

**OFFICER DELEGATION SCHEME
RECORD OF DECISION**

Date: 28 th January 2026	Ref No: PLACE BGI204
Responsible Officer: Richard Spensley (Major Projects Manager, Business, Growth and Infrastructure)	
Title/Subject matter: Western Access scheme Pre-construction stage consultancy services (External Professional Team Lead) - Approval to extend Bentley Project Management Ltd existing Professional Services Contract.	
Budget/Strategy/Policy/Compliance:	
(i) Is the decision within an Approved Budget?	Yes
(ii) Is the decision in conflict with the Council's policies, strategies or relevant service plans?	No
(iii) Does the decision amend existing or raise new policy issues?	No
Is publication still required? (see guidance)	Yes

Item for decision:

To support the Council's delivery of the Northern Gateway Western Access scheme during the scheme's pre-construction stages (ie. SCAPE Stage 2/ Outline Business Case and SCAPE Stage 3/ Full Business Case), a dedicated external consultancy, Bentley Project Management UK Ltd, has been procured to provide project management, cost management, business case preparation and assurance, and land and property development commercial services. This is because the Council does not have the necessary internal resources or technical skills to deliver this time critical work which is required to progress the Stage 2 (OBC) and Stage 3 (FBC) Pre-construction stages of the Western Access scheme in compliance with Investment Zone grant funding requirements (see below).

Bentley Project Management (UK) Ltd were procured and named as preferred bidder on 20th January 2025 following a competitive tender exercise utilising the Procure Partnerships Procurement Framework (North West Professional Consultancy Services LOT). The tender consisted of a Quality submission and was weighted 70% quality and 30% price based on Bentley Project Management's tendered Framework rates. Bentley Project Management (UK) Ltd was the highest scoring bidder with an overall score of 95.3%. The tender exercise was undertaken in full compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015), and with the full support and endorsement of the Council's Corporate Procurement service.

At its meeting on 12th February 2025, Cabinet approved a report delegating approval allowing officers to finalise contract arrangements with the Western Access scheme's main construction contractor (Balfour Beatty). The same Cabinet report also noted the good progress that had been made with the procurement of the External Professional Team Lead (Bentley Project Management) and recorded the fact that the value of this procurement is below the threshold requiring notification as a Cabinet Key Decision. Subsequent to Cabinet's approval on 12th February the Professional Services Contract was finalised and signed on 7th March 2025 with Bentley Project Management.

The comprehensive scope of External Professional Team Lead services covering SCAPE Stage 2 and Stage 3, which have been procured utilising the Procure Partnerships Framework and which Bentley Project Management will provide to the Council in line with the PSC Contract, include the following core activities:

- Contract Administration inc:
 - Day to day administration of contract mechanisms;
 - Advising the Client as pre-construction stage and construction stage contracts are scoped, prepared, negotiated and finalised with the main Construction Contractor;
- Cost Consultancy inc:
 - Preparing monthly cost plan reports and cash flow (supporting Western Access scheme budget monitoring, Funding Strategy);
 - Contract administration duties inc. assessing, validating monthly NEC 4 PSC / ECC contract payment claims from the main contractor

