

Decision Report – Service Director Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/06/02

Decision Date – 06.07.2023

Key Decision – yes



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## Apprenticeship Procurement

Executive Member(s): Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources

Local Member(s) and Division:

Lead Officer: Chris Squire, Service Director, Workforce

Author: Misha Liddiatt

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## Summary / Background

1. Somerset Council's apprenticeship levy is specific funding, held by the government, which can only be used to cover the cost of apprenticeship qualifications. It has been available since 2017 and this is therefore the 2<sup>nd</sup> procurement exercise carried out in relation to the contracting of national and local training providers, to enable Somerset Council to deliver its apprenticeship programme, as part of the Early Careers Strategy.
2. The total for this contract over the next 3 years will be circa. £4million.

## Recommendations

3. Chris Squire, Service Director, Workforce, agrees:

To support the implementation of this apprenticeship training framework; through the contracting of national and local training providers; to enable Somerset Council to continue to deliver apprenticeships to the entire workforce under the Early Careers Strategy.

## **Reasons for recommendations**

4. Somerset Council has access to a substantial apprenticeship levy pot, which offers funded apprenticeships to the entire staff body across the organisation and maintained schools, therefore, to not use this funding would be to the detriment of the learning and development of Somerset Council staff.

## **Other options considered**

5. Given the nature of the apprenticeship levy there are no other options to consider. Apprenticeship training can only be funded via the apprenticeship levy which is a specific pot of funding for this purpose – it can not be used in any other way.

## **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

6. Apprenticeship provision directly links to the Early Careers Strategy that Somerset Council supports – it also supports the learning and development of existing staff to enable them to develop skills and enhance their CPD.
7. Apprenticeship provision directly impacts on the Learning and Development of staff both new and existing and through making use of ring fenced funding, enables Somerset Council to utilise its learning and development budget in creative ways.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

8. Given the nature of the apprenticeship levy, there are no risks associated – as this budget is a specific levy that can only be used to fund apprenticeship training. Therefore it does not impact on any other spend.

## **Legal Implications**

9. Procurement colleagues have led the contracting for all training providers and will liaise with legal and HR colleagues as necessary prior to contracts being issued.

## **HR Implications**

10. As the apprenticeship provision is ongoing within Somerset Council there are no new HR implications.

## **Other Implications:**

### **Equalities Implications**

11. All considerations relating to Equality and Diversity have been captured within the Early Careers Strategy EIA which is attached below as an appendix. Given the apprenticeship programme sits within the Early Careers Strategy, there is nothing specific that warrants a separate EIA.

### **Community Safety Implications**

12. NA

### **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

13. Apprenticeship provision within Somerset County Council and contracting with local training providers will only benefit the local economy of Somerset.

### **Health and Safety Implications**

14. NA

### **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

15. Apprenticeship provision is available to all staff therefore will increase the wellbeing of all staff to empower them to develop their CPD.

### **Social Value**

16. The apprenticeship programme aims to develop Somerset Council's workforce through offering opportunities for staff to develop themselves both personally and professionally. It also aims to bring young people, from a variety of backgrounds, into the organisation and develop them up through their careers – creating leaders of tomorrow.

### **Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

17. NA

## Background

18. Since 2017, large organisations, such as Somerset Council, have been able to make use of their own apprenticeship levy funding – this is specific funding for apprenticeship qualification costs and cannot be used for other costings such as salaries or stand-alone qualifications.

Over the last 4 years, Somerset County Council and the 4 district councils have utilised their apprenticeship levies to build strong apprenticeship programmes, and now post vesting day, the Early Careers Strategy team aim to expand this programme and our offering through contracting with a wide variety of high quality apprenticeship training providers; both on a national and local scale.

## Background Papers

19. None

## Appendices

- Evaluation Report
- Early Careers Strategy Equality Impact Assessment

## Report Sign-Off

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	16.06.2023
Communications	Chris Palmer	12.06.2023
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	12.06.2023
Workforce	Chris Squire	12.06.2023
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	12.06.2023
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Chris Squire	12.06.2023
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	12.06.2023
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Theo Butt Philip	12.06.2023
<b>Consulted:</b>		
Local Division Members		On publication of the report

Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Faye Purbrick Opposition Spokesperson for Transformation and Human Resources	16.06.2023
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Bob Filmer for Scrutiny Corporate & Resources Committee	16.06.2023

**APPENDIX A**

**Tender Evaluation Report**

**Framework Agreement for the Provision of Apprenticeship Services for Somerset  
Council**

**DN642265**

**Author: Name: Iain Copeland**  
**Title: Senior Procurement Officer**  
**Commercial & Procurement**  
**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

## 1. Management Summary

The purpose of this procurement is to establish a framework agreement for Apprenticeship services in order to have a method of engaging with apprenticeship providers to meet the needs of the Authority and the apprentices. This framework will be replacing an existing framework that is due to expire in July 2023.

