

Decision Report - Executive Director Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/05/03

Decision Date – 30 June 2023

Key Decision – yes



Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care – Appointment of Design Team

Executive Member(s):

Cllr Ros Wyke – Lead Member for Economy, Planning & Assets

Cllr Dean Ruddle – Lead Member for Adult Social Care

Cllr Tessa Munt – Lead Member for Children, Families & Education

Local Member(s): Cllr Leigh Redman and Cllr Hilary Bruce

Lead Officer: Nathaniel Lucas / Joe Wharton, Assistant Director Major & Special Projects

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Summary / Background

1. This paper is seeking approval from members for the Executive Director for Climate and Place, in consultation with the Executive Director for Adult Services, the Executive Director for Children, Families and Education, and the Executive Director for Resources and Corporate Services, to confirm award of the design contract associated with the delivery of the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care which is funded through Government grant following confirmation of Levelling Up Fund investment.
2. The Academy will address future recruitment and training requirements for the delivery of Adult and Children's social care services throughout Somerset. Initially focused on a main centre in Bridgwater with a satellite facility to be established in Minehead, there is potential to expand provision in the longer term and subject to further funding.
3. The delivery of the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will support the under resourced health and social care sector providing a larger and more highly skilled workforce. It will also future proof the sector as demand rises exponentially due to Somerset's aging population. The scheme will also bring back into use a significantly dilapidated site providing substantial associated economic benefits related to large scale Town Centre regeneration.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Director for Climate and Place, in consultation with the Executive Director for Adult Services, the Executive Director for Children, Families and Education and the Executive Director for Resources and Corporate Services agree:
 - a. To award the design contract associated with the delivery of the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care to the preferred bidder as outlined in appendix one.
 - b. That appendix 1a and 1b be treated in confidence, as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.

Note – the Leader of the Council and the Chair of Scrutiny Committee – Communities, Chair of Scrutiny Committee - Adults and Health, Chair of Scrutiny Committee – Climate and Place & Chair of Scrutiny Committee – Children and Families have agreed the use of urgent implementation to enable the immediate implementation of the decision.

Reasons for recommendations

3. The preferred bidder confirmed in the procurement report (appendix 1a and 1b) has been through a rigorous and robust tender process in line with Somerset Council's procurement regulations. The assessment process has shown the preferred bidder as the contractor that can deliver the design element of the programme to the right standard, to time and budget and therefore should be awarded the contract as part of this Key Decision process.
4. Appendix 1a and 1b is considered exempt on the basis it contains information associated with the procurement process that could compromise and undermine it and, by proxy, the appointment of the preferred bidder.

Other options considered

5. To reach this point, a full tender process has taken place in line with Somerset Council's procurement regulations. Alternative tenders were considered, however, the preferred bidder was considered most suitable in line with appendix 1a and 1b.

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

6. This decision and the wider delivery of the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care links directly with the 2023 – 2027 Council plan in the following ways: -
 - **A Healthy and Caring Somerset** – The Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will support the Health and Care sector by addressing a shortfall in resources by attracting new entrants to the sector and providing a high level of skills and flexibility in the existing workforce. The facility will deliver this for years to come addressing a longer-term concern in the sector that by 2035 a further 8,000

staff (a 40% increase in workforce) will be required to support individuals of all ages across the County.

- **A Fairer and Ambitious Somerset** – The Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will provide training opportunities for individuals in areas of high social deprivation and significantly rural areas ensuring there are career pathways within the sector enabling residents of Somerset to access well-paid and rewarding jobs.
 - **A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset** – The Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will support innovation and business growth by providing technology companies with an opportunity to work closely with the health and care sector across Somerset in the development of new and innovative ways to deliver services. The facility will be able to embed new technology into the training of new and existing staff allowing a seamless rollout of life changing and resource saving ways of working.
 - **A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset** – The Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will support the Council's drive towards a sustainable future through the successful regeneration and repurposing of a Grade II listed building currently at risk in the centre of Bridgwater, investment in green technology such as ground source heating and PV and will promote the use of sustainable transport through its proximity to the train station and also the network of walking and cycling infrastructure around the town of Bridgwater.
7. In terms of links to the MTFP there are no negative impacts associated with this decision on the basis that the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care delivery is funded through the £19.7m Levelling up Fund allocation.
 8. Looking longer term the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will have a positive impact on Somerset Council's budgets by facilitating the increased provision of resources within the Health and Care Sector, therefore, mitigating a reliance on costly agency staff.

Financial and Risk Implications

9. The design team contract will be funded through an allocation of the £19.7m Levelling Up Fund capital grant awarded by Government on the 19th January 2023. On that basis there are no financial implications associated with this decision for Somerset Council.
10. It should also be noted that the tender process for the design team was rigorous and robust to ensure it provides value for money and fits within the wider cost plan for the delivery of the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care.
11. In the unlikely event of any cost overrun associated with the design work it should be noted that the wider scheme has adequate contingency and inflation mitigation which has been assessed by a Chartered Quantity Surveyor.