- Providing cost assurance – checking / validating pre-construction and construction cost estimates provided by Contractor during OBC / RIBA 3 and FBC / RIBA 4 stages, and assessing tender prices provided by the main Contractor / supply chain covering the main construction works packages (RIBA 5), including producing a tender report for the Council
- Business Case inc:
 - Assuring draft business case iterations produced by main Contractor to ensure compliance with HM Treasury Green Book process (and Client OBC / RIBA 3 and FBC / RIBA 4 briefs)
 - Producing specific business case elements that will feed into the main OBC and FBC inc:
 - Co-ordinating / leading Quantifiable Risk Assessment (QRA)
 - Developing Procurement Strategy / Management Case
 - Inputting into the preparation of other business case elements as required, including Commercial Case / funding strategy and any which may be determined during the initial Feasibility Study stage with the main Contractor.
- Commercial inc:
 - Advising and inputting into the preparation of the Western Access scheme Funding Strategy / Infrastructure Delivery Plan including:
 - Assessing commercial land and property development appraisals for the Northern Gateway Investment Zone site, including advising on commercial assumptions such as yields, profit, abnormal and infrastructure costs, commercial financing etc.
 - Assessing commercial development programmes and phasing plans
 - Advising Client about any funding gaps identified and funding / financing arrangements / options such as:
 - s106 / developer contributions
 - Other external grant funding sources
 - Financial subsidies / incentives (eg. business rates relief free periods)
 - PWLB prudential borrowing and payback mechanisms aligned to the project's cash flow (inc. clawback / overage, roof tax options)
 - Equalisation mechanism
 - Subsidy Control implications inc. in line with the requirements of the "English IZ Subsidy Scheme", "UK subsidy control regime")
 - Contractual mechanism/s that will be required to be put in place between the Council / Accountable Body, grant funders, 3rd party funders, landowners, developers to ensure the robust implementation and assurance of the Funding Strategy.
 - Advising on the preparation of the Western Access scheme OBC and FBC as the Funding Strategy is developed (inc. Financial and Commercial Cases) during the Western Access scheme pre-construction phases.
 - Supporting the Council in commercial discussions and negotiations with developers, 3rd party landowners (including Council legal representatives and land and property team in support of the development of the scheme Land Acquisition Strategy during the pre-construction stage).

The PSC Contract that is already in place with the External Professional Team Lead (Bentley Project Management) utilises a pre-construction contract form of agreement, namely the NEC4 Professional Services Contract form, that will

cover the full duration of the pre-construction stage (ie. SCAPE Stage 2 OBC / RIBA 3 stage and subsequent SCAPE Stage 3 FBC / RIBA 4 stage). Importantly, this pre-construction contract includes break clauses to protect the commercial interests / minimise commercial risk for the Council (eg. in the unlikely event of consultant team underperformance, withdrawal of external grant funding, changes to scheme circumstances etc).

Funding for this work is paid from a £10M Investment Zone grant funding allocation which is administered by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). This grant funding will specifically support the Western Access scheme delivery over a 5-year funding period between 2024/25 and 2028/29.

An associated Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) has previously been signed between the GMCA and Bury Council (as the accountable body). The GFA covered the first-year tranche of £800k grant allocation for 2024/25.

Acceptance of this initial grant funding tranche was agreed at Bury Council's Cabinet meeting on 6th November 2024. As of Q3 FY 2025/26 the full £800k grant allocation has been expended. The second tranche of grant allocation of £700k for 2025/26 has been made available for Bury Council to draw down as necessary and a Deed of Variation to the original GFA was signed between the Council and GMCA during September 2025. The costs associated with the appointment of Bentley Project Management UK Ltd to provide its services during the remainder of the Western Access scheme's Outline Business Case / RIBA 3 planning stage (ie. SCAPE Stage 2), will be covered by this IZ grant funding and will be charged to the existing budget code for the Northern Gateway Western Access scheme.

Bentley Project Management has successfully undertaken the activities as outlined above during the initial SCAPE 2A stage in line with the existing PSC Contract however, further transport modelling work was required by stakeholders during the scheme optioneering in autumn 2025 which resulted in the Stage 2A timeframe requiring to be extended. The consequential impact of the extra transport modelling that was required meant that finalising and agreeing the scheme's Preferred Way Forward (Proof of Concept) at the end of SCAPE Stage 2A was delayed. This in turn has meant that the SCAPE Stage 2B preconstruction programme and associated activities have been prolonged into 2026.

As a consequence, this now requires an extension to the Bentley Project Management PSC Contract from 31st January 2026 until 31st October 2026. Bentley Project Management have submitted a fee proposal covering this extended nine-month period, which is summarised in the Table below.

