



Report to: STAR Joint Committee
Date: 15th March 2023
Report for: Information/Discussion
Report of: Assistant Directors, STAR Procurement

Report Title

STAR Procurement Q3 Continuous Improvement Update

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update STAR Joint Committee on the continuous improvements made against our STAR Business Plan 2021-24

Recommendations

The recommendation of this report is that the STAR Joint Committee:

- Gives consideration of the continuous improvements made against our STAR Business Plan 2021-24 and future plans
- Approve the Real Living Wage (RLW) to be included in procurement documentation for Trafford and Stockport Councils once RLW accreditation has been awarded.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background

Financial Impact:	None
Legal Impact:	None
Human Resources Impact:	None
Asset Management Impact:	None
E-Government Impact:	None
Risk Management Impact:	None

Health and Safety Impact:	None
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Consultation

No public consultation required

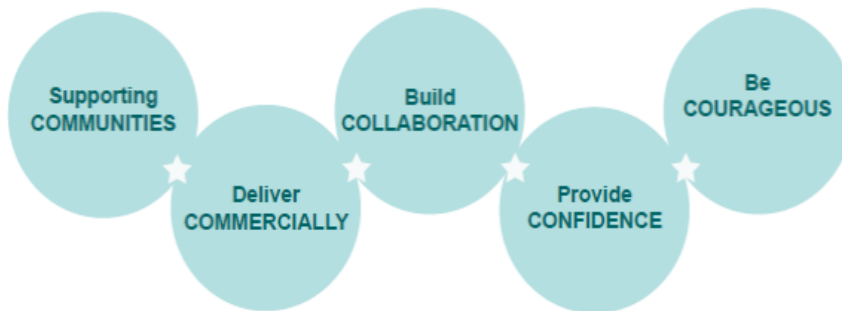
1. Background

1.1. The STAR Business Plan 2021-24 was launched in January 2021. This sets the strategic direction for STAR over the next three years, including our vision, objectives, and enablers.

