

## POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 20 JANUARY 2020

**Present:** Councillor Brock (Chair);

Councillors Page (Vice-Chair), Duveen, Emberson, Ennis, Hoskin, James, Pearce, Rowland, Skeats, Stanford-Beale, Stevens, Terry and White

**Apologies:** Councillors Jones and Robinson

### RESOLVED ITEMS

#### 60. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 61. QUESTIONS

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

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Peter Burt	Leisure Centres	Cllr Hoskin
2.	Peter Burt	Consultation with Users	Cllr Hoskin
3.	Roger Lightfoot	Leisure Contract break point	Cllr Hoskin
4.	Roger Lightfoot	Leisure Contract bids	Cllr Hoskin
5.	Colin Lee	Financing of Leisure contract	Cllr Hoskin
6.	Colin Lee	Palmer Park pool	Cllr Hoskin
7.	Colin Lee	Rivermead contract settlement	Cllr Hoskin
8.	Richard Tredgett	Better Mental Health	Cllr Hoskin
9.	Richard Tredgett	Partnership work on community wellbeing	Cllr Hoskin
10.	Ann Dally	Debt and Mental Health	Cllr Emberson
11.	Ann Dally	Preventative Programmes	Cllr Emberson
12.	David McMullen	Management Capacity	Cllr Hoskin
13.	Tom Lake	Cost of Palmer Park pool	Cllr Hoskin
14.	Tom Lake	Palmer Park car parking	Cllr Hoskin
15.	Tom Lake	Arthur Hill refurbishment	Cllr Hoskin

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr White	Zero Hours contracts	Cllr Hoskin
2.	Cllr White	Council Inaction on Green Road tennis courts	Cllr Page
3.	Cllr White	Eco Schools	Cllr Pearce

(The full text of the questions and responses was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

**62. DESIGN, BUILD, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN CONTRACT FOR BOROUGHWIDE LEISURE FACILITIES**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the process to procure a strategic partner to design, build, operate and maintain the Council's four leisure centres, and seeking permission to award a 25-year contract to the preferred bidder. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix A - Summary of Requirements
- Appendix B - Summary of Bids & Tender Evaluation (confidential)
- Appendix C - Bidder A images (confidential)
- Appendix D - Risk Register
- Appendix E - Reading Strategic Outcome Planning Model
- Appendix F - Equalities Impact Assessment

The report noted that the current leisure contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) for Rivermead Leisure Centre expired at the end of December 2022, and a negotiated termination position had been agreed to facilitate the Boroughwide procurement process. Aside from the management arrangement with GLL the remaining centres were currently managed directly by the Council. The procurement process had tested the market through a competitive dialogue procedure for an external provider, including direct dialogue and negotiation with bidders to clarify and develop the submissions. Two comprehensive and competitive bids had been submitted to the Council in October 2019, and these had been evaluated with 50% of the marks awarded for commercial and 50% for technical criteria. Further information on the detail of the bids and the evaluation was attached to the report at Appendix B. As a result of the evaluation it was recommended to enter into a new contract with 'Bidder A'.

The report noted that the contract specification issued had included a new-build solution at Rivermead, incorporating a new competition standard pool with provision for diving, a new community pool at Palmer Park linked to existing facilities, improvements to existing leisure centres at South Reading and Meadway and introduction of membership and customer schemes allowing access to all Council facilities. This would secure significant improvements to the current offer and be a key driver in delivering a number of Council priorities and community outcomes. Further detail on the requirements of the new contract was set out in Appendix A to the report. As part of the new contract the Council would enter into a lease agreement for the four sites with the preferred bidder; there would be a requirement to advertise the loss of open space to be used for leisure purposes to facilitate the construction of new facilities at Rivermead and Palmer Park.

This report also provided details of a variant bid option which both bidders had been asked to submit, to develop a larger 6 lane pool at Palmer Park in place of the minimum 4 lane pool set out in the specification at Appendix A. The report set out the additional capital and revenue costs as well as potential increased income of a larger pool. It was

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proposed at the meeting that the variant bid be accepted, on the basis of the highly accessible location of Palmer Park, the uniqueness of the comprehensive offer and the affordability of a larger pool.

