

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 05 October 2021

TITLE	Covid Marshals Extension		
Ward(s)	Citywide		
Author: Kurt James	Job title: Project Manager (Communities)		
Cabinet lead: Councillor Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor - Communities, Equalities and Public Health	Executive Director lead: Hugh Evans – Executive Director: People		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report: 1. To agree to extend the funding for Covid marshals until 31 March 2022.			
Evidence Base <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On 22 September the Prime Minister announced that £60 million will be made available across the police and local authorities for compliance and enforcement activities. 2. Of this £60 million, £30 million was allocated to all district and unitary authorities including metropolitan borough and London borough councils in England to spend on COVID-19 related compliance and enforcement activities. Bristol received an allocation of £282,752. 3. To keep rates of infection down there is a need for more work to be done to support individuals and businesses to comply with Covid guidance. 4. The role of COVID-19 secure marshals or equivalents is not to enforce COVID-19 regulations, or have any enforcement powers, which should remain the remit of the police and designated local authority compliance and enforcement officers. COVID-19 secure marshals or equivalents should instead engage, explain, and encourage best practice and national COVID-19 secure guidance. 5. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis in Bristol, the current trajectory of cases and the need to increase levels of compliance in Bristol, Public Health agreed in line with government guidance to procure a marshal service comprised of a total complement of 16 marshals that went live 11 November 2020 with a contract valued at £308,000 with the service delivered by the Red Snapper Group. 6. This contract was extended in March 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis allowing the marshal service to continue until 31 October 2021 with a total value agreed by procurement of £499,000 under the compliant exception of 'unforeseen circumstances' triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. 7. On 12 July 2021 the Outbreak Management Group recommended the retention of the marshals until 31 March 2022 which was agreed by the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. This decision was taken to support the ongoing COVID-19 challenges that the city faces in line with the agreed Outbreak Management Plan. 8. The role of the marshal is not to enforce COVID-19 regulations, or to have any enforcement powers, which should remain the remit of the police and designated local authority compliance and 			

enforcement officers. COVID-19 Secure Marshals or equivalents should engage, explain, and encourage best practice and national COVID-19 secure guidance. COVID-19 secure marshals or their equivalents will:

- a. Promote and encourage public compliance with COVID-19 public health measures
- b. Educate and explain COVID-19 Secure guidelines in the public realm and for business premises
- c. Identify and support businesses and premises not following guidelines, escalating as appropriate

9. The marshals have been an important tool in Bristol's efforts to combat Coronavirus. In just over nine months the marshals have provided an extremely responsive service:

- d. Completed over 17,000 COVID-19 related inspections whilst patrolling across the whole city, including the 47 shopping areas and the city's parks and green spaces, and helped to rectify problems in over 2,800 instances
- e. Marshals walk up to 17 miles per day whilst patrolling the city
- f. They have provided support to GP Vaccination Centres at over 100 vaccination clinic days helping tens of thousands of residents to be vaccinated safely starting with the first clinic held in the city on 16 December 2020 at the Greenway Centre
- g. They have supported 53 days of action delivered in partnership with the police, and Bristol City Council Enforcement and Environmental Health officers
- h. Marshals have put up advisory posters in every ward of the city, and in times of high infection rates. Publicity and support work has also included
 - Distributing 86,000 face masks to members of the public and businesses as well as thousands of lateral flow tests
 - Distributing thousands of documents to businesses around the city advising them of Covid related guidelines and regulations. These include restriction updates and changes to business practices, COVID-19 awareness posters and public safety information distributed with consultation and inspections from marshals at the rate of up to 300 a day
 - Handing out hundreds of signs including social distancing, wear face coverings, test and trace QR codes and more to businesses to support their ability to keep themselves and their customers safe
- i. In support of managing the challenges of reopening, the marshals have worked in partnership with the police and others to promote water safety following the drowning death last month, to promote drugs awareness following a recreational drug taking death, audits in support of several BCC departments, and submitted fly tip and ASB reports. They also conduct daily welfare checks
- j. Although most government COVID-19 related regulations were removed on 19 July 2021, the need to provide guidance and support continues with the marshal team being best placed to do so. The marshals will continue to do work for the council that supports its efforts to help the city recover from COVID-19.

10. Extending the service with a complement of 16 officers until 31 March 2022 will cost an additional £304,000.

11. To date a competitive tender process has not been conducted due to the urgency of the requirement. An existing contract was varied to include the COVID Marshal requirement until 31 October 2021. As the requirement now needs to be continued beyond this expiry date to 31 March 2022 and requires an additional spend of £304,000, cabinet approval is needed as the total spend on this requirement would be £803,000 and would entail a further direct award to the Red Snapper Group.

12. It is the view of Procurement colleagues that the proposed extension is too short to complete an

OJEU tender process without causing significant service disruption and that Cabinet approval be sought to agree funding to be approved and the direct award to the Red Snapper Group. This agreement would be on the proviso that any further extension of the marshal service should be compliantly tendered via a full OJEU tender process in a timely manner.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the direct award contract to Red Snapper Group until 31 March 2022 at an additional cost of £304,000, which would take the total contract value including the extension to £803,000.
2. Authorises the Executive Director for People in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Deputy Mayor - Communities, Equalities and Public Health to take all steps required to direct award the contract in line with the procurement routes and maximum budget envelopes outlined in this report noting the associated Procurement and Legal commentaries.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. Work with city partners to manage and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensure business premises are secure and Local Outbreak Management Plans are in place. Deliver a health protection response to recovery that includes:
 - a. Working with partners on the delivery and take up of the vaccination programme.
 - b. The roll-out of testing and effective tracing of positive cases.
 - c. Community involvement in reducing the spread of the virus.
 - d. Using accurate intelligence to inform our strategies and actions.
 - e. Address the findings of research into the effects of the virus on Black, African and minority ethnic groups.

City Benefits:

1. The marshals are a very responsive part of Bristol's Outbreak Management Plan that supports:
 - a. The delivery of vaccination clinics across Bristol including community clinics in areas with high levels of vaccine hesitancy, as well as the sharing of vaccine communication across the whole city or to cohorts of concern
 - b. The roll out of testing through the distribution of lateral flow test kits and welfare checks on people self-isolating
 - c. The sharing of COVID-19 advisory communications with communities and businesses across the city in the form of letters, flyers, posters, and other forms of communication designed to help the city stay as safe as possible, using data allowing them to deliver in areas with the highest level of need
 - d. Sharing guidance and face coverings across the city of Bristol
 - e. The auditing of businesses across the city to check their adherence to Covid related guidance and regulations. This auditing ability extends to helping the city recover from COVID-19.
 - f. Working with other parts of the council and partners such as the police to manage some of the challenges that COVID-19 has brought to the city, including protests, anti-social behaviour, and environmental crime

Consultation Details:

1. N/A

Background Documents: [Bristol Local Outbreak Management Plan](#)

Revenue Cost	£304,000	Source of Revenue Funding	Contain Outbreak Management Fund
Capital Cost	£	Source of Capital Funding	E.g., grant/ prudential borrowing etc.
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: This report seeks approval to extend the funding for Covid Marshals to 31 March 2022 at a cost of £304k to be funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. This fully funded and there are no additional costs to the Council.

Finance Business Partner: Denise Hunt, Finance Business Partner, 23 September 2021

2. Legal Advice: It is recognised that the further extension of the contract for five months places the Council in a situation where it may breach the procurement regulations. The fact that the extension is limited and required to avoid significant service disruption, will help mitigate the risk of challenge. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the extension of contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Leader/Solicitor, 23 September 2021

3. Implications on IT: No anticipated impact to IT/Digital Services

IT Team Leader: Simon Oliver, Director: Digital Transformation, 23 September 2021

4. HR Advice: The report is seeking further funding to maintain the Covid Marshalls presence across the city. As the marshals are employed via an Agency there are no significant HR implications for Bristol City Council employees arising from this report.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, HR Strategic Partner, 23 September 2021

EDM Sign-off	Hugh Evans, Executive Director: People	25/08/2021
Cabinet Member sign-off	Mayor's Office	06/09/2021
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	06/09/2021

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	No
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO