

POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES - 30 OCTOBER 2017

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair)

Councillors Duveen, Eden, Ennis, Gavin, Hacker, Hopper, Hoskin, Jones, Page, Skeats, Stevens, Terry and White.

37. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 38 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

38. CONTRACT AWARD - PROCUREMENT CONSULTANCY SUPPORT

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out details of the confidential financial model and detailed financial implications of the proposal for additional procurement consultancy support to be considered elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 46 below refers).

Resolved -

That the confidential information be taken into account when considering the Contract Award - Procurement Consultancy Support item (see Minute 46 below).

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 3).

39. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

40. QUESTIONS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by members of the public:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	James Berrie	Proposed changes to Bus Services in Caversham	Cllr Page
2.	James Berrie	Consultation on Proposed Changes to Bus Services	Cllr Page
3.	James Berrie	Proposed Bus Service Changes - Access to Community Facilities	Cllr Page

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4.	Paul Matthews	Proposed Bus Service Changes in Caversham	Cllr Page
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(The full text of the questions and responses was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

41. THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Anthony Stansfeld, Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), and Francis Habgood, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police (TVP), attended the meeting to give presentations and answer questions from members of the Committee. Superintendent Stan Gilmour also attended to answer questions on local issues.

The presentation by the Police & Crime Commissioner covered the overall level of crime and level of various crime types in the Thames Valley for 2016/17, a comparison of the rates of violent crime and burglary in the Thames Valley with other police force areas, the results of the 2016 PCC survey of adults and young people, and the PCC's strategic priorities for 2017-21.

The presentation by the Chief Constable covered achievements and targets under the following areas of the 'Force Commitment': Keeping people safe and bringing offenders to justice; Building stronger, more resilient communities; A modern police force which meets the needs of communities, and Being a skilled and trusted workforce. He also outlined the operational priorities for 2017/18.

The Committee asked questions on subjects including the apparent reduced visibility of Neighbourhood Policing, concerns from residents about street drug dealing, returning IS fighters, CSE and police attendance at MASH.

Resolved -

That the Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable be thanked for their presentations.

42. NARROWING THE GAP COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK

The Chief Executive and Director of Adult Care and Health Services submitted a report on a 'Narrowing the Gap II' (NTG II) community services commissioning framework which sought approval to commission services through the framework from 2018, to award a series of contract extensions and interim contracts to ensure continuity of service, and to award funding for the management of community buildings through the Community Buildings Transition Fund. The NTG II schedule of bidding opportunities was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and an Equality Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that all services commissioned under the first NTG framework had been reviewed along with all other commissioning of non-mandatory services

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across the Wellbeing Team, use of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Grant, and Council support for managing community buildings. The review had taken into account the latest information about local need, including that drawn from the detailed monitoring reports provided by the NTG service providers, and information on inequalities in the Reading Poverty Needs Analysis and the Reading Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The report stated that the new framework set out in the NTG II proposals was intended to focus support on those who were vulnerable and in greatest need, include support to maintain a strong and sustainable voluntary sector, aim to eliminate duplication of services and avoid using Council funding where alternative sources of funding were available. There were additional areas of community investment which had not been included in the first NTG framework, but were recommended for inclusion in NTG II, as follows:

- social prescribing (including Making Every Contact Count training)
- peer support for adult mental health
- carers' information advice and support
- peer support and condom distribution to reduce HIV health risks
- peer support for breastfeeding

The social prescribing, mental health peer support and carers' information advice and support services were all to be commissioned jointly with the Reading CCGs, and West Berkshire Council were an additional funding partner for the carers' information advice and support service.

Current NTG providers were commissioned to deliver services up to 31 May 2018, with the NTG II contracts due to commence the following day. In the case of new areas being brought into NTG II, however, the Council was currently contracting with the provider organisations until 31 March 2018. It was therefore proposed to exercise contract extension provision or to award new short-term contracts to cover April and May 2018 in order to avoid a gap in provision and provide for a safer transition to new contracts.

