



# Committee Report

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**PURPOSE:** Final Decision Report

**KEY OR NON-KEY DECISION:** Key decision over £500k

**COMMITTEE:** Strategy and Resources Committee

**DATE:** 17 March 2025

**TITLE:** Procurement for a supplier of recruitment advertising and public notices

**Ward(s):** City Wide

**Officer presenting the report:** Steph Griffin

**Job title:** Director of Workforce and Change

**Committee Chair:** Councillor Tony Dyer

**Executive Director lead:** Nick Hibberd: Chief Executive

**Proposal origin:** BCC Staff

## **Purpose of Report:**

1. To seek approval to procure and award a contract for a provider of recruitment advertising and statutory public notices using the Eastern Shires Procurement Organisation (ESPO) framework and authorise the Director of Workforce and Change in consultation with the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee to make the contract award.

## **Evidence Base:**

1. Since July 2021, the council has engaged with a specialist agency to provide recruitment advertising services and public notice placements via the ESPO framework. This contract covers:
  - a. All the council's external recruitment advertising – including negotiating best value rates with specialist media, booking and placing adverts in the appropriate media and ensuring advertising is live and accurate.
  - b. The provision for advertising statutory traffic orders to ensure transparency and provide the public with an opportunity to be informed about and respond to proposed changes affecting road use, parking, or traffic flow. This process upholds accountability and compliance with legal requirements while encouraging community engagement in decision-making.
2. The council has approximately 900 job vacancies each year. All roles are advertised, in the first instance, through the internal staff intranet. If we cannot recruit internally, we then place a job advert on our dedicated recruitment jobsite on which external applicants can apply. In addition to

this, the jobsite Indeed advertises our roles and we use the council's LinkedIn page for hard to fill roles. All these advertising routes to market are at no cost.

3. However, there are a number of very hard to fill positions across the organisation that cannot be filled through the above channels. These roles include social workers, planners, engineers, housing and finance roles. To attract a more targeted and diverse range of job applicants, paid-for advertising can be used, which includes using specialist job boards and social media.
4. Paid-for recruitment advertising is deployed sparingly to connect with targeted, diverse audiences and is funded locally by the hiring manager's service budgets. Professional media advice provided by the contractor is carefully considered. This was used successfully recently for the recruitment of a number of housing roles: using a combination of social media, Google keyword searches and professional job boards. If the Council didn't use paid-for advertising for these types of hard to fill roles, the potential consequence is greater use of more costly agency/interim workers to cover the positions.
5. The recruitment advertising industry has changed significantly over recent decades from hard copy press advertising to online job boards to now being centred around digital employer branding strategies. The Council uses many free routes to market in terms of branding such as LinkedIn and Facebook and our own recruitment site.
6. The maximum contract value over 4 years would be up to £2m, which covers both statutory public notices and recruitment advertising. The value split between the two areas is approximately 50/50.
7. The current contract expires in July 2025. The council has an obligation to secure Best Value through testing the market with the aim to make further efficiency savings and improvements.
8. It is proposed to tender the contract via ESPO. This is a compliant procurement route. The ESPO framework offers an efficient, coherent and competitive route to procuring this type of contract. All of the suppliers on the ESPO framework have been selected for their ability to provide customers with a comprehensive range of services that combine quality and value. This will enable the council to make a commercially informed decision.
9. ESPO determines that the contract length will be three years with the option of extending for a further one year.
10. The specification will include a requirement to demonstrate a thorough understanding of diversity in recruitment advertising with the aim of attracting and recruiting candidates from all communities. This will support our objective to have a workforce that reflects the communities we serve at all levels of the organisation. The impact of paid-for advertising will be kept under regular evaluation to ensure return on investment.

## **Officer Recommendations:**

That the Committee for Strategy and Resources:

1. Approves the procurement of a provider for recruitment advertising and statutory public notices using the Eastern Shires Procurement Organisation (ESPO) framework, as outlined in this report.
2. Authorises the Director of Workforce and Change, in consultation with the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, to take all steps required to procure and award a contract for recruitment advertising and statutory public notices for four years.
3. Authorises the Director of Workforce and Change, in consultation with the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, to invoke any subsequent extensions/variations specifically defined in the contract being awarded.

## **Corporate Strategy alignment:**

1. Recruitment Advertising: This proposal aligns with the corporate strategy to support the recruitment of a workforce that reflects the diversity of Bristol and becomes an employer of choice.
2. Public Notices: Public engagement with proposed transport schemes aligns with all our corporate themes but principally ‘improving transport and connectivity’, which in turn directly contributes to increased employment opportunities, business growth, improved health, access to services and positively affects the overall well-being of our communities.

## **City Benefits:**

1. Recruitment Advertising: This proposal improves outcomes for citizens through ensuring job vacancies (particularly those that are hard to fill and high volume) are advertised to the relevant target audiences through the appropriate media. This in turn aims to ensure that the council has the best talent pool of suitable candidates to appoint from in a recruitment process.
2. Public Notices: By keeping the public informed and involved, we can better address community needs and preferences, ultimately enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of our transport infrastructure.

**Consultation Details:**

1. Public consultation is not required and there are no staffing changes requiring staff consultation.

<b>Revenue Cost</b>	£0.5m per annum, up to £2m maximum over a 4 year contract period	<b>Source of Revenue Funding</b>	Met by recruiting service budget
<b>Capital Cost</b>	£0	<b>Source of Capital Funding</b>	N/A
<b>One off cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Ongoing cost</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<b>Saving Proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>If yes - existing or new saving?</b> Choose an item. <b>OR Income generation proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

**1. Finance Advice:** This report seeks approval to procure a provider for recruitment advertising and public notices using the Eastern Shires Procurement Organisation (ESPO) framework. The existing contract is due to expire in July 2025. This will be a competitive process involving those who are listed on the framework, enabling the Council to make a commercially informed decision and secure best value. The new contract would be for a period of up to 4 years with a contract value of up to £0.5 million per annum and up to £2 million pro rata across 4 years. This reflects the maximum annual spend of £0.4 million since 2021/22 and allows for inflationary increases. Expenditure will be incurred across BCC by the service initiating the requirement and it is the responsibility of the budget manager to ensure they continue to manage the cost of this spend within their approved budget.

**Finance Business Partner:** Kathryn Long, Finance Business Partner, Resources, 28 January 2025

**2. Legal Advice:** The procurement process must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations/Procurement Act 2023 and the Councils own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements.

**Legal Team Leader:** Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor, 17 January 2025

**3. Implications on IT:** I can see no implications on IT regarding this activity.

**IT Team Leader:** Alex Simpson, Lead Enterprise Architect, 27 January 2025

**4. HR Advice:** No direct impacts on Council employees, though as identified in the report, without paid-for recruitment advertising the Council would likely have more unfilled hard-to-fill roles, which may cause higher spend on agency/interim workers.

**HR Partner:** James Brereton (Head of Human Resources), 24 January 2025

## APPENDICES

<b>Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix C – Environmental Impact Assessment</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix D – Decision Risk Assessment</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix E – Exempt Information</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix F – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix G – Options appraisal matrix</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix H – Business case / financial analysis</b>	<b>NO</b>