

DECISION NO:	<i>For Member Services use only</i>
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Concurrence No:	066407
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Action under delegated authority of Chief Executive	X
Action under delegated authority of Director of Finance and Cabinet Member for Finance	
Action taken by Chief Executive in consultation with Cabinet Member(s)	

Subject: Exception to Contract Standing Orders – to appoint a Town Centre Information Officer

Signature and designation of officer(s) taking action:

PP

PP

09/07/20

19/07/20

Chief Executive

Date

Director of Finance

Date

Head of Finance

Date

Name of Cabinet Member(s) Consulted:

I have been consulted and concur with the proposals set out below:

Councillor

Cabinet Member for

Signature:

Date:

Councillor

Cabinet Member for

Signature:

Date:

Name of any member who has declared a conflict of interest in relation to this decision:

THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

The report overleaf sets out the decision to be taken, the reasons for the decision, and the details of alternative options, if any, considered and rejected.

Officer decisions are available for public inspection, both at the Borough Offices and on the Council's website. Officer decisions are kept for a period of six years at the Borough Offices and for six months on the website after the decision is made. Background papers are available for four years.

RECOMMENDED that: an exception to contract standing orders to allow Mr Antony Cox to be engaged to provide professional services to support the reopening of the Council's Town Centres be approved.

Purpose

To request an exception to contract standing orders to allow Mr Cox to be engaged to provide professional services in compliance with the government's Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.

Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF)

The government has recently made available £50m of additional funding to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas. The Council was allocated £85,547. The money will allow the Council to put in place measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers, particularly in high streets, these measures will extend to the end of March 2021. Under strict guidance, the fund will support four main strands of activity:

1. Support to develop an action plan for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen their local economies.
2. Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely
3. Business-facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely
4. Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.

Given the nature of the funding and size of the award the government is encouraging use of the funding by the end of this year to address immediate needs in 2020.

The Proposal

Mr Cox is a freelance sole trader and is the BID manager for Love Hoddesdon. Given the tight timescales for using the funds and Mr Cox's wealth of experience in town centre management and relationship with many of the local traders he is considered to be an ideal resource to take on some of the work streams above. Mr Cox has confirmed he is able to commit up to eight hours each week on this project. The hourly fee would be the same as that currently charged for undertaking ad-hoc professional services directly for the Council, which is £27.50 per hour.

Given Mr Cox's knowledge of the local area and his experience working in town centres and with small businesses and the need to begin the programme of work as soon as possible so that it can be of the most benefit to the local economy, an exception to contract standing orders is requested on the basis of Mr Cox being the only suitable supplier.

Financial, Legal and Risk Management Implications

The cost of the professional services are fully recoverable under the RHSSF. Therefore there is no cost to the Council. Expenditure for reimbursement under this grant is eligible from 1 June. The detail of the requirements of this grant will be covered in a funding agreement which will be finalised shortly. Once this agreement is in place then claims for reimbursement for expenditure incurred from 1 June can begin to be made. The grant awards will be available to access up until the end of March 2021.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Proceed with a tender process that will be time consuming, cause delays and risk not using the funds by March 2021 deadline. A contractor is likely to be more expensive and will not have such in-depth knowledge of the local area and local businesses.

Contribution to the Council's Objectives

- Support thriving town centres and businesses.

Conclusion

Approval to be given for an exception to Contract Standing Orders to allow Mr Cox to be engaged to provide professional services in compliance with the government's Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and related guidance.

Contact Officer: Alf Cuffaro

Ext: 5539

Date

9 July 2020

Action reported to the Cabinet on:
