

Part 1: Open to the public  
Or  
Part 2: Closed to the public

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REPORT OF  
The Strategic Director for Service Reform  
TO  
Procurement Board  
ON  
11 March 2020

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TITLE: Approval to go out to competition for Key Cities Public Relations contract

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RECOMMENDATION:

That Procurement Board grant authority for the Key Cities Public Relations support to be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules through an open tender.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to request approval to go out competition for the delivery of the above mentioned project.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: N/A

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KEY DECISION: Not at this stage.

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DETAILS:

Key Cities is the UK's city leadership network – with 25 member cities spanning the length and breadth of England and Wales, and with a collective population of over 6.5 million. Key Cities is the recognised democratic and authentic voice of urban Britain.

Salford City Council has recently been elected interim Chair and secretariat of the Key Cities Network – and the position of interim chair is held by the Council's Deputy City Mayor. As part of this role, the city council provides support services (legal,

procurement, financial etc) to Key Cities and acts as the lead authority for Key Cities. (Between now and July 2020, the secretariat functions are shared between Wakefield and Salford Councils).

The network is supported by external public relations, media and communications, and policy development and research support. This enables relationships with Government (ministers and civil servants) to be developed, national events and conferences to be held that influence and shape national policy and funding developments.

The work to be commissioned includes policy and media support services to underpin increased awareness and influence of the Key Cities Network and its activity. The organisation commissioned to provide this support will be expected to work collaboratively with all the members of the Network. It is expected that successful delivery of these services would increase the influence of Key Cities on national and regional policies as well as maintenance or an increase in membership of the Network itself.

Key Cities aims to be a 'go to' national network that significantly shapes and informs economic and social policy with both the UK Government and devolved administrations. The services to be commissioned will be critical to achieving this goal, and will include:

- Development of policy position statements in response to emerging national issues or driven by specific Key Cities' needs.
- Creation and publication of blog and other online content, to raise awareness of case studies, share good practice directly relevant to cities and to introduce thought provoking and innovative ideas and concepts.
- Facilitation of an All Party Parliamentary Group, including arranging and facilitating quarterly meetings, identification of key themes, securing involvement of members of Parliament from all parties and cities, other stakeholders and guest speakers, and managing all practical arrangements.
- Public relations activity – including proactive and responsive social media campaigns, securing a wider range of media and specialist press opportunities to highlight the work and opportunities of Key Cities, and supporting the Key Cities secretariat at events and as required.

The capacity to deliver this work does not exist within the Council, or across the Key Cities Network. Agreement to go to tender will ensure capacity is in place to enable the Network to continue to function and will enable us to explore alternative organisations able to deliver these services.

A current contract is in place with the existing secretariat (Wakefield Council) until the end of June. It is envisaged a future contract will be in place for three years, with the option for further monthly extensions. The contract term will though be subject to negotiation during the tender evaluation process, and further decision by Procurement Board. A maximum value over the three year period will be determined as part of the tender process.

Key Cities Network activity is funded by membership fees paid by each member of the network. There is no financial draw on Salford City Council over and above our contribution to the Network.

A further report will be brought back to Procurement Board reporting the outcomes of the evaluation process and seeking agreement to enter a contract. -

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#### KEY COUNCIL POLICIES:

The Key Cities Network supports Salford's delivery of the Great 8.

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#### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

Not applicable at this stage. Equality impact will be considered as part of the tender evaluation.

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#### ASSESSMENT OF RISK:

Medium. Salford is acting as lead authority for the Key Cities Network – and these services will support the Network as a whole.

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#### SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Key Cities Network membership contributions.

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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: Supplied by: Tony Hatton, Principal Solicitor, tel. 2129 6323

When commissioning contracts for the procurement of goods, services or the execution of works the Council must comply with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR) as well as the provisions of its own Contractual Standing Orders (CSO's), Financial Regulations and the duties of Best and Social value, failing which the award of a contract may be subject to legal challenge.

The report sets out that the Council proposes to enter into a compliant open procurement process to commission a provider to deliver the services referred to in the report as the incoming secretariat to the "Key Cities Network". The tender exercise will give some comfort to the Council (and other members of the group) in ensuring that value for money is being obtained and tested, with open competition maintained. The carrying out of a compliant procurement exercise will ensure that the risk of challenge to the eventual award of the contract is minimal and that any challenge, should it materialise, is unlikely to be successful.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Supplied by: Leanne Wrigley 0161 793 3354

Source of funding: Key Cities Network membership contributions.

This is a tender (and contract) that Salford will manage as lead authority and secretariat for the Key Cities Group (a national network of 25 mid-size cities and towns. This contract, and Salford's support costs subject to an SLA, will be met by membership fees, and in that respect an annual budget of £240k will transfer to Salford from 1 July to that effect. . Confirmation has been provided that the 25 member contributions will provide the funding required for this.

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PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS: Supplied by: Emma Heyes, Category Manager x6243

All procurement activity in relation to this project is to be carried out in compliance with Contractual Standing Orders.

The intention is to advertise this as an open tender on the Chest.

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HR IMPLICATIONS: Supplied by:

Not applicable

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CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS: Supplied by:

Not applicable.

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OTHER DIRECTORATES CONSULTED:

Not applicable. Wakefield Council as the existing Key Cities secretariat has been consulted.

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WARD(S) TO WHICH REPORT RELATE(S):

N/A

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