Principal Decision Report

Decision between £100k-£250k or the Executive Director/Director considers it to be of such significance that a record of the decision would ensure transparency and accountability.

Subject:	Continued Participation in the Greater Manchester Managed Service Provider contract
Decision maker:	Chief Executive
Decision date:	
Report author:	Jingwen Yang, Workforce Business Partner
Ward (s):	All

Reason for decision

Approval is sought for Oldham Council to continue participation in the Greater Manchester (GM) collaborative Managed Service Provider (MSP) contract for the provision of contingent labour following completion of the GM-wide procurement exercise and award of the contract to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd.

Continued participation will enable the Council to access a compliant, established framework for sourcing agency workers where temporary staffing solutions are required to maintain service delivery.

Whilst participation does not require a direct financial commitment, the decision is considered sufficiently significant due to the Council's ongoing utilisation of the contract for contingent labour and its strategic role in supporting service delivery across the organisation.

Recommendation(s)

1. To approve Oldham Council's continued participation in the Greater Manchester collaborative Managed Service Provider contract for contingent labour awarded to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd.
2. To authorise officers to utilise the contract for the engagement of agency workers in accordance with the Council's procurement, financial and workforce management procedures.

Background

The Council participates in the Greater Manchester collaborative arrangement for the procurement and management of contingent labour. This arrangement provides access to agency workers through a Managed Service Provider model, ensuring compliance with procurement legislation whilst delivering a consistent approach across Greater Manchester authorities.

The Greater Manchester HR Collaborative is a collaborative of 10 Authorities who work in partnership to procure and manage several workforce and workforce system related contracts. The Managed Service Provider contract is committed to by all 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities along with Blackpool Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Greater Manchester Police and Warrington Council.

A collaborative procurement exercise has recently been completed by Greater Manchester partners to secure a replacement contract for contingent labour services. Following a competitive tender process, the contract has been awarded to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd from July 2027 – January 2030 for extension for another year in accordance with the contract terms.

The MSP arrangement does not commit the Council to any minimum spend and there are no direct costs associated with participating in the contract. The Council only incurs costs where agency workers are engaged to meet temporary workforce requirements. Charges are met from existing service budgets and are subject to established approval processes.

The contract provides a mechanism through which temporary staffing requirements can be sourced where services identify a business need, in accordance with existing approval arrangements.

Participation in the GM arrangement also supports collaboration across Greater Manchester, delivering standardised contractual terms, improved supplier management and enhanced governance arrangements.

As part of the Greater Manchester collaborative procurement exercise, Oldham Council participated in the evaluation process alongside other GM authorities. Internal subject matter experts from HR & OD, Children's Social Care, IT/Digital, Procurement, and Governance contributed to the assessment of bidders, helping to ensure the selected provider can meet the diverse contingent labour requirements of participating organisations.

Following completion of the procurement process, the contract has been awarded to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s)*

Option 1: Continue participation in the GM MSP contract (Recommended)

This option provides:

- Access to a compliant and competitively procured contract.
- Consistent contractual arrangements across GM authorities.
- Effective management and oversight of agency spend.
- Access to a broad supply chain of agency providers through a single managed arrangement.

- Reduced procurement and contract management burden for the Council.

Option 2: Withdraw from the GM arrangement and procure independently

This option is not recommended as it would:

- Require the Council to undertake its own procurement exercise.
- Increase administrative and procurement costs.
- Delay access to temporary staffing resources.
- Reduce opportunities to benefit from collaborative purchasing arrangements and GM-wide supplier management.

Consultation *(include any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted)*

The Greater Manchester collaborative procurement exercise was undertaken on behalf of participating GM authorities.

Within Oldham Council, a coordinated evaluation and assessment process was completed to support the re-tender exercise. Representatives from the following services contributed to the evaluation of bids and the selection process:

- HR & OD
- Children's Social Care
- IT/Digital
- Procurement
- Governance

This collaborative approach ensured that the requirements of key service areas and contract users were appropriately considered throughout the tender evaluation process.

No conflicts of interest have been identified.

Risks

Service Delivery Risk

Failure to continue participation may reduce the Council's ability to secure temporary staffing resources when required, impacting service delivery.

Procurement Risk

Alternative arrangements may not provide the same level of procurement compliance and assurance as the GM collaborative contract.

Workforce Risk

Inability to access temporary labour could increase pressure on existing employees, particularly in services experiencing recruitment challenges or fluctuating demand.

Financial Risk

Participation in the Greater Manchester HR Collaborative carries no direct cost, and actually allows for negotiation of preferred rates and introductory fees due to the significant footprint of the contract.

Implications

Financial	There are no direct financial implications arising from approval of this decision. Continued participation in the Greater Manchester collaborative Managed Service Provider (MSP) contract does not commit the Council to any minimum level of expenditure and does not require additional budget provision. The Council will only incur costs where agency workers are engaged to meet identified temporary staffing requirements, with all expenditure being met from existing approved service budgets and subject to established financial regulations, workforce controls and approval processes. Participation in the collaborative arrangement also provides the opportunity to achieve value for money through aggregated purchasing power, negotiated rates and supplier management arrangements across participating authorities. No adverse impact on the Council's overall financial position is anticipated as a result of this decision. (Matthew Kearns – Finance Manager)
Procurement	This report does not contain any immediate procurement implications and Oldham Procurement acknowledge that a compliant procurement process was followed. Tom Pyne – Assistant Director Procurement, Contract Management and Social Value
HR	The continued participation in the Greater Manchester Managed Service Provider (MSP) contract supports the Council's workforce strategy by providing a compliant and coordinated mechanism for the engagement of agency workers where temporary staffing solutions are required to maintain service delivery. The contract will continue to provide access to a managed supply chain for contingent labour, supporting services to meet short-term workforce pressures, address skills shortages, and

	maintain operational resilience where permanent recruitment has proven challenging or where temporary capacity is required. Participation in the contract does not alter the Council's commitment to reducing reliance on agency workers wherever possible. The use of agency labour will remain subject to existing workforce governance, recruitment controls, and financial approval processes. Agency engagement should continue to be considered a temporary solution whilst longer-term workforce planning, recruitment, retention, and succession planning initiatives are progressed. The contract supports workforce flexibility by providing access to temporary labour where required to maintain service delivery, The arrangement complements, rather than replaces, the Council's approach to substantive recruitment and workforce planning. No further workforce implications. Natasha Needham Workforce Business Partner 06.10.2026
Legal	The report confirms that the contract has been awarded following a competitive procurement exercise undertaken on behalf of participating authorities, providing a compliant route for engagement of labour. The Council participating in the arrangement does not create a commitment to any minimum level of expenditure, with agency worker engagements remaining subject to the Council's established financial, procurement and workforce approval processes. Any call-off arrangements and use of agency workers must continue to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations and relevant employment and agency worker legislation. Alex Bougatef – Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	n/a
Other	n/a

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes / No

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes / No
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	Yes / No

Appendices (including any relevant Background Papers)

1. Agency Award Report 2026 signed attached

Report author sign-off	
Role	
Date of sign-off	

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors: Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:

Summary of feedback from the political group leaders