The Table below outlines Bentley Project Management's Fee Proposal that covers the provision of its services during the initial (SCAPE Stage 2A) phase of the scheme's Pre-construction Stage (which is the Outline Business Case / RIBA 3 planning stage):

Bentley Project Management Fees Expended to date (March 2025 – 31 st January 2026)	£ 261,392.32 <i>(Including £22,794 of Aspinall Verdi's Fees)</i>
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Bentley Project Management Fees forecast expenditure (1 st February 2026 – 31 st October 2026)	£ 224,811.00 (Including £41,156 of Aspinall Verdi's Forecast Fees)
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In line with the above Table, upon completion of the SCAPE Stage 2B activities that will be covered by the contract extension between 1st February 2026 and 31st October 2026, a report will be presented to Cabinet in October 2026, that will set out Bentley Project Management's fee proposal cost for the final remaining pre-construction stage (ie. SCAPE Stage 3 Full Business Case phase and Technical Design).

The PSC contract extension for the above period and the associated fee shown in Table 1, will be instructed and formalised utilising the NEC 4 PSC normal contract mechanisms. The terms of the existing PSC contract will remain unaffected.

Options considered: Option 1 (recommended option) – Approve Bentley Project Management's Fee Proposal as shown in Table 1 covering the Stage 2B period between 1st February and 31st October 2026 (ie. the remaining OBC / RIBA 3 stage activities), as outlined above, which reflects their resource allocation aligned with the scheme's pre-construction programme timeframes. Bentley Project Management Ltd were procured following a competitive tendering exercise and the costs of this Fee Proposal are accounted for within the Year 2 Investment Zone Western Access scheme grant funding allocation. As noted in the report presented to Cabinet on 12th February 2025, and also as shown in the Table above, the value of this procurement and contract extension falls below the threshold requiring notification as a Cabinet Key Decision. The continuation of Bentley Project Management Ltd's activities during the remainder of the SCAPE Stage 2 phase (ie. finalisation of the OBC/ RIBA 3 designs) remains critical to ensuring the delivery of the Western Access scheme pre-construction stage in line with Grant Funding Agreement timeframes and requirements.

Option 2 – Source alternative external Project Management / Contract Management, Cost Management, Business Case and Commercial property support for the scheme. This would have significant time and cost implications for the project as this would adversely impact on the Council's ability to achieve the Investment Zone grant funding expenditure deadlines and associated grant funding milestones for the development of the scheme's business case and associated outputs. Bentley Project Management Ltd has a longstanding track record of successfully delivering consultancy services for similarly complex, major civils schemes elsewhere in the UK, and has continued to do so during the initial phases of the Western Access pre-construction stage. This experience includes the provision of similar Client-side services on major strategic highway schemes where the main contractor is Balfour Beatty. Bentley Project Management Ltd were procured following a competitive tendering exercise undertaken in full compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and

the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) and was the highest scoring bidder.

Decision

For the reasons set out in this report, it is recommended that the Bentley Project Management Fee Proposal for the provision of services covering the Stage 2B phase of the Western Access Pre-construction Stage (ie. finalisation of OBC / RIBA 3 planning designs) for the period of February 2026 to October 2026 is now approved and formalised via this Operational Decision.

Decision made by:	Signature:	Date:
Authorised Officer Approved / reviewed Director		2 nd February 2026
Member Consulted (only if applicable) [see note 4 below]		

Notes

1. In most cases a single signature is required in accordance with the Table below.
2. The form must be published if expenditure is over £100K. However, this must be after all the required contract documentation has been completed. This is to avoid publishing exempt confidential information.
3. A report to Cabinet must be made if expenditure is over £500K.
4. In a small number of cases in accordance with the requirements of the Officer Delegation Scheme, consultation is required from the appropriate Cabinet Member who must sign the form to confirm that they have been consulted and that they agree with the proposed action. Please refer to the Guidance.
5. This form must not be used for urgent decisions.
6. Where there is any doubt officers should always err on side of caution and seek advice from Democratic Services, the Monitoring Officer or Corporate Procurement where applicable.

EXPENDITURE APPROVAL TABLE

Approval Limit	Approval By
Over £500,000	Cabinet.
Over £250,000 to £500,000	Chief Executive
Over £100,000 to £250,000	Executive Director
Over £50,000 to £100,000	Director/Assistant Director
Over £10,000 to £50,000	Head of Service
Up to £10,000	Service Lead