Following a Non-Key Decision approval dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022; the decision was taken to go out to tender using an Open procedure and establish a multi-supplier framework agreement.

## 2. Procurement Process

This procurement was carried out in accordance with the authority's Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders and Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

The tender was split into 9 lots (listed below). There was no limit on the number of lots an applicant could apply for, but they needed to be delivering at least one of the qualifications within a lot to be considered compliant.

- Lot 1 - Legal finance and accounting
- Lot 2 - Sales, marketing and procurement
- Lot 3 - Business and administration
- Lot 4 - Catering, hospitality and facilities management
- Lot 5 - Childcare and education
- Lot 6 - Construction, Engineering, Manufacturing, Transport & Logistics
- Lot 7 - Digital, Creative and Design
- Lot 8 - Health, Social Care, Science and Protective Services
- Lot 9 - Agriculture, environmental and animal care

Suppliers were invited to submit a response to the Invitation to Tender (ITT) through the e-Tendering System (ProContract). The Procurement Documents were published on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022.

Bid responses were received by the closing date of 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 as follows:

- 27 Bidders responded.
- All Bidders submitted a compliant Bid.
- Bids were evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in the Procurement Documents and set out in section 2.1 below.

The Commercial and Procurement Team conducted the compliance checks in conjunction with SCC specialists in various areas where required.

## 2.1 Evaluation Methodology

Bids were evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out within the Procurement Documents and were applied as follows:

Evaluation criteria breakdown	Means of evaluation	
	Sub criteria	Main criteria
<b>Quality</b>		<b>100%</b>
Quality Question 3.1 – Specification Compliance	Pass/Fail	
Quality Question 3.2 – Delivery & Approach	35%	
Quality Question 3.3 – Previous Experience and Key Personnel	28%	
Quality Question 3.4 – Added Value and Social Value	7%	
Quality Question 3.5 – Implementation	15%	
Quality Question 3.6 – Student Satisfaction and Pass Rates	15%	
<b>Price</b>		<b>Pass/Fail</b>
Part D - Pricing Submission – Compliance with funding	Pass/Fail	

## 2.2 Quality

The quality questions were scored and evaluated in accordance with the published criteria.

The quality element of the Tenders was evaluated by a panel of officers and moderated by staff from the Commercial and Procurement Team at Somerset Council (see Confidential Appendix B for the list of evaluators and moderators). Each evaluation panel member scored each Bid on an individual basis and prior to the moderation meeting.



Moderated scores are available in Confidential Appendix B, including the proposed award decision.

### **2.3 Pricing**

Pricing was assessed on a pass/fail basis. An applicant would achieve a pass if their pricing did not exceed the maximum funding for the apprenticeship they were bidding for. Any applicant who submitted a price that exceeded the maximum funding received a fail and would be excluded from the relevant lot.

### **2.4 Social Value**

The Authority's standard social value approach was not used in this process as there was not a total contract value to compare the TOMs social value commitments against.

However, one of the quality questions included an element of social value, which asked applicants to confirm what social value could be delivered and examples of where they have delivered similar benefits previously.

Moderated scores are available in Confidential Appendix B, including the proposed award decision.

## **3. Contractual Position**

Each of the successful applicants will be required to sign the Contract Terms and Conditions to confirm their place on the framework. Any call off from this framework, whether direct award or further competition will be subject to the completion of the Call Off Contract. The Contract will be under the standard SCC Service Terms and Conditions, as per the latest draft circulated to all suppliers on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

The Authority has the right to terminate a contract of a framework supplier by giving 6 months notice.

This is subject to approval of a Key Decision to award supported by this evaluation report.

### **3.1 Proposed Term**

The awarded Contract will be for a term of 36 months. The service under the new contract will start on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and will expire on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

### **3.2 Service Levels and Contract Management**

Service levels will be monitored as part of Contract Management and the contract will be managed to ensure that the service meets expectations and to identify further opportunities for service improvement.

