



Northumberland

County Council

CABINET

12 SEPTEMBER 2023

BEST: DELIVERY PARTNER DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Report of Cabinet Member: Councillor Glen Sanderson, Leader of the Council
Lead Officer: Jan Willis, Executive Director of Transformation and Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Purpose of report

To seek delegated authority for the Council's Executive Director of Transformation and Resources to enter into a contract for the BEST Delivery Partner in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

Cabinet Recommendation

To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Transformation and Resources to enter into a contract for the BEST Delivery Partner in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services following the conclusion of the procurement process up to a maximum of £3 million (exclusive of VAT and risk/reward element).

Link to Corporate Plan Priorities

This report is relevant to "Best Value", "Driving Economic Growth" and "Tackling Inequalities" priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2023-2026. BEST also supports the implementation and embedding of the Caller Programme Work Packages i.e., Corporate Plan, Enhanced Performance framework, Best Value Council, Data and BI Strategy and Council Values

Background

The Business Case agreed by Cabinet on 17 January 2023 set out changes to ways of working that will make the Council more modern, efficient, and fit for purpose whilst delivering sustainable financial savings. This is not about cutting services, but about transforming the way services are delivered and how the Council operates to deliver value for money and achieve the best outcomes for our customers and residents. In summary, the key aims of the Business Case are:

- Improved Customer Experience
- Enhanced Experience for Staff
- Improved Efficiency and Effectiveness Following a Best Value Approach

The Business Case and subsequent delivery of projects within the programme supports the Council to deliver its three priorities of economic growth, addressing inequalities, and value for money.

On 14 March 2023, Cabinet made the key decision to proceed with the tendering and procurement of a Delivery Partner who will be engaged to assist the Council in delivering the priorities identified in the strategic business case and supporting the design and delivery of projects falling within the scope of the programme. Some of the benefits identified from engaging a delivery partner were as follows:

- The Council receives the highly specialist support and advisory that it needs to deliver.
- Our current workforce will have an opportunity to learn from industry experts.
- BEST opportunities and benefits are achievable, and opportunities are maximised.
- New opportunities are identified.
- We use experienced professionals who have worked in multiple councils and private sector organisations.
- The procurement process will support the delivery of Social Value outcomes and ensure value for money.
- Opportunity to agree 'payment by results' mechanism to incentivise Partner's performance, encourage innovation and increase risk transfer.

As noted in the March report engaging a Delivery Partner is viewed as a critical enabler to deliver multiple projects within the programme. Without the engagement of highly specialist advisory, it is unlikely that BEST and the opportunities set out in the Business Case agreed by Cabinet, can be achieved.

One of the key deliverables within the Best Value for Money workstream is the introduction of VFM Assessments across all Council services. Each service will be required to carry out a baseline VFM assessment, highlighting any opportunities for improvement. These assessments will then be used the basis for the forward plan and prioritisation of service reviews to ensure that the biggest impact is achieved, and the reviews are the most efficient and effective use of Council resources. The core team will work alongside the delivery partner to develop this need VFM Framework and ensure it is successfully implemented across the Council.

The Delivery partner will also be critical in supporting Benefits Realisation and will work with the core team to ensure that both financial and non-financial benefits are maximised, tracked, delivered and reported.

Delivery Partner Resourcing

At the Cabinet meeting held on 14 March 2023, approval was given to commence a procurement process for a Delivery Partner to support the design, delivery, and implementation of the BEST programme, on the basis that this is a critical investment to maximise the realisation of benefits set out in the Business Case.

A Procurement Working Group was set up comprising senior officers with subject matter expertise (BEST Workstream Leads) and led by the Head of Corporate Commissioning and Procurement.

Early market engagement was completed to gauge market interest and utilise market knowledge and expertise which in turn has helped inform the scope of services and the contracting model. A contract notice was subsequently published on 16 June 2023 on the Government's Find a Tender Service inviting interested suppliers to complete and submit a Selection Questionnaire by 17 July 2023.

Following a technical and financial evaluation of 18 responses, the 5 highest scoring suppliers have been invited to tender. The tender response deadline is 25 August after which submissions will be evaluated in accordance with the following award criteria:

Criteria	Subcriteria	Weighting %
Quality (70%)	Approach and methodology	25
	Application of experience and capabilities	15
	Communication	10
	Risk and reward methodology	10
	Social value	10
Fees (30%)	Overall cost for core deliverables	25
	Risk/Reward for non-core deliverables	5

Due to mandatory timescales under the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the procurement will not be concluded until approximately 2 October. The recommendation to appoint the preferred bidder will be considered at the BEST Working Board on 22 September 2023.