Our Vision

Leading Transformation Through Procurement and Co-Operation

Our Objectives



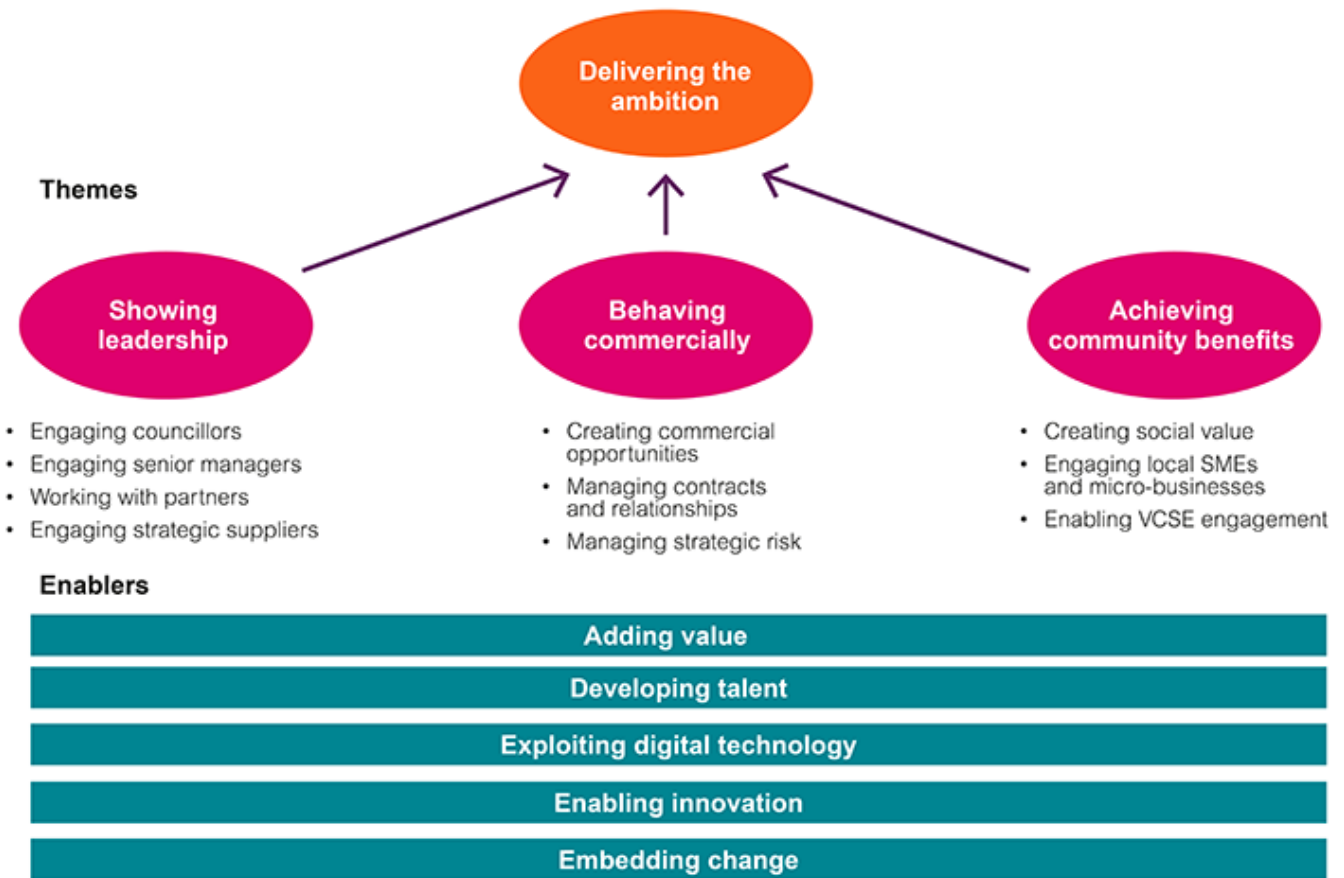
Our Enablers



2. Continuous Improvement Group

2.1 The Continuous Improvement Group (CIG) is due to meet early February and the strategic focus this year will be on the new Procurement Bill and the recently updated National Procurement Strategy (NPS) from the Local

Government Association (LGA). There are three key themes: showing leadership; behaving commercially; and achieving community benefits.



2.2 The continuous improvement lead is attending a LGA event Diagnostic Focus Group Session, which is focussed on the new NPS.

3. Supporting Communities

3.1 STAR is reporting the delivery of social value against TOMs measurement framework and corporate priorities from April 2023 onwards. The social value squad (a team of officers within STAR) is working with the Social Value Portal to ensure that accurate and timely reporting takes place to support this new requirement. Key to achieving this is ensuring social value delivery is profiled accurately across the contract period (understanding quite often full delivery will not take place in year one).

3.2 STAR is fully supporting the STAR partners in working towards the GM six priorities in the GMCA report: Driving Social Value in Public Procurement (March 2022) social value priorities. There is a questionnaire in all procurement documentation which identifies: business type, location, diversity, inequality,

and carbon reduction commitment. To help support this a survey has been produced and sent out to suppliers recently. We are also working in collaboration with other GM authorities, plus GMCA and TFGM, to share intelligence and knowledge on this subject area. The market intelligence will help STAR understand what support is needed to ensure, small, medium and micro businesses (MSMEs) are fully equipped to tender for future opportunities.

- 3.3 STAR is hosting another smaller 'meet the buyer' event planned for early summer 2023 aimed specifically at SME /micro, local organisations. The agenda for this event is currently being created but will focus on two key themes from STARs Twelve Steps to Social Value.
- Grow social economy organisations and removing barriers.
 - Support better bidders to be 'match fit'
- 3.4 STAR is continuing to support the STAR partners on Real Living Wage (RLW) requirements. Trafford has submitted the application to be RLW Accredited and Stockport is now in a position to submit the accreditation application. Once accreditation is granted there will be a procurement requirement for all in scope suppliers to pay their employees RLW to aid the accreditation requirement. STAR have worked with legal teams and with colleague's from Trafford and Stockport to agree the requirement to be issued with procurement documentation post RLW accreditation, this mirrors the approach of other accredited Councils within GM. See Appendix 1 for wording. This inclusion into tender documentation requires approval for Trafford and Stockport procurement activity post RLW accreditation.

4. Resources: Recruitment and Retention

- 4.1 Two Procurement Officers resigned in quarter three and new Business Support Officer role has been created and recruited, replacing a Trainee Procurement and Business Support Officer role; to help support with more basic office functions. This will allow the other two trainees to focus on procurement skills development and obtain procurement related experience.
- 4.2 Following the very successful 'touch base' sessions across the STAR team, STAR is planning to repeat the process next summer to ensure staff feedback is valued and reviewed continuously.
- 4.3 A wider review of the current staffing structure has taken place in consultation with Trafford HR and a proposal has been put forward to look at career grades.

(see separate report). This is intended to further support recruitment and retention.

5. Delivering Commercially

- 5.1. New commissions have been secured which brings income into STAR, these are being delivered by the Development Team. We are also reviewing several new opportunities that are currently being scoped and proposals drafted, including expansions to current arrangements and reviewing opportunities for longer term arrangements.
- 5.2. The charging policy has been reviewed and updated, in accordance with the advice previously provided as part of the Legal and Governance review by Towners and Hamlins, to reflect current costs and market conditions. (See separate report).