**4. Not Used**

**5. Next Steps**

- Key Decision to award to be approved
- Suppliers to be informed of the decision by Commercial and Procurement Team
- Standstill period to run for 10 days
- Contract awarded
- Commence framework 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023

**End of Report**

## Appendix B

### Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset Council		
Version	3	Date Completed	23.05.2023

#### Description of what is being impact assessed

The Organisational Early Careers Strategy for Somerset Council – setting out our commitments for encouraging and supporting young people into meaningful careers within Somerset Council.

We will look to re-launch the Early Careers Strategy during the summer of 2023.

Our Early Careers Strategy will encompass our ambitions and aims in relation to various initiatives, including apprenticeships, traineeships, graduate programmes and pathway to employment funding which looks to support those vulnerable and/or disadvantaged young people across Somerset.

#### Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

Data has been gathered by each organisation around the age brackets of their current workforce so we can highlight the number of people this strategy may affect, already in the organisations. This is shown in the below pie chart where it is highlighted that only 13% of the total workforce across the 5 organisations are aged 16-29.

Our Early Careers Strategy will predominantly be aimed at those aged 16-26.

16-29: 13%

30-39: 20%

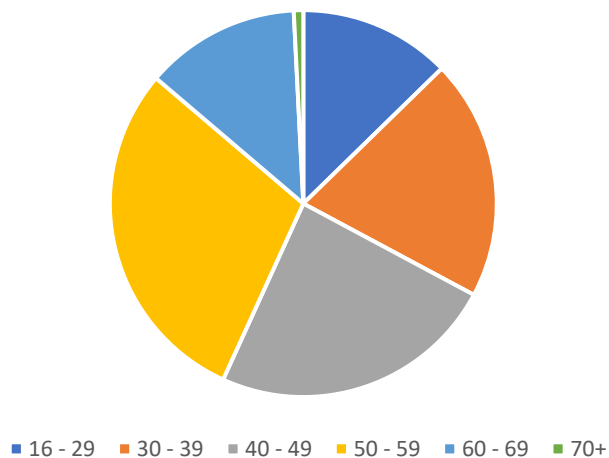
40-49: 24%

50-59: 29%

60-69: 13%

70+: 1%

Age Brackets - Somerset Council Workforce



Data has also been used from the Youth Voice Census 2021 and the Somerset Youth Board to inform the strategy we have designed to support young people into work and education.

All opportunities offered within the ECS are open to all young people from any background or personal circumstance. Accessibility needs are met whenever necessary to ensure an equitable process.

The ECS will be used to ensure inclusivity within Somerset Council through targeted supported employment opportunities in conjunction with other partner organisations such as supported employment colleagues and job coach organisations, such as Discovery.

As of June 2019, 17.4% of Somerset's population were young people aged 0-15. This shows that over the coming few years, we, as a large employer, have a responsibility to offer high quality opportunities for early careers and in partnership with other organisations, educational options. We also must acknowledge the dissemination of information to young people within primary and secondary settings is imperative to ensure they are well informed and able to make their future aspirational decisions.

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups?** If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

The strategy was initially drafted in partnership, by colleagues from Somerset County Council, Somerset, West and Taunton District Council, South Somerset District Council Sedgemoor District Council and Mendip District Council.

It was shared with Young People within the participation groups, SICC and SLICC for their views on if we were encompassing all protected groups and to ensure our plans were accessible to all.

The ECS was brought to and approved by the LGR Implementation Board and HR Committee.

Final sign off/endorsement will be sought at the Public Exec meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

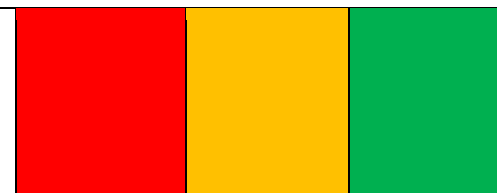
Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By improving career opportunities, it is likely to reduce the percentage, we as a county, lose each year of young people.</li> <li>• Young People may lack career aspirations and require support to navigate the opportunities available to them within Somerset.</li> <li>• Employees aged 27 and over may feel excluded from these opportunities.</li> <li>• Young People are less likely to have their own transport, and therefore more likely to use public transport which can impact on where they are able to work.</li> </ul>	□	□	☒

