

Delivering a Modern Cardiff Works and Agency Provision

Reason for the Report

1. To provide Members with the context for pre-decision scrutiny of a proposal to re-procure a Vendor-Neutral provider to supply the Council with specialist agency staff. In addition to update Members on the Council's in-house recruitment agency, Cardiff Works.

Background & Context

2. Attached to this cover report at **Appendix A** is the report to be considered by Cabinet on 13 July 2023 requesting approval to proceed with the procurement of Agency Worker Services to the Council.
3. The Terms of Reference for this committee confer responsibility for the scrutiny of commissioning and procurement, and for the Council's use of human resources.
4. The Council has an in-house recruitment agency, Cardiff Works, founded on the principle of making Cardiff Council jobs accessible to all.
5. The Cardiff Works agency sits within the Housing and Communities service area, alongside the Into Work Advice service.
6. Following a review in 2020 Cardiff Works has set out to digitalise its service, streamline recruitment processes, develop a new marketing and branding strategy, increase service accessibility and its visibility in the community.
7. Cardiff Works also manages a contract with a Vendor-Neutral provider to provide external agency staff. The provider offers a brokerage service, to supply workers from a number of different agencies as required by the Council. This contract is currently held by Matrix SCM Ltd, and the contract expires on the 31st of October 2023.

Cardiff Works update

8. The Cabinet report attached explains progress made in a number of areas since 2020, (see *points 10-14*). It also explains proposals for future enhancements (*points 15-18*).

Agency Worker Contract

9. The central part of this Cabinet report is the proposal to re-procure a Vendor-Neutral provider to supply the Council with specialist agency staff. The competitive process delivered through the National Procurement Service (NPS) will go live in June 2023 and it is proposed that a contract be awarded for 5 years with the option for a 2-year extension, if required.
10. It is therefore proposed to advertise a contract for a Vendor-Neutral provider, which has been assessed as the best option to ensure the Council receives better value for money. This is considered to offer the Council access to a wide range of specialist agency suppliers.
11. The Council requires agency workers to allow flexibility in the workforce. It is considered vital that the agreement in place with a partner continues to focus on the benefits of encouraging access to local SME's.
12. Other Local Authorities have expressed an interest in collaborating on this tender. Further economies of scale are possible through a joint tender process with neighbouring Local Authorities also looking to implement a Vendor-Neutral provider.

Scope of the Scrutiny

13. Members are invited to test the proposed approach to advertise the Council's contract for a Vendor Neutral provider of agency worker services, and how well it fits with the Council's socially responsible procurement approach.

Way Forward

14. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance, Cllr Chris Weaver and the Cabinet Members for Tackling Poverty, Equality and Public Health, Cllr Peter Bradbury will be in attendance to answer Members' questions. They will be accompanied by the Corporate Director, People and Communities, Sarah McGill and the Operational Manager Advice, Hayley Beynon.

Legal Implications

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review, and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

16. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review, and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- I. Consider the proposal to procure Agency Worker Services under the National Procurement Service (NPS) All Wales Agency Framework, and delegate authority to the Corporate Director of People and Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Finance, Modernisation and Performance, and Tackling Poverty, Equality and Public Health, to award a User Agreement with the provider selected; and
- II. Agree whether any comments, concerns or observations should be relayed for consideration by Cabinet.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance and Legal Services

6 July 2023