Resolved -

- (1) That a 25 year design, build, operate and maintain contract for Boroughwide leisure facilities be awarded to Bidder A subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the statutory stand still period;
- (2) That the variant bid to construct a 6 lane community pool at Palmer Park be noted, and, taking into account the highly accessible location of Palmer Park, the uniqueness of the comprehensive offer and the affordability of a larger pool, the variant bid be accepted to secure the construction of a 6 lane community pool at Palmer Park;
- (3) That it be noted that TUPE regulations apply to the contract award;
- (4) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport, the Assistant Director for Procurement and the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to finalise contractual arrangements;
- (5) That, subject to agreement of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy by Council in February 2020, the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Assistant Director for Finance, be authorised to give scheme and spend approval for the Leisure procurement in accordance with the 2020 - 2023 Capital Programme;
- (6) That the Assistant Director for Culture be authorised to finalise the Strategic Outcome Planning Model (Appendix E) in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport;
- (7) That the Assistant Director for Property and Assets and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to enter into a lease of land at Rivermead, Palmer Park, South Reading Leisure Centre, and Meadway Sports Centre with the prospective bidder, and to advertise a disposal of open space in accordance with S123 of the Local Govt Act 1972, in order to facilitate the building of new facilities at Rivermead and Palmer Park;
- (8) That the Risk Register and Equality Impact Assessment attached to the report at Appendices D and F be noted.

Following agreement of the resolution above the Chair made the following announcement:

‘It would be normal practice to keep the name of the winning bidder confidential until after the end of the procurement standstill period which is at midnight this evening. Notwithstanding, I considered it be to be appropriate, in light of the decision to award a 25-year contract, to announce that Bidder A is GLL. A full press release will be issued tomorrow with a statement from GLL.’

**63. ESSENTIAL PLAYGROUND WORKS 2019/20**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval to allocate approved capital spend of £200,000 in 2019/20 for essential playgrounds works.

The report noted that the Council carried out its own internal playground inspections and also instructed the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to carry out an annual independent inspection of its play areas. The annual RoSPA inspection in October 2019 had recommended two items of equipment for immediate removal, and also advised the monitoring of others that were at risk. Accessibility issues had also been identified at both Prospect and Palmer Parks, and investment in all-inclusive play was considered a priority.

The report explained that over the past few years parts of the disabled unit on the former ERAPA site at Palmer Park had been removed as they had failed inspections, reducing significantly the play value for children in wheelchairs. It was therefore proposed that in Palmer Park one large climbing apparatus and several swing units be replaced. In Prospect Park a tree had fallen next to the play area in 2019, after the ground underneath had been eroded by an underground spring in spate after the wet winter. It was therefore proposed to relocate the play area away from the remaining large trees. Any viable equipment would be moved, but most of the junior equipment and all toddler kit required refreshing, and the current provision for disabled children was also poor for an important park. Investment was also proposed in Christchurch Meadows, one of few sites with fully-inclusive play equipment, where significant use meant that the site required refreshing.

**Resolved -**

**That the allocation of £200,000 capital spending in relation to the priorities, sites and programme set out in the report be approved.**

**64. CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN - CONSULTATION ON SAND AND GRAVEL PROVISION AND OPERATOR PERFORMANCE**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan (CEBJMWP). The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment scoping

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- Appendix 2: Focused Regulation 18 Consultation - Sand and Gravel Provision and Operator Performance
- Appendix 3: Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme

The report noted that a draft version of the CEBJMWP had been approved for consultation by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee at its meeting on 2 July 2018 (Minute 8 refers). It proposed a vision and spatial strategy and set out policies for the management of minerals and waste proposals, as well as proposed sites to help meet minerals and waste needs. No sites had been identified within Reading Borough. Due to a limited number of site options, a further 'Call for Sites' exercise had been carried out after the consultation, resulting in an additional site within the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead being proposed.