<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young People within the County, who have physical or mental health impairments, may not feel that they can join the workplace because of their disability and/or that there may not be appropriate support for them.</li> <li>• Young People with disabilities are likely to require reasonable adjustments. Both within the recruitment process and the workplace.</li> <li>• There will be more opportunities for young people with disabilities through the various supported employment schemes within the ECS.</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people who are thinking about transitioning or going through transition may feel that there are barriers in joining the workplace.</li> <li>• Young People who are thinking about transitioning or going through transition may have greater levels of anxiety within the workplace.</li> </ul>	☒	□	□
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have considered the impact upon this protected group, marriage and civil partnership, and no impact has been identified.</li> </ul>	□	□	□
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger parents and expectant mothers may require greater levels of flexibility in the workplace.</li> <li>• This cohort may not be attracted to careers paths within the Council due to their lack of knowledge around what is and isn't</li> </ul>	□	☒	□

	available. For example, part time opportunities or term time working.			
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals who identify as BME may feel there is a lack of diversity awareness across the organisation – which in turn could impact upon their decision to choose the organisation for their early career.</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☐
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have considered the impact upon this protected group, pregnancy and maternity, and no impact has been identified.</li> </ul>	☐	☐	☐
<b>Sex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We recognise that there are some areas within the council that are traditionally seen by young people as male or female roles and that may influence the decisions young people make about their career path.</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☐
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young People who do not identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual may feel that there will be a lack of diversity within a council environment.</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☐
<b>Other, e.g., carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to their caring responsibilities, Young Carers, may feel they are unable to take on a role within the Council.</li> <li>Young people who have spent time in the Armed Forces may need extra support in readjusting to civilian life. May suffer with PTSD.</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☒



- Young People who live in a low income household, may struggle to pay for transport to and from work or not have suitable attire for the working environment.



### Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
The Council will continue to create new opportunities and continue with existing opportunities for employees who are excluded from this strategy.	Ongoing	Organisational Development Team	Ongoing – quarterly and annual reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look to increase the number of apprenticeship roles we offer through looking at current vacancies and whether they could be filled using an apprentice.	Ongoing	ECS Team and recruiting managers across the organisation	Ongoing – monitored through quarterly reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offering school leavers an additional opportunity to academic options – apprenticeships, work-based learning.	Ongoing	ECS Team	Ongoing – work experience	<input type="checkbox"/>

Showcasing the range of apprenticeships now on offer – Level 2 entry level right up to degree and masters Level 7's.			lead to feedback.	
	Ongoing	ECS Team	Ongoing – ECS team to feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>
We will continue to recruit care leavers into the organisation into apprenticeships, on an annual basis.	Ongoing	ECS Team alongside Leaving Care and YOS colleagues.	Ongoing – monthly finance reports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental disorders to access high quality educational or career opportunities – through supported programmes and/or mainstream programmes with additional recruitment support where needed.	Ongoing	ECS Team alongside SEND colleagues and Special School colleagues.	Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity	
Support those on no/low incomes or those who might be homeless to access educational opportunities and work experience placements to strengthen their abilities to begin their early careers.	Ongoing	ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues alongside local job centres	Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity	
Sharing information about inclusivity and diversity of Somerset Council as a workforce to ensure those from all	Ongoing	ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues	Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity	

<p>backgrounds and ethnicities feel supported and included in our recruitment opportunities.</p>		<p>alongside local job centres</p>		
<p>Veterans - Those joining the Council from the Armed Forces are provided with sufficient support in readjusting to civilian life.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues alongside local job centres</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity</p>	
<p>Young Carers – providing flexible working arrangements and initial application support to encourage applications from young carers and ensure they feel our vacancies are viable options.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Young Parents - providing flexible working arrangements and initial application support to encourage applications from young parents and ensure they feel our vacancies are viable options.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>As an action for all Groups, ensuring that there is a robust induction/onboarding process to provide the relevant support for new starters and give Line Managers confidence. Including signposting to relevant staff networks.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>OD Team &amp; Line Managers</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Promotion of the Young Employee's Network to all young people who join the council – showcasing the support it can offer as they begin their early careers.	Ongoing	Young Employee Network Chairs and ECS Team	Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity	
If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.				
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Misha Liddiatt</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>23.05.2023</b>			
<b>Signed off by:</b>	<b>Michelle Anderson</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>23.05.2023</b>			
<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>	<b>Michelle Anderson - 23.05.2023</b>			
<b>To be reviewed by:</b> (officer name)				
<b>Review date:</b>				

