

Decision Pathway – Report

PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 05 October 2021

TITLE	Language services corporate contract		
Ward(s)	All		
Author:	Rizwan Tariq	Job title: Head of Citizen Services	
Cabinet lead: Councillor Craig Cheney – Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Performance	Executive Director lead: Mike Jackson, Chief Executive		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Officer Decision forum: Officer Meeting			
Purpose of Report: To approve the implementation of a zero-commitment corporate contract for language services (including translation, interpreting and British Sign Language) for 5 years (maximum value £1.5m).			
Evidence Base:			
Background			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is currently no corporate contract in place for language services (including BSL, interpreting and translation) across the council resulting in services spending money with multiple suppliers at varying rates. Without a contract in place the council will not be compliant with procurement and financial regulations. Not having a corporate contract also means that there is no contract and performance management should issues arise. Around 50 different areas around the organisation source language services from around 90 different suppliers. It is unknown what the quality standard is and how compliant suppliers are. Many of the suppliers sourced are freelance BSL interpreters so the spend shows as individuals but is a single service type. Between April 2019 and March 2020, corporately £286,684 was spent on external language service suppliers (i.e., spend that was not on internal casual interpreters and translators). Any spend outside of the council's Translation and Interpreting Service (TIS) has potential to be non-compliant spend. The breakdown below is for 2 years as 2020-2021 was a very different year for language services with Covid. 			
	Spend within TIS	Spend outside TIS	Total BCC spend
1st April 2019 - 31st March 2020	£164,843	£121,841	£286,684
1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021	£19,309	£109,608	£128,917
Total	£184,152	£231,449	£415,601
5. £184,152 was compliant spend by TIS			

£231,449 was spend on language services by other services (no known contracts)

6. The top 3 non-contract suppliers used in the last 2 years with values are:

Language Services UK Limited £97,526

The Big Word £36,317

Signing Works £51,216

Note: In the 3 months from April 2021-June 2021, an additional £54,000 has already been spent with the 3 suppliers above.

7. The council's internal language service (TIS) is an income generating service that serves internal and external customers with over 100 casual BCC interpreters and translators. Where the demand exceeds TIS' capacity to provide interpreters and translators, it will call upon its compliant contractor AA Global. The AA Global contract will expire in November 2021 and work has begun to retender, however there is an opportunity to put in place a council wide language services contract and address the lack of a corporate contract.
8. The council's TIS offers competitively priced and professional interpreting and translation in over 50 languages in areas such as face-to-face interpreting, telephone and video interpreting, British Sign Language, written translation, and specialist requests such as Braille translation. All TIS casual workers (employed by the TIS service) undergo a stringent recruitment process, have a high standard of training and qualifications, holders of a valid DBS and, have regular supervision, support and feedback overseen by an experienced team of coordinators.
9. Where a casual worker is not available, TIS has local contracts in place with external providers to provide language services to fill the gaps (AA Global and Gloucestershire Deaf Association). Casual interpreters may not be available for a number of reasons including for extremely rare languages, high demand languages or bespoke requests.
10. TIS will explore changing the employment status of casual workers and look to offer permanent/FTC contracts where appropriate i.e., there is enough demand for the language to warrant this. For some languages the demand isn't regular enough to formalise hours.

Options:

A. Do nothing – TIS will put in place a contract to address its needs but service areas across the organisation will continue to use multiple suppliers and risk non compliancy and continued breach of our own procurement rules and future breach of Procurement Regulations 2015.

B. Put in place a corporate contract managed by TIS. TIS will become the preferred supplier for all language services across the council. If a language service cannot be sourced through TIS, then TIS would source the language service through its contract. The total contract value will be £1.5m (£300k x 5 years) based on 19/20 spend as 20/21 was greatly impacted by covid and does not represent a typical year.

11. **Officer recommendation: Option B (agreed at EDM 11/08/2021)**

Having TIS as the preferred supplier would ensure that there is a standard delivery of service across the Council, resolving compliancy challenges as all services would go through TIS first and if the service isn't able to provide interpreters then additional interpreters would be sourced through the corporate contract. The spend across the whole council on language services can be more closely monitored and any savings opportunities identified. Using interpreters from the TIS service would also mean that the income stays within the Council.

12. **If Option B is selected**, TIS can lead on the work but some support from central teams may be required. This project has been added to the service plan for the last 2 years, but due to its size has never been 'above the line' and therefore has not had resources allocated to it.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:
That Cabinet:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approves the establishment of central Translation and Interpreting Service contract for 5 years at a cost of up to £1.5m. Authorises the Executive Director: Resources in consultation with Cabinet Member Deputy Mayor – Finance, Governance and Performance to take all steps required for the implementation of the service, in line with the procurement routes and maximum budget enveloped outlined in this report.
Corporate Strategy alignment: This supports the Corporate Strategy’s aim of having a Fair and Inclusive city by enabling services to communicate with citizens in different languages.
City Benefits: This proposal will benefit the city by ensuring language is not a barrier for citizens when accessing council services.
Consultation Details: N/A
Background Documents: Supports the Fair and Inclusive strategic theme of the Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2023 Corporate Strategy 2018 - 2023

Revenue Cost	£1.5m (5 year cost)	Source of Revenue Funding	Service areas that use the service
Capital Cost	£-	Source of Capital Funding	
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:		
<p>1. Finance Advice: This report seeks approval to centralise the administration of all Translation and Interpretation activity under the T&I Service and to put in place an organisation-wide single language contract for £0.3m p.a., up to £1.5m over a 5-year period. No centralisation of budgets is planned at this time. Through the proposed corporate contract TIS would become the preferred supplier, in turn sourcing a language service through its contract if it cannot provide the service in-house. It is expected that operation through a single contract with standardised pricing should bring efficiencies. In 19/20, 57% of external language service suppliers costs passed through the TIS budget, the remaining 43% being sourced from up to 90 different suppliers with differing terms, conditions and payment rates. No savings are proposed at this stage.</p>		
Finance Business Partner: Jemma Prince, Finance Business Partner 03 August 2021		
<p>2. Legal Advice: The procurement process must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations 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.</p>		
Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Leader/Solicitor 23 September 2021		
<p>3. Implications on IT: IT/Digital Services are fully supportive of this report, and will continue to try to blend automated services with non-automated services to ensure citizens get access to the most appropriate support</p>		
IT Team Leader: Simon Oliver, Director: Digital Transformation – 26 July 2021		
<p>4. HR Advice: TIS currently uses casual workers to deliver its services. Option 2 will result in increased use of the services. Under this option the service should review the employment status of each casual worker in conjunction with those workers to assess whether permanent or fixed term contracts would be more appropriate.</p>		
HR Partner: James Brereton (HR Business Partner), 27 th July 2021		
EDM Sign-off	Mike Jackson, Chief Executive	11/08/2021
Cabinet Member sign-off	Councillor Craig Cheney – Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Performance	16/08/2021

For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	06/09/2021
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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	YES
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
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