6. Build Collaboration

- 6.1. The In-tend system has continued to improve STAR's efficiency in terms of running reports on pipeline and transparency requirements. STAR has five years pipeline information for each Council and are already working with each partner Council to ensure early proactive engagement takes place and developing further collaborative opportunities.
- 6.2. STAR Procurement is continuing to undertake significant work on the Councils' energy contracts. New suppliers have now been selected, and purchasing strategies are being created through collaborative meetings with Trafford, Rochdale, Stockport, and energy experts. Flexible pricing options have been chosen to ensure the utility companies can support with the Councils' carbon reduction plans, energy crisis, and the future associated reductions in energy usage.
- 6.3. STAR has a monthly working group with the STAR partners on post-contract and contract management working. This is aimed at facilitating a smooth transition from procurement to contract management officers, and to ensure the STAR partners have the right tools and information available to carry out this function in an accurate and consistent manner.

7. Provide Confidence

- 7.1. The new Procurement Bill has been released May 2022 and is set to go live spring 2024. The first strategic Task and Finish GM meeting has taken place to

ensure a smooth transition to the new Regulations. Some of the actions from the meeting are below:

- Finalise Terms of Reference
- Confirm workstream leads
- Setup communication channel on MS Teams
- Request a Cabinet Office update
- Create a work/action plan
- Link up with the GM legal officers meeting

STAR procurement has a member of the team attending each of the workstream areas: Process and Policy; Systems; People; and Transition.

- 7.2. The Procurement Bill is now passing through the House of Commons and will soon be at the final stage, eventually receiving royal assent; and this is on course to take place by May 2023.
- 7.3. The SLA with Stockport Council, to support the data management through Tableau, is performing well. The SLA will now be used to map key processes across STAR to ensure they are working as efficiently as possible, establishing where improvements can take place to streamline processes and practices and ensure consistency across the STAR team.
- 7.4. STAR procurement has completed an audit of all CIPS qualified members of the team. There will be a further push to ensure all staff members are working toward full MCIPs qualification, ensuring the Apprenticeship route and Levy Fund is always used to help reduce any training costs.
- 7.5. The next STAR operational team meeting is booked in for Q4 the key subject areas will be:
 - Refresh on the STAR core offer
 - Updated action plan from the b-Heard survey and touch-base sessions
 - Benchmarking and market intelligence process/training

8. Be Courageous

- 8.1. STAR procurement attended several network and training events in Q3:
 - Combined Authority Growth Hub Round Table SME Event
 - National Social Value Taskforce
 - Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Meeting to review their recent publication on Public Sector Procurement in GM.
 - Breaking Down Barriers – Thornton Lowe
 - Environmental Social and Governance – Risk and Digitisation 2023

- Service Showcase – Procurement and Contract Management
- Improving Opportunities for the VCSE Through GM Procurement
- Grant Thornton Showcase – Procurement and Contract Management

8.2 STAR Procurement held the Meet the Buyer event on the 24th November 2022 hosted by Tameside Council. Various partner organisations attended and successfully delivered presentations throughout the day, including:

- Social Value Portal
- Business Growth Hub
- GM Good Employment Charter
- North West Construction Hub
- Living Wage Foundation
- Black United Representation Network
- GM Good Employment Charter
- GM Chamber of Commerce

Over four hundred suppliers registered for the event and there is very positive feedback from suppliers, partners organisations and buyers alike. All workshops within the event were very well attended. Feedback has been collated and will be used to help inform future events.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that STAR Joint Committee:

- Gives consideration of the continuous improvements made against our STAR Business Plan 2021-24 and future plans
- Approve the Real Living Wage (RLW) to be included in procurement documentation for Trafford and Stockport Councils once RLW accreditation has been awarded.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Real Living Wage proposed wording for procurement documentation

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Real Living Wage

Stockport Council developed a formal Living Wage Policy (add date) and Trafford Council have a Pay Policy statement and a commitment via budgeting processes which defines the Council's policy with regard to its lowest paid employees. In (Add date) Stockport Council/Trafford Council became a **Real Living Wage Accredited Organisation (RLW)**.

The RLW is a voluntary rate of pay announced annually by the Living Wage Foundation and is based on an independent assessment of the real cost of living based on a number of indicators, including goods and services, which represent what people need to meet their basic everyday needs.

As part of that accreditation the Council is required to provide information relating to its supplier's payment of the Living Wage to their employees and as such any successful suppliers will be required to provide relevant details on request.

The current RLW rate is £10.90.

The main drivers that led to the creation of the RLW were the impact of the economic downturn, positive links between wage levels and all aspects of well-being, the Council's Community Plan Objectives, and the direct contribution this strategy had on the Community Strategy Vision.

Stockport Council's/Trafford Councils alignment with the RLW supports the Council in meeting many of its social, economic and environmental objectives, including:

1. Ensuring that wages in the Borough can sustain families and individuals
2. Attracting and retaining motivated employees, thereby reducing the impact of staff
3. Helping to underpin a thriving economy.

In accordance with the Council's aspirations and objectives and its obligations under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 we commend the adoption of the RLW to our contractors and suppliers.

Further guidance on social value can be found in the Social Value Policy 2021.