

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Starting Well Recruitment and Role Promotion
Decision Maker:	Tara Geere, Director of Children's Services
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Oscar Ford, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
SLT Lead:	Tara Geere, Director of Children's Services
Report Author and contact details:	Fatema Ahmed, Project Manager, 01708 431854 Fatema.ahmed@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	Supports the Council's vision of "enabling a resident-focussed and resilient Council." Delivers to the Starting Well Ofsted Improvement plan of "Embedding a Stable and Able Workforce."
Financial summary:	Allocate £10k of the risk reserve for recruitment activity within Starting Well
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	People OSSC
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Yes, it is a non-key decision

Non-key Executive Decision

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Things that matter for residents X

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - A well run Council that delivers for People and Place. X

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This report seeks approval from the Director of Starting Well to agree to;

- Award a contract to Social Work Today for the provision of a recruitment package, at a cost of £8,000 over a 12-month period.
- Award a contract to the Council's approved supplier, Mark Sepple, for a series of targeted recruitment videos (aimed at social care practitioners, teachers and foster carers), at an estimated cost of £2,000.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

Scheme 3.3.3 – Powers common to all Strategic Directors

1. General

1.1 To take any steps, and take any decisions, necessary for the proper management and administration of their allocated directorate.

4. Contracts

4.2. To award all contracts with a total contract value of below £1,000,000 other than contracts covered by Contract Procedure Rule 16.3. This delegation shall include the ability to extend or vary a contract up to and including a value of £1,000,000 (provided that the extension is in line with the existing contractual provisions).

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Recruiting and retaining high quality social work practitioners, teachers and foster carers is essential to delivering effective services within Starting Well.

The Social Work Today recruitment package offers a cost effective, targeted approach to attracting top talent. The total cost for the selected package is £8,000 for a 12-month period and includes;

- Unlimited social work job postings for 12 months.
- Two "Jobs of the Week" placements with banner advertisements in email.
- Advertisement for one recruitment event (virtual or open day).
- Four-week banner advertisement on daily emails reaching 22,000 social workers.
- Inclusion in the Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) online conference (webinar + NQSW job ad).

Non-key Executive Decision

The total value of these services, if booked separately, would amount to £46,400. By securing it at £8,000, the Council achieves a saving of £38,400.

A further £2,000 is to be dedicated to creating a series of targeted recruitment videos aimed at social care practitioners, teachers and foster carers.

These will enable Starting Well to effectively promote all roles that are difficult to recruit to within Starting Well, ensuring maximum visibility and reach, enhancing the recruitment efforts and supporting the Council's objectives and delivering to our Ofsted improvement plan.

Officers obtained two quotes from suppliers in relation to the proposed recruitment package, and one quote for the targeted recruitment videos. Following detailed evaluation of the options available, the recommendations in this report are the most cost effective and beneficial packages. The service will maximise the exposure for hard to recruit roles by taking advantage of the comprehensive promotional services offered by Social Work Today and the recruitment videos. This aligns with the wider aims of the service and the Council's priority within its Ofsted improvement plan of "Embedding a Stable and Able Workforce".

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- An in-house solution was considered, but it would have limited reach and lack the specialist sourcing skills and sector knowledge.
- Other advertising platforms were also evaluated, but they did not offer the same comprehensive range of services or the same level of visibility and reach as Social Work Today. Furthermore, the cost-effectiveness and additional promotional opportunities provided by Social Work Today were unparalleled.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Not applicable.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Fatema Ahmed

Designation: Project Manager

Signature: *Fatema Ahmed*

Date: 18/03/2025

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has the power to award the contracts under s111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

The Council also has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual may generally do subject to any statutory limitations. The recommendation sought within this report is in accordance with this power.

The combined value of the contracts is £10,000, each of which is below the threshold for services under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA 2023). As such, the contracts are not subject to the full implications of the PA 2023.

The Council is a Best Value authority and has a duty to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. As set out in this report and in accordance with the Council’s Contracts Procedure Rules, officers have obtained two quotes from suppliers in relation to the proposed recruitment package, and one quote for the targeted recruitment videos, and are satisfied that awarding the contracts achieves Best Value.

In light of the above, the Council may proceed with awarding the contracts.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The financial implication of this decision involves allocating £10,000 from the risk reserve to fund recruitment activities for hard to recruit roles within Starting Well over a 12-month period. The primary risk is that if the recruitment package does not yield the expected results, it could lead to inefficient use of public funds. Additionally, any legal disputes arising from non-compliance with contractual obligations could result in financial penalties or additional legal costs however these are normal risks that the council has processes to manage. The one off costs are expected to deliver savings by recruiting to a permanent workforce and value for money to the Council. There is sufficient funding in the reserve to cover this cost.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The decision provides an enhanced recruitment pipeline for hard to recruit roles within Starting Well, which will help reduce vacancy rates and dependence on agency staff and independent fostering agencies. This, in turn, will lead to improved workforce stability and better service delivery. The primary HR risk is that if the recruitment package does not attract the desired talent, it could result in continued high vacancy rates and reliance on agency staff, which may affect the quality and consistency of

Non-key Executive Decision

service delivery. Additionally, there is a risk that the recruitment process may not fully address the specific needs of the roles, leading to potential mismatches and turnover.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 mandates the Council to consider eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between individuals with protected characteristics and those without. Protected characteristics include age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. The Council is dedicated to these principles in its services, procurement, commissioning, and workforce employment, as well as improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents. There are no concerning equalities and social inclusion implications or risks associated with this decision.

Under the Equality Act 2010, recruitment activity must promote equal access to employment opportunities for all applicants. The package prioritises inclusive recruitment strategies to attract talent.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The proposal aligns with the Council's carbon reduction goals by utilising digital methods to decrease overall energy consumption. The suppliers have committed to implementing digital strategies to reduce environmental impact and offering remote engagement options to reduce unnecessary travel. This approach not only supports sustainability but also enhances efficiency and convenience.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

N/A

Non-key Executive Decision

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Tara Geere

CMT Member title: Director of Starting Well (Statutory Director of Children's Services)

Date: 29.05.25

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____