12. There are no direct revenue implications arising from this Key Decision to appoint the design team. Longer term, the operating revenue responsibility for the Academy has previously been considered by the Executive and other partners at the time of accepting the LUF capital grant from Government. These have been raised in the original Executive paper (appendix two) sections 7.3 – 7.4 and considered manageable/acceptable at the time of the decision on the 27th of February 2023.
13. An outline operating plan has been prepared which shows the Academy to become viable in meeting its operating costs through accommodation charges and rental income. Further detailed work involving partners from across the health and care system is progressing on the future governance and operational viability and critical path - and officers, and the Executive will be updated as the project proceeds.
14. The key risks for Somerset Council associated with this decision are as follows:

Risk 1 – Design team do not design the facility to the requirements of Somerset Council and its partners.

Mitigations –

- Design team will engage extensively with key stakeholders to explore their requirements and get a complete understanding of the future use of the facility.
- Milestones/checkpoints will be included within the design phase with an opportunity for design team and stakeholders to reflect to ensure the designs meet the requirements of Somerset Council and partners.

Likelihood	2	Impact	3	Risk Score	6
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Risk 2 – Design phase takes longer than planned, compressing the overall programme and reducing the available time for demolition and construction.

Mitigations –

- Capital Build Project Manager will set out timescale expectations at inception meeting.
- Programme Manager currently working with partners to identify requirements for the building to ensure they are formulated ready for engagement with the design team.

Likelihood	2	Impact	4	Risk Score	8
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Legal Implications

15. Legal implications associated with this decision will involve completion of the standardised NEC 3 contract and formalising the relationship with the preferred bidder. Legal Services Contract Team are aware of the procurement process and will proceed with the documentation once the decision is confirmed and following the required 10 day call in period in line with Somerset Council’s procurement regulations.

16. The procurement process associated with this decision has been supported from the outset by the Procurement Manager for Somerset North to ensure Somerset Council's procurement rules and regulations have been followed.

HR Implications

17. There are no HR implications directly associated with this decision, noting that the facility, once constructed, will have a positive impact on the workforce in the Health and Care sector.

Other Implications:

Equalities Implications

18. This paper relates to the award of a design contract to the preferred bidder (as set out in appendix one) in relation to delivery of the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care. All bidders are required to confirm compliance with equalities objectives through the tender process.
19. In terms of the following implications listed below: -
 - Access
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Human Rights

they are not considered applicable for this current phase of the programme. However, at the point that the design team are in place it is essential that these considerations are woven into the design and delivery of the facility. This will include accessibility requirements.

20. Following a conversation with the Equality and Risk Manager it was agreed that an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

Community Safety Implications

21. The Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care main site at the former Bridgwater Hospital is currently a magnet for anti-social behaviour. The type of activity includes vandalism, street drinking, drug abuse and drug dealing. By regenerating the site and facilitating significant activity associated with the new use of the building this will deter those individuals from participating in the aforementioned activity, thus making the centre of Bridgwater a safer and more appealing place to visit.
22. This will have a positive impact on the quality of life and general wellbeing of those residents in the vicinity of the site.
23. The scheme will integrate closely with the Bridgwater Town Deal Town Wardens Project who are tasked with addressing anti-social behaviour in Bridgwater. The Wardens will

be able to support the individuals taking part in the activity outlined above and provide them with holistic support to address their situation.

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

24. The Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will address sustainability in the following way: -
- The main Academy site at the former Bridgwater Hospital is intended to be heated through ground source heating which reduces the requirement for fossil fuels and the production of CO₂. PV has also been built into the scheme for the same reasons. The total allocation has been costed by a Chartered Quantity Surveyor with a significant allocation of over £1m.
 - The main site will promote the use of sustainable low carbon transport on the basis that it is positioned very close to Bridgwater Station and is connected via a range of walking and cycling infrastructure. Further investment via the Bridgwater Town Deal and Public Health funding will develop this infrastructure further with investment totalling millions of pounds.

Health and Safety Implications

25. The former Bridgwater Hospital is the main site for the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care and is a significantly dilapidated building. Therefore, before the design team will have access, significant Health and Safety assessments will be undertaken to ensure their safety. This will include the following:
- Removal of needles and other drug related paraphernalia.
 - Site clearance related to the external elements of the site.
 - A thorough review of the internals of the site including a review of asbestos
 - Making safe of any asbestos found through the internal review of the site.
26. It should be noted tasks outlined above (and others) will be carried out by professional contractors that will be a blend of Somerset Council Officers and externally resourced companies/individuals.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

27. The delivery of the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will provide a step change in the health and wellbeing of all ages in Somerset once the scheme is operational. In relation to the Health and Wellbeing priorities outlined below, the scheme will:
- Improve the health and wellbeing of individuals gaining access to high quality training and career guidance delivered locally through the combination of the main Bridgwater site and the initial satellite operation in Minehead.

- Have a positive impact on health and wellbeing of residents of Somerset through its ability to provide greater resources into the sector and also a higher level of training ensuring the services delivered are of a higher standard.
 - Impact in a positive way on ill health through individuals having greater access to support. This will be in the form of early intervention due to more people delivering services across the full range of health and social care services.
 - Reduce health and social inequality as per the aim of the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care.
28. The Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care will increase resources across the whole sector from Children's through to Adults' and, therefore it is fair to say that it will support the whole population of Somerset from a Health and Wellbeing perspective.

Social Value

29. With any Central Government funding there is a requirement to leverage additional Social Value from the investment. This also aligns with Somerset Council's policy for delivering Social Value locally and embracing the spirit of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. It is good practice to report this back to Government as part of the monitoring and evaluation so this will sit at the core of the project through the following approaches: -
30. During the build, where possible, procure local contractors to ensure that Government funding is channelled through the local economy.
31. Build Local Labour Agreements into the planning process to enable local people to access employment and skills opportunities including jobs, training and apprenticeships.
32. Adopting the TOMS (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) social value framework to ensure that as much social value as possible is leveraged through the £19.7m investment.

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

33. It has been agreed that this decision can utilise urgent implementation. In order to obtain approval, the Chair of Policies and Place Scrutiny Committee and the Chair of the Adult and Health Scrutiny Committee have been briefed to obtain their sign off. In addition, this paper has been shared with the respective Chairs for comment as part of the sign off process.

Background

34. The £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund for investment in infrastructure was announced in the 2021 Budget intended to be rolled out over four years (21/22 to 24/25). Bids into the fund were for up to £20m of capital to deliver schemes linked with Town Centre Regeneration, Transport Investment and Cultural Investment (inclusive of heritage).
35. In July 2022, Sedgemoor District Council submitted a round two Levelling Up Fund bid “The Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care” which targeted two of the three themes outlined above as follows: -
- a. **Town Centre Regeneration** – the derelict former Bridgwater Hospital site located in the centre of Bridgwater was sold by the NHS to a private developer circa 8 years ago. In that time it has become an eyesore which sits at a key gateway into the town centre. Investment will bring it back into use, whilst complementing circa £8.5m Bridgwater Town Deal investment in public realm improvements along Eastover and Salmon Parade where the former Bridgwater Hospital site is positioned.
 - b. **Cultural investment (inclusive of heritage assets)** – The former Bridgwater Hospital frontage is Grade 2 listed and dates back to 1865. Investment from the Levelling Up Fund will secure the future of this historic building and breathe life back into one of the town’s most significant heritage assets.
36. On the 19th January 2023, Government confirmed the bid was successful and allocated £19.7m towards its delivery. In brief, the bid was made up of three core elements: -
- The regeneration of the former Bridgwater Hospital to create the main site for the Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care (inclusive of key worker accommodation).
 - The repurposing of the Sea Horse Centre in Minehead as a satellite site to the main facility in Bridgwater extending its reach into West Somerset which has traditionally suffered from training accessibility issues due to the extent of its rurality.
 - A contribution to the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier scheme with a recognition that once complete it will secure the main site from the impact of climate change and rising sea levels.
37. Since the January announcement significant work has taken place to mobilise the programme. This has included internal governance decisions to accept Government funding, purchase the former Bridgwater Hospital site and begin the procurement for the design team. Appendix two (Somerset Academy for Health and Social Care Executive Paper approved by the Executive on the 27th of February) sets out the decisions and has laid the foundations for this Key Decision to award the contract for the design team.

38. Following appointment of the design team the next key milestones from a delivery perspective will be completion of the concept design (Autumn 2023), followed by a planning and listed building application towards the end of the year.

Background Papers

39. None

Appendices

- **Appendix 1a – Exempt**
- **Appendix 1b - Exempt**
- **Appendix 2 – Somerset Academy for Health and Social Care Executive paper (27th February 2023)**

Report Sign-Off

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance	David Clark	6 th June 2023
Communications	Chris Palmer	5 th June 2023
Section 151 Officer	Jason Vaughan	25 th May 2023
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	26 th May 2023
Workforce	Chris Squire	23 rd May 2023
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	8 th June 2023
Climate & Place	Mickey Green	21 st May 2023
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	22 nd May 2023
Executive Lead Members	Cllr Ros Wyke	25 th May 2023
	Cllr Bill Revans	17 th May 2023
	Cllr Dean Ruddle	5 th June 2023
	Cllr Tessa Munt	8 th June 2023
	Cllr Heather Shearer Associate Lead Member for Children’s Social Care & SEND	29 th May 2023
Consulted:	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members	Cllr Leigh Redman	31 st May 2023
	Cllr Hilary Bruce	31 st May 2023
Opposition Spokespersons	Cllr Mark Healy	8 th June 2023
	Cllr Sue Osborne	7 th June 2023
	Cllr Francis Nicholson	8 th June 2023
Scrutiny Chairs	Cllr Gill Slocombe	17 th May 2023
	Cllr Gwil Wren	17 th May 2023
	Cllr Leigh Redman	28 th June 2023