Alongside the proposed NTGII Commissioning Framework, changes were proposed to the Community Buildings Transition fund which was used to assist those organisations managing community buildings. From 2018/19 there would be a reduction in funding from £82k to £60k, a Bidding Fund which had not been drawn on would be deleted, and discussion would take place with the individual organisations currently in receipt of funding to manage their transition to reduced support. It was proposed that the Head of Customer Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to apportion the amounts for individual organisations affected by the Community Building Transition Fund within a total allocation of £60k p.a. over four years.

Resolved -

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- (1) That the Narrowing the Gap II framework containing a series of bidding opportunities as set out in the summary at Appendix 1, and the likely equality impacts of adopting the framework as set out at Appendix 2, be noted;
- (2) That the Director of Adult Care and Health Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Health, be authorised to grant contract extensions to 31 May 2018 to:
 - (a) The Breastfeeding Network for the provision of peer support to establish and maintain breastfeeding at a cost of £30k p.a. (pro-rated);
 - (b) Thames Valley Positive for the provision of an HIV peer support and condom distribution service at a cost of £52k p.a. (pro-rated);
- (3) That the Director of Adult Care and Health Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care, be authorised to negotiate and enter into contracts from 1 April 2018 to 31 May 2018 to:
 - (a) Reading Your Way (Together for Mental Wellbeing) at a cost of £76k p.a. (pro-rated);
 - (b) the Reading and West Berkshire Carers Hub (Carers Trust East Midlands) at a cost of £95k p.a. (pro-rated);
- (4) That the Director of Adult Care and Health Services and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to negotiate and enter into:
 - (a) a legally binding agreement with South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group and the North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group pursuant to Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 to manage a pooled budget for commissioning a Social Prescribing Service, a Peer Support Service for Adult Mental Health, and a Carers Information Advice and Support Service, as described as specifications 3.2, 14.1 and 15.2 respectively in the Narrowing the Gap II framework;
 - (b) appropriate funding agreements for 2018-22 with the organisation or organisations which succeed in each service area of the Narrowing the Gap II commissioning exercise;
- (5) That the Head of Customer Services, in consultation with the Leader

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of the Council, be authorised to enter into agreements with individual organisations affected by the Community Buildings Transition Fund, apportioning the total fund as grant aid payments to these organisations as deemed appropriate, with the final agreed amounts to be published through the Decision Book.

(Councillors Hoskin and Eden declared non-pecuniary interests on this item.)

43. DRUG AND ALCOHOL STRATEGY

The Director of Adult Care and Health Services submitted a report seeking approval for consultation on a draft Drug and Alcohol Strategy for adults and young people 2018-2022. The strategy was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that a drug and alcohol misuse needs assessment for adults had been carried out in December 2015 (Minute 63 of the meeting held on 18 January 2016 refers). The findings of the assessment had informed the draft strategy which outlined the priorities for the next five years. The strategy was intended to set out the broad vision of the Council in terms of what needs to be done to put in place a sustainable treatment system for drug and alcohol use in Reading as well as a multidisciplinary approach that joined up the various different services provided across all agencies and partners.

The report proposed that a 12 week consultation take place between November 2017 and January 2018, and that, following a review of the consultation response, the strategy be updated and an action plan developed for submission to the Health & Wellbeing Board in March 2018.

Resolved -

That the draft Drug and Alcohol Strategy for adults and young people 2018-2022 be approved for a 12 week formal consultation process.

44. AWARD OF CONTRACT: REFURBISHMENT OF FLATTED BLOCKS AT HEXHAM ROAD

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking authority to award a contract for the refurbishment of two blocks on the Hexham Road Estate.

The report noted that the Council had committed to improving the Hexham Road Estate area in Whitley, by refurbishing five blocks of flats/maisonettes, with work funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Refurbishment of Rothbury Court and Kershope Court was complete and work on Kielder Court was due to complete in February 2018. Works to refurbish the final two blocks, Redesdale Court and Denton Court, would go through a further tendering exercise to establish value for money, and the report sought delegated authority to award the contract further to the

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completion of the tender exercise.

