

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Commission capacity to deliver bespoke business advice to individual Herefordshire based businesses specifically to assist them in managing their business issues around the EU exit, Covid-19 pandemic and more general business resilience
Date of decision:	27 January 2021
Decision maker:	Director for Economy and Place
Authority for delegated decision:	The chief executive's scheme of delegation General Delegations – SA45 – Economic Development - Updated 29 September 2020
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	None
Decision made:	Award a Framework Agreement to Core Tree Ltd, IBD Group & Mountain Perspective for the provision of a Business Advisor One to One Support service available to all businesses in Herefordshire for a period up to the end March 2021.
Reasons for decision:	<p>During the unprecedented situation facing businesses across Herefordshire it has identified that there is a need to provide additional tailored 121 business support to businesses, especially as current Business Support Staff are focussed on delivering Covid-19 Business Support Grants.</p> <p>The council have conducted a procurement exercise to form a framework of suitable suppliers of business support to deliver the service to businesses across the county. Given the expected high demand for the service it was decided a framework approach would provide more capacity rather than a single supplier.</p> <p>The procurement exercise concluded that three companies had the required skills, experience and staff capacity to undertake the commission and could be included within the framework.</p> <p>The funding for this framework has been provided by the Marches LEP via the existing Growth Hub project. The LEP has agreed that the funding should only be made available for the provision of these advisory services.</p> <p>The service will be promoted via the Marches Growth Hub and the council, both organisations will promote on their website and social media channels and will produce suitable publicity.</p> <p>Businesses applying to the service will be allocated a supplier on the basis of supplier capacity and the nature of the business requiring support, this will give businesses the most appropriate advice for the nature of their enquiry.</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	The £58,500 of revenue funding has been made available by the Marches LEP via the existing Growth Hub arrangements. The funding has been allocated by the Marches for the purposes of delivering this support to businesses within Herefordshire. The Marches LEP will not fund activity outside of this service.

	<p>The commission with the three companies on the framework is in line with the LEP's expectation of funded activity which mitigates any risk of ineligible activity and the council being unable to claim expenditure from the LEP.</p> <p>It has been decided to form a framework of three companies to mitigate any risk of not having the required capacity to deliver the service.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Do Nothing – we would lose access to the £58,500 funds allocated for this support and any future allocations.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	N/A

Signed

Date: 27 January 2021

Richard Ball
 Director for Economy & Place