reasons

Decision:

That the contract for the provision of interim professional Finance staff to the Council be awarded to Allen Lane for a 12 month period commencing 1 September 2020. The appointment is to be made via direct award from the Local Government Resourcing Partnership (LGRP), a public sector recruitment framework. The total contract cost to the Council over the 12 month period is expected to be a maximum of £133k (plus VAT).

Reason:

The Council has a statutory obligation to publish its audited accounts for any financial year (with the exception of 2019/20) by the 31 July of the following financial year. The Financial and Regulatory Accounting Team Leader is critical to the delivery of these accounts, leading on the detailed technical work of their production. The current post-holder is due to go on maternity leave from 1 October 2020 for a 12 month period, giving rise to a temporary vacancy on the team.

The Financial and Regulatory Accounting Team Leader role has proved hard to recruit and retain to successfully in recent years, due to its specialist technical nature. The current post holder has been in post since January 2019, following a period of high turnover associated with the role.

The previous attempts to fill this post on a temporary or permanent capacity have been very difficult and as the role is one that requires great technical knowledge and as such carries a great amount of responsibility the Council's standard recruitment processes has not been progressed for this reason.

The production of the Council's statutory accounts is a continuous process. Work starts almost as soon as the accounts for the preceding financial year have been approved by Members. For this reason, it is proposed that the interim appointment start in September 2020 on a part time basis, increasing to full time from January 2021 until August 2021.

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Framework Agreements are put together by Central Buying Organisations (CBO) by identifying categories of goods and services which are commonly purchased throughout the public sector. These agreements establish the terms governing any call off contracts, in particular price and where appropriate quality. Due to the high volumes of spend that go through these agreements, the CBO use their bargaining power to reduce costs and increase quality.

A Framework Agreement is also a quicker route to market when compared to a standard tender process, sometimes saving up to 6 months which is a significant internal cost.

The LGRP framework is led by the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the provision of recruitment services to public sector organisations. The framework runs until October 2021. A direct award to a provider within the framework, as proposed here, is permissible under the terms of the framework.

Reports considered:

None

Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:

Sue Foster, Procurement Officer

Financial Comments:

The maximum contract cost to the Council of this award is £133k. This is expected to be split as follows: 2020/21 £76k; 21/22 £57k.

In 2020/21, £30k of the contract costs can be supported by existing approved staffing budgets, leaving a pressure of £46k, that has been projected to date.

In 2021/22, £30k of the contract costs are expected to be supported by the residual post budget created by the maternity leave, leaving a budget pressure of £27k.

Where possible the service will cover these costs from underspends in other service budgets but where a shortfall exists requests for additional funds will be requested.

Deputy Monitoring Officer Comments:

No comments to add to the report.

Deputy S151 Officer Comments:

A Deputy S151 decision record, comments are included in the body of the report. At present this post is the only temporary filled post in the finance team.

Implications:

Value for Money: The contract award will be made under a framework arrangement that has followed a competitive tender process.

Financial: Please see financial comments above.

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Risk: Failure to secure appropriate staffing resources to deliver the Council's published accounts increases the risk that those accounts are delivered after their statutory deadline and/or attraction a qualified external audit opinion.

Officer Signature:

Date: