

PAPER NO. 5

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF

Meeting:	Executive
Date:	July 8th 2013
Subject:	Procurement of consultant to produce an Open for Business Strategy
Report of:	Jonathan Ward-Langman
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr B Pain
Status:	Decision
Relevant Ward(s):	All

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. To note the procurement of a consultancy service to produce an Open for Business Strategy for the District.

2. Recommendations:

2.1. That the procurement of a consultant to produce an Open for Business Strategy for the District is noted.

2.2. That authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to negotiate and agree a contract for delivery of the service.

2.3. That it is noted that the procurement is exempt from the Council's contract rules for reasons of urgency.

2.4. That expenditure within a budget of £9,000 is noted.

3. Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

3.1. Harborough District Council is committed to the promotion of economic prosperity within the district; to achieve this objective, it needs to develop a coherent strategic approach and to demonstrate to stakeholders that it understands the district's economy and its place within the regional, sub-regional, national and international contexts.

3.2. The Council will require an agreed position statement and strategy that clearly articulates Harborough's vision and its commitment to be 'open for business'; it will need to define the overall investment strategy and medium term

investment plan for the district; and it will be necessary to develop operational plans with identified capacity for delivery and performance management.

3.3. This piece of work will provide the following :-

- An understanding of national, EU and LLEP landscapes for local growth and development
- An understanding of how Harborough's local economy works, and its place in global, national and regional/sub-regional markets
- Using these understandings to develop and agree a distinctive and credible vision and intervention strategies for the economy, with strong relationship management locally, reinforcing positive profile and reputation nationally and internationally
- Turns the strategies into resourced operational plan(s) with identified capacity and capability (not always in-house) for delivery (and performance) management
- Clearly articulates Harborough's offer, ask and contribution to LLEP's growth strategy, the Leicester and Leicestershire city deal, and the investment strategy prospectus being formulated by LLEP (by September 2013) for the area's EU structural and investment fund (EUSIF) 2014-20 period
- Defines the overall investment strategy and medium term investment plan for the district
- Provides a more general signal/communication to local, national and global, public and private markets of Harborough's ambitions and opportunities

3.4. This is a specialised piece of work that requires considerable, proven expertise; the Council does not have the capacity within its staff resource to undertake it at present.

3.5. The consultant to be appointed will:

- Review Harborough's current economic performance and relevant local policies and plans, within the wider economic context.
- Consult with stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors.
- Produce an initial discussion paper identifying the opportunities and challenges facing the district, and the options for policy and programmes.

- Facilitate a workshop based on the discussion paper for HDC members and officers (and external stakeholders as appropriate).
- Draft a strategic position statement and action plan for consideration by HDC members as a framework for future action.

3.6. Procurement of the consultancy is a matter of urgency. A number of very significant strategic developments will emerge over the next few months, including: agreement of the LLEP's growth strategy; the Leicester and Leicestershire City Deal; and the investment strategy prospectus for the area's EU structural and investment fund (EUSIF) for 2014-20, also to be produced by LLEP. The Council therefore needs to start work on an Open for Business Strategy immediately.

3.7. A budget of £9,000 is already allocated for development of a strategy for economic growth and will be used to fund the consultancy service.

3.8. The Council's Procurement Rules are contained in the Constitution's Standing Orders; in normal circumstances, procurement of a consultancy would require officers to seek quotations or estimates before identifying a preferred provider.

3.9. However, there are exemptions: Contract Procedure Rule 2 lists a number of situations in which the rules do not apply, including those when:

"2.1 e) Goods and services are required in such an emergency, or where the operational need means that insufficient time exists to use the tendering procedure."

3.10. It has been determined that procurement of a suitably qualified consultant should be considered exempt from contract procedure rules on the grounds that there is insufficient time to procure the consultancy through a competitive process.

3.11. It is intended that the Chief Executive will negotiate contractual arrangements and manage the consultancy provision.

4. Key Facts

4.1. None.

5. Legal Issues

5.1. It has been determined that exemption from the Council's contract rules is necessary to facilitate timely procurement of the service.

6. Resource Issues

6.1. A budget of £9,000 has been earmarked within the 2013/14 Budget for Economic Development for development of an Open for Business Strategy.

7. Equality Impact Assessment Implications/Outcomes

7.1. None.

8. Risk Management Implications

8.1. None directly; however failure to support the district's economic development would carry significant risk.

9. Consultation

9.1. The proposal was considered and approved by Corporate Management team on June 5th 2013. Consultation with the Leader as portfolio holder was also undertaken and is supportive of the appointment.

9.2. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in relation to the procurement procedure.

10. Options Considered

10.1. The Council is not obliged to adopt an Open for Business Strategy; however if it does not do so, the absence of a clear framework for investment and engagement with partners such as the LLEP is likely to be detrimental to its ability to deliver a key priority.

11. Background Papers

11.1. None

Previous report(s): *text*

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N

Ward Members Notified: N/A

Appendices: *list any appendices here including title and filename in brackets (e.g. Performance Data 2010 (perfdata.doc)).*