



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Name and date of Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE – 14 JANUARY 2026</b>
Subject	<b>ENFORCEMENT AGENT COMMISSIONING</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Alaric Smith – Executive Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk">alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing – Executive Director Email: <a href="mailto:jon.dearing@westoxon.gov.uk">jon.dearing@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Report Author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: <a href="mailto:mandy.fathers@westoxon.gov.uk">mandy.fathers@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary	To seek approval to initiate a procurement process to tender for the provision of Enforcement Agent services
Annexes	Annex A – Equality Impact Assessment
Recommendations	That Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Approve the process to undertake a procurement exercise to appoint Enforcement Agent services for the Council; and,</li><li>2. Note, that the procurement exercise will be undertaken via a Dynamic Purchasing System; and in partnership Cheltenham Borough, Stroud District, Tewkesbury Borough, Cotswold District and the Forest of Dean District councils.</li></ol>
Corporate priorities	Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Executive, Director of Governance & Regulatory Services, Director of Finance, Head of Finance, Director of Place, Head of Legal Services, Executive Director, Managing Director (Publica)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek formal approval to initiate a procurement process to tender for the provision of Enforcement Agent services. The current contract is due to expire on 2 October 2026, and a new contract is required to ensure continuity of service and compliance with procurement regulations.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Enforcement Agent service is a critical function that supports the Council in recovering outstanding debts such as:

- Council Tax arrears
- Business Rates
- Parking Fines
- Sundry Debts

- 2.2** The main current contract, held by Bristow and Sutor, and the secondary contract, held by Rossendale's has been in place since 2 October 2021 and is reaching the end of its contract terms.

## **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** The use of enforcement agents and debt collection agencies is an absolute last resort, but they are an essential resource to have available to ensure that debts due to the Council are paid. Multiple efforts to put in place affordable repayment arrangements are always offered prior to referring to an external debt agency, but these either fall into default and are not resumed, or debtors choose to ignore them altogether.

- 3.2** In order to satisfy current legislative requirements in respect of contracting, the Council is required to undertake a tendering exercise to procure Enforcement Agent companies to ensure that continued recovery support is available for those debts detailed within paragraph 2.1 (above).

- 3.3** It is proposed that the Council undertakes an open tender process via a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) in partnership with five other councils:

- Cheltenham Borough
- The Forest of Dean District
- Stroud
- Tewkesbury Borough
- Cotswold District

- 3.4** The contract will be awarded for a period of 3 years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years, subject to performance. Contracts will be created for each individual Local Authority, and therefore there will be no impact on West Oxfordshire in respect of LGR.

- 3.5** Key elements of the tender will include:

- Compliance with the Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2013

- Ethical enforcement practices
- Data protection and GDPR compliance
- Social value commitments

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The Enforcement Agent service is delivered at no direct cost to the Council, with fees recovered from the debtor in accordance with legislation. However, internal resource will be required to manage the procurement and ongoing contract monitoring. This will be met through existing budgets.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules provide that the Council may enter existing public-sector framework agreements where it is evident that such frameworks represent the optimum solution to the Council in terms of service and cost. The enforcement process for enforcement agents is governed by the Taking Control of Good (Fees) Regulations 2014.

#### **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The formal tendering process has been timetabled to put in place a new enforcement provision on or around the expiration of the previous Contract(s). If the recommendations within the report are not approved the Council will not hold a valid contract with an external Enforcement Agency for its provision of debt recovery. This could lead to an impact on the level of debt collected.

#### **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed that shows no adverse impact on any protected characteristics and is attached at Annex A.

#### **8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None

#### **9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 9.1. There are no alternative options. In order for the Council to be able to maximise its collection of debts an external enforcement agency is required

#### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1. None.

(END)