

OFFICER DECISION NOTICE



Reading
Borough Council
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This notice is to be used for the following types of officer decisions. (Select one option).

A. Decisions taken by officers under a specific express delegation from Council or a Committee.

B. Decisions taken by officers under a general delegation from Council or a Committee, which relates to (i) a permission or a licence, or (ii) the rights of an individual, or (iii) a contract or expenditure over £100,000.

1. Title of decision:	Berkshire Coroner's Service - Mortuary Contract Extension
2. Date of the decision:	08 April 2024
3. The decision maker:	James Crosbie, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection

4. Decision details:

The Council has a contract in place with Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services (Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust) for the provision of mortuary services for HM Senior Coroner for Berkshire. This contract was in effect from 18 October 2020 and expired on 31 March 2023. The contract included an option to extend for a further period of two years.

This decision is to grant authority to extend the original agreement for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025.

5. Reasons for the decision:

Mortuaries are specialist facilities and no other sites are available in Berkshire other than those currently in use as part of the contract (Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading and Wexham Park Hospital, Slough).

A market testing exercise was undertaken prior to entering the contract to explore alternative delivery models, but no responses were received, confirming the limited market for these services.

No further expressions of interest have been received, nor alternative suppliers identified and therefore the decision has been taken to extend the original agreement to ensure continued service delivery.

6. Alternative options considered (if any) and rejected:

Re- procurement: There are currently no alternative options available.

There is a project underway to explore alternative future service delivery options such as collaboration with other Local Authorities on a regional mortuary model and exploring local options available for minimally invasive postmortems (CT scanning).

7. List of open Background Papers:

N/A

8. List of confidential or exempt Background Papers:

N/A

9. Any other matters taken into consideration:

<input type="checkbox"/> Legitimate expectation of consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> Procedural requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Health implications	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental or Climate Change
<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Management implications
<input type="checkbox"/> Transparency of Information (FOI etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Privacy Impact Assessments
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights Act Duties	<input type="checkbox"/> Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Parenting	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Safety
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regulatory duties	<input type="checkbox"/> EU withdrawal
<input type="checkbox"/> Armed Forces Covenant	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Details of the matters taken into account:

The Senior Coroner has a statutory duty under section 14 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 to order a post-mortem to take place to enable him/her to decide whether the death is one into which they have a duty to investigate.

10. Legal considerations

The original contract was entered to in accordance with the Councils Contract and Procedure Rules and Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

The original contract included the provision of an extension period (clause 2.3).

11. Financial considerations

The cost of the contracted is estimated to be £856,000 over two years.

The contract is subject to an annual price review subject to NHS CPI percentage calculations.

- 23/24: 8.8% increase
- 24/25: 5.1% increase

The costs for the Coroners Service are apportioned under a joint arrangement with the six local authorities in Berkshire: Bracknell Forest, Reading Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council, Wokingham Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

12. Internal consultations

Legal services

Sections 13- 18: To be completed only for Decision A (express delegation from a Committee)

13. The name of the Committee:

14. Date of the meeting:

Click or tap to enter a date.

15. Minute number:

16. The delegation given by the Committee:

17. The name of any member of the committee who declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision:

18. Any councillor or officer required to be consulted prior to the exercise of this delegation and details of their response.