However, in order to prevent any delay in the mobilisation of the successful tenderer, permission is requested to delegate the approval of the contract award (following conclusion of the procurement) to the Director of Transformation and Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services. It is anticipated that the value of the contract will not exceed £3 million (exclusive of VAT and risk/reward element) which is to be funded from the Transformation reserve.

In the event that the value of the contract exceeds £3 million then a further report will be prepared for Cabinet, however, this will delay the award of the contract and then impact on the timing of the delivery of the benefits outlined in the business case.

Implications

Policy	N/A
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<p>Finance and value for money</p>	<p>Savings</p> <p>Collectively, the Business Case for BEST agreed by Cabinet on 17 January 2023 sets out changes to ways of working that will deliver recurrent Council wide savings of more than £20m (Low: £17.9 million and High: £38.5 million). Savings will be incrementally achieved over the next 3 years, as and when change projects are delivered. Resourcing the programme is a critical enabler to mobilisation and the key decision to tender and procure a Delivery Partner is essential to support the delivery of projects and to achieve the cashable and non-cashable benefits. Without the support of highly specialist change resources, many projects will not be delivered, and the savings opportunities set out in the Business Case cannot be met. The approved MTFP provides for funding of £3m per annum for BEST implementation costs for the 3-year period from 2022/23 to 2024/5.</p>
<p>Legal</p>	<p>The Local Government Act 1999 imposes a duty for Local Authorities to make arrangements for the achievement of best value in the performance of their functions.</p> <p>Best value for these purposes is described as securing continuous improvement in the exercise of all functions undertaken by the authority, whether statutory or not, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.</p> <p>Within the design stages of workstream projects, regular assessment of any legal requirements / legal constraints will be identified, and advice taken where necessary. When needed, legal issues will be escalated to Programme Board and / Executive Team for strategic advisory and decision.</p> <p>The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council.</p>
<p>Procurement</p>	<p>The procurement has been conducted in accordance with the Restricted Procedure under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012</p>
<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>Within the design stages of workstream projects, regular assessment of any HR/OD requirements or constraints will be identified and advice taken where necessary. When needed, HR/OD issues will be escalated to Programme Board and / Executive Team for strategic advisory and decision.</p>
<p>Property</p>	<p>Delivery Partner will be expected to work on site at County Hall and potentially other corporate buildings on a regular basis. It is</p>

	likely that hot desking space will be required to accommodate Delivery Partner colleagues.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Risk Assessment	If approval to delegate to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to award the contract is not granted, further delay will impact on the delivery of the identified benefits and Delivery Partner mobilisation
Crime Disorder &	N/A
Customer Consideration	Residents First is a primary objective of BEST and 'Best Service to Customers' is identified as a specific workstream in the business case. Key improvement projects identified for delivery, will focus on improvements to customer access, customer contact and engagement. Implementation of the improvement projects set out in the business case are also anticipated to achieve a reduction in the volume of customer complaints.
Carbon reduction	The business case sets out multiple projects for delivery within the Programme. Following the design phase of each project, an individual project Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) will be completed based on design options set out in an Options Appraisal for consideration and decision by Programme Board. CIA's will be subject to consultation with the Council's Climate Change specialists and will be subject to frequent review and update based on the chosen option. Positive contributions to the Council's carbon reduction targets will be monitored and mitigation will be sought for any negative impacts identified as a result of changes.
Health and Wellbeing	BEST is intricately linked to work set out in the Inequalities Programme. The design options for each workstream project, will be viewed through the 'inequalities lens' to ensure cohesion of delivery priorities. Director leads and programme/project managers from BEST and the Inequalities programme, will maintain regular contact to ensure that dependencies across programmes are known and understood.
Wards	BEST is 'Council wide' therefore, all wards benefit equally from the change, improvements, and cost savings of BEST and the support provided by Delivery Partner

Lead Members:

- Lead Members, Cllr Glen Sanderson and Cllr Richard Wearmouth were consulted throughout Programme Phase 1 'Discovery' and the development of Strategic Change Business Case.
- Lead Members, Cllr Glen Sanderson and Cllr Richard Wearmouth are consulted through BEST Working Board for the development of this report and the 'key decision' that is needed by Cabinet to proceed with the procurement of a Delivery Partner.
- Cllr Glen Sanderson and Cllr Richard Wearmouth are consulted as part of regular portfolio holder briefings.

Linked report:

- Business Case was approved by [Cabinet](#) on 17 January 2023

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