The report explained that a significant proportion of the plan's expected minerals provision had been from the Bridge Farm site in Wokingham, but that this had recently been withdrawn following Wokingham Borough Council's refusal of an application for mineral extraction. Its removal meant that there was a substantial shortfall in meeting sand and gravel requirements, and in order to address the shortfall a further call for sites had been undertaken in autumn 2019, which had identified two potential sites in Wokingham and Windsor and Maidenhead Boroughs. Consultation would be required on these sites and further policy approaches to address the minerals shortfall. It was therefore proposed to undertake a further consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 before a full version of the plan was prepared for submission. The proposed Focused Consultation on Sand and Gravel Provision and Operator Performance was attached to the report at Appendix 2. Subject to approval by each of the four unitary authorities the consultation would take place between 10 February and 20 March 2020.

The report explained that the delays to the timescale of the CEBJMWP to incorporate additional consultation required amendment of the Local Development Scheme (LDS), a document which set out the Council's process for producing planning policy documents. The current version of Reading's LDS had been approved in November 2016 and included a joint Minerals and Waste LDS as an appendix. Approval was sought for a revised version of this Minerals and Waste LDS, which was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

### Resolved -

- (1) That the Focused Consultation on Sand and Gravel Provision and Operator Performance (Appendix 2) be approved;
- (2) That community involvement on the Focused Consultation on Sand and Gravel Provision and Operator Performance and associated supporting documents be authorised;
- (3) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Focused Consultation on Sand and Gravel Provision and Operator Performance in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment,

Planning and Transport, prior to the commencement of community involvement;

- (4) That the Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (Appendix 3) be approved, and that it form the basis for production of planning policy, with effect from 20 January 2020.

#### **65. CIVIL ENFORCEMENT (PARKING) CONTRACT REVIEW**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval for an extension of the current contract for civil enforcement (parking) and providing an update on work to review parking services.

The report noted that the current contract with NSL Ltd had commenced in November 2014 for an initial term of five years and extensions of a period or periods of not less than one year up to an additional five years. At its meeting on 14 January 2019 the Committee had agreed an extension for a one-year period commencing in November 2019 (Minute 63 refers). Over the past 12 months officers had carried out a Parking Services Fundamental Service Review (FSR) and a review of the current parking services market supported by advice from specialist parking consultants. The report summarised the proposed actions arising from the FSR, as well as contract improvements for the current extension period which had been implemented and reviewed.

The report explained that it was proposed to prepare a new specification and contract for Civil Enforcement based on the changing parking services market conditions, but that it would not be possible to deliver a new contract prior to the expiry of the current contract extension with NSL. A further one-year extension to the contract was therefore recommended.

**Resolved -**

**That a one-year extension to the contract for Civil Enforcement with NSL Ltd from 1 November 2020 - 31 October 2021 be agreed in accordance with the terms of the contract.**

#### **66. CONTRACT AWARD - MEASURED TERM CONTRACT FOR GAS CENTRAL HEATING INSTALLATIONS 2020-2025**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval for the award of a 'measured term' contract (MTC) for the provision of gas boiler and full central heating system installations, relating to the repair and maintenance of the Council's Housing Stock.

The report explained that the Council's Housing Property Services managed the day-to-day repairs, planned maintenance and voids repair works to approximately 5,600 Council properties. Elements of this work were sometimes sub-contracted out through MTCs to provide specialist services or manage peaks in workload. In each case the ability to carry out the work using existing resources or direct employment had been found to be

uneconomical due to the level of spend or the capacity/specialist skills not being available internally.

The report explained that the current arrangements with contractors for gas central heating installations were due for renewal, and it was therefore proposed to invite tenders for an MTC covering gas boiler and full central heating system installations. Tenderers would be invited to submit their price following the measured term format, and a negotiated single price delivery format would be agreed for two winning contractors. No volume of expenditure would be guaranteed, and expenditure would depend on the actual level of work that was required to be sub-contracted. Based on expenditure records the total expenditure was estimated to be circa £500,000 per annum for each contractor respectively.

**Resolved -**

**That the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to award a Measured Term Contract for the Gas Central Heating Installations for a period of three years with a two-year extension.**

## **67. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY**

The Director of Resources submitted a report presenting the new Customer Experience Strategy and the business case and mobilisation underpinning the implementation of the Strategy. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1: Customer Experience Strategy
- Appendix 2: Business case and mobilisation plan
- Appendix 3: Customer Digital Experience capital bid business case
- Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment

The report explained that the Customer Experience Strategy was built on a best practice approach to delivering customer services in both the public and private sector, using a model that had been adopted by a number of Councils. The strategy set out a vision to achieve the best possible experience for the Council's customers which was underpinned by six core themes:

- Achieving Customer Service Excellence
- Adopting a mindset and promise
- Involving the organisation
- Putting the customer at the heart of service and process design
- Harnessing digital technology
- Realising the power of data.

The strategy and mobilisation plan outlined a new operating model under which self-service would become the primary channel for customers to interact with the Council. High volume transactional, processing and assessment services would be brought together and managed in one place within the Council, with technical specialists refocused on

delivery of services to meet the more complex needs of customers. Moving to a self-serve model would ensure that customers engaged with the Council at the most appropriate point to support their need and would allow resources to be prioritised on customers that required additional support.

The report noted that the strategy would be delivered in a phased manner, and the mobilisation plan set out activities to support the implementation of the strategy in Phase 1 of the programme to the end of 2020/21. These included moving to a single telephone number, implementing new core service standards and KPIs across the Council, and implementing the new operating model including business process re-engineering.

**Resolved -**

**That the Customer Experience Strategy, mobilisation plan and programme to embed the Strategy within the organisation be endorsed and adopted.**

#### **68. MORTUARY SERVICES - DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO AWARD CONTRACT**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking authority to enter into a contract to deliver mortuary services for HM Senior Coroner for Berkshire with effect from 1 April 2020, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

The report noted that the Council currently had arrangements in place with two NHS Trusts to provide mortuary facilities: Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and Frimley Heath NHS Foundation Trust (Wexham Park Hospital, Slough). Mortuaries were specialist facilities and no other suitable sites were available in Berkshire other than those used by the service. The current contract with the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust had been in place since 2015 and would cease on 31 March 2020. A market testing exercise had been completed to explore alternative delivery models and to ensure that the council was receiving value for money, but no responses had been received, which confirmed the limited market for these services. As a result, a Prior Information Notice had been published in September 2019 to give advance notice that the Council intended to arrange contracts for mortuary and post mortem services and to award contracts to the incumbent providers without further publication, unless expressions of interest were received from alternative economic operators. No expressions of interest had been received.

The report explained that the two mortuaries in Reading and Slough which were used by the Coroner's service were now the responsibility of Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services (BSPS), a joint venture between Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Frimley Heath NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Officers had started negotiations with BSPS to enter into a single contract to cover both sites, and it was proposed that the contract be for an initial three-year term with the option of extending up to a further 48 months.

**Resolved -**



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- (1) That the recommended procurement route and process as set out in the report be noted;
- (2) That the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Assistant Director of Finance, be authorised to enter into a contract with Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services (BSPS) to provide mortuary services from 1 April 2020.

### 69. TEMPORARY AGENCY STAFF - CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking authority to procure and award a contract for the supply of temporary agency staff for a period of three years, with an option to extend for a further one year in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

The report noted that the Council and Brighter Futures for Children spent a significant amount of money on temporary agency staff, in line with most Local Authorities, with expenditure falling from a peak of £14m in 2017/18 to a forecast of £10.5m in 2019/20. Significant focus had been applied to increasing the number of permanent staff and reducing the numbers of temporary staff to a minimum, but the Council could not rely fully on permanent staffing as there were situations where the use of a temporary member of staff was the most effective or only way of covering a post.

The report explained that the Council currently operated a managed service provider model through a framework call off contract with Reed, which ran until February 2021, and that it was proposed to continue with a hybrid managed service provider model. The new contract would be for three years with an option to extend by one year and total value over four years was approximately £40m based on current usage.

The report stated that the proposed procurement approach was to use the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) to access Managed Services for Temporary Agency Resources (MSTAR) 3, the leading temporary staff framework for Local Authorities. This would involve running a 'mini-competition' to ensure best available rates were achieved with the solution tailored to the Council's requirements. It was expected that the re-tender of this contract would achieve additional savings of around £100k per year, which had been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

#### Resolved -

**That the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services, be authorised to procure and award a contract to provide temporary agency staff for an initial term of three years with an option to extend for a further one year under the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation Framework Agreement, Managed Services for Temporary Agency Resources (MSTAR).**

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(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.50 pm)