The report stated that a total expenditure of £7m had previously been approved for the refurbishment of the Hexham Road Estate. Additional capital expenditure approval of up to a further £750,000 for the programme of works across all phases was now sought, to allow for cost inflation, some unforeseen works and revisions to project scope over the period.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to award a contract for the internal and external refurbishment of 27 properties at 1-55 (odd) Redesdale Court, Bamburgh Close, scheduled to commence in March 2018 and complete in April 2019 with an option to extend the contract to a further 27 properties at 92 - 144 (even) Denton Court, Hexham Road, to commence in May 2019 and complete in June 2020, subject to a satisfactory tender evaluation exercise;
- (2) That additional capital expenditure of up to £750,000 in the Housing Revenue Account (further to the £7m spend approval in 2014) to fully fund all phases of the works be approved.

45. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Chief Executive submitted a report on the outcome of a mid-year review of fees and charges and a proposal to increase a limited number of fees from 1 November 2017. A summary table of the proposed changes was set out at Appendix 1 attached to the report.

The report explained that the review of fees and charges formed an integral part of the Council's overall budget setting process and assisted with the delivery of income-related saving targets. Each service had considered benchmarking/market pressures, the rate of inflation and cost recovery in proposing fees for November 2017. A number of services had not proposed any changes as part of this review, which was broadly due to either benchmarking identifying no scope for fee increases without loss of business, or the service completing a broader review of fees and charges through a separate process.

Resolved -

That the schedule of revised Fees and Charges as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved for implementation from 1 November 2017.

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46. CONTRACT AWARD - PROCUREMENT CONSULTANCY SUPPORT

The Director of Finance submitted a report seeking approval for the award of a contract for procurement consultancy support following a competitive tendering exercise. A project brief was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report noted that the Council's programme of savings and medium term financial plan required reductions in budgeted expenditure on goods and services provided by third party suppliers over the next three years. To improve the Council's capability and capacity to deliver further value for money from contracting and contract management arrangements, it was proposed to seek an external partner to supplement existing resources and provide access to a range of subject matter experts. There was a well-established market of these specialist providers who worked with organisations to identify and deliver cost reductions on a risk and reward basis, and a provider had been procured through a mini-competition under a framework agreement provided by the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation.

The report explained that Phase 1 of the project would be scoping work to identify where significant savings could be delivered. A specialist forensic audit of historic payments would also be undertaken alongside the scoping work, on a 'no win no fee basis' with the provider being paid a percentage of any amount recovered. When the payments audit and phase 1 work were completed, the Council had the option to terminate the contract should it not be possible to agree a satisfactory programme of savings to be delivered in Phase 2 of the project. It was, however, anticipated that a significant programme of additional savings would be identified.

The report stated that for Phase 2 the cost of the external support was designed to be self-financing, with the work undertaken by the consultants being funded through a gainshare arrangement whereby the fees would be a percentage of the spend reductions achieved. The contract would run for a maximum of four years, should ongoing opportunities continue to be identified where the expertise of the provider could be demonstrated to add value. The consultants would be expected to work with officers across the Council to embed best practice across all procurement, contract management and revenue generating activity so that the Council could continue to find savings in the long term.

Resolved -

That the Committee approve the award of a contract to V4 Services Ltd for Procurement Consultancy Services for a period of four years from the commencement date.

47. CONTRACT AWARD - CIVICA PAYMENTS ENTERPRISE LICENCE

The Director of Finance submitted a report seeking approval for the award of a contract for a five year contract for software licences and maintenance.

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The report explained that the Council's current contract with Civica for incoming payments processing would end in July 2018. In addition to this, there were a number of issues to be addressed in the near future including maintaining Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard compliance, compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation by 28 May 2018, support for homeworking call centre staff to enable them to securely handle payments from customers, rationalisation of server usage to ensure all data was held and accessible in a single place, and improvements to the Council's bank reconciliation process to address issues raised by the Council's external auditors.

The report noted that the current payment system supplied by Civica did not provide an adequate solution to these challenges, but that the product could be upgraded to a version which was suitable to address these issues. Under the terms of the Crown Commercial Services Framework RM1059 (Local Authority Software Solutions), Civica had made a proposal for a five year, enterprise licence, which included all future system upgrades for the duration of the licence at no further cost to the Council over the proposed upgrade implementation and fixed annual charges.

Resolved -

That a contract be awarded to Civica UK Ltd (Civica) for a period of five years from the commencement date for the provision of an enterprise licence and associated maintenance and services for upgraded Civica ICON payments, hosted software.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.42pm).