

## Record of officer decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	Apprenticeship Programme for Social Work (Degree) procurement
<b>Date of decision:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Director of HR and OD
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	Corporate Services Scheme of Delegation: Article 91 - Approval of spend and the allocation of funds to providers from the council's apprenticeship levy fund.
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>The following colleagues have been consulted and advice provided has been incorporated into the decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce development leads in Community WellBeing Directorate</li> <li>• Social Work Academy Lead in Children &amp; Young Peoples Directorate</li> <li>• Hoople</li> <li>• Head of Learning &amp; Organisational Development</li> </ul>
<b>Decision made:</b>	To undertake a full open tender process via the ProContract portal to secure the best provider to deliver the Social Work (degree) apprenticeship.
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>The council, like other local authority areas across England has a skills gap and challenge in recruiting qualified social workers. There is therefore ambition and planning underway to 'Grow Our Own' social workers in both Community Well Being and Children and Young Peoples directorates to address this issue. One mechanism for this is through the development and delivery of social work apprenticeships.</p> <p>As a large employer the council is required to make a mandatory contribution to the government apprenticeship levy pot. However, the council is also able to benefit from this levy to fund Apprenticeship courses directly from the levy.</p> <p>The successful Apprenticeship provider will be required to draw down the funding directly from the government Apprenticeship levy. The maximum that can be claimed for each Apprentice is £23,000 for the three year Social Work (degree) Apprenticeship programme. The council is seeking to train up to 16 Apprentices starting in 2023. Therefore, the maximum contract value will be £368,000 which requires an open tender process to procure a provider.</p> <p>The provider must be registered on the Register of Approved Training Providers to deliver an approved apprenticeship leading to a degree level qualification in social work.</p>
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	<p>The risk of a challenge to the procurement process is mitigated by following the full open tender procurement process, in line with the councils procurement and contract procedures.</p> <p>The financial risk is low as the funding is accessed by the provider from the apprenticeship levy, not from a council budget.</p> <p>Apprentices will be recruited internally through expressions of interest and an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to ensure the process</p>

	<p>is fair to all.</p> <p>No health and safety implications or other risks have been identified.</p>
<p><b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p>	<p><b>Do Nothing.</b>  This option was rejected, as a large employer the council already pays into the apprenticeship levy, if this money is not used for the intended purpose it will expire and be lost. There is a shortage of qualified social workers in the county and apprenticeships offer a realistic opportunity to “grow our own” workforce in this area, not utilising all available avenues would be a missed opportunity.</p> <p><b>Utilise a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)</b>  This option was rejected, if a DPS was utilised, the generic contract documentation set up by the DPS will need to be adopted by Herefordshire Council. This will remove any local influence and Legal team, Senior Operational management and Workforce Leads will need to review and agree to the terms of these contracts prior to the framework being used.</p> <p><b>Make a direct award</b>  This option was rejected. A soft market test of all eligible providers including those already registered with Procontract has identified only 2 potential suppliers who were interested in delivering this service. Making a direct award could limit the available options for the project delivery.</p>
<p><b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b></p>	<p>None</p>

Signed..... Date: