

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2016 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Also Present: Cllr Simon Killane, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr John Noeken, Cllr George Jeans, Cllr Rosemary Brown, Cllr John Walsh, Cllr Tony Deane, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Atiqul Hoque, Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Dr Carlton Brand

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Brian Dalton who was substituted by Cllr Trevor Carbin and Cllr Whalley, who was substituted by Cllr Anna Cuthbert.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 **Chairman's Announcements and Date of the Next Meeting**

There were no announcements. The date of the next meeting was noted as being on 16 February 2016.

4 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted in relation to the item to be discussed for this extraordinary meeting.

5 **New Highways Contract Award**

A report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor Philip Whitehead and Dr Carlton Brand, Corporate Director. The Cabinet Member praised the work of officers in appropriately and robustly preparing and tendering for the contract in as short a time as was possible since the termination of the previous contract.

Following the early termination of the Council's existing Highways and Streetscene contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP), a procurement exercise had been undertaken for a new highways contract. The new contract would include the provision of routine highways maintenance, Parish Stewards, pothole repairs, winter gritting and the implementation of safety and Community Area Transport Group (CATG) schemes. The new contract was anticipated to start on 1 April 2016, and it was anticipated that annual expenditure through the contract was likely to be in the region of £15,000,000.

In response to queries, the report was corrected to confirm that although the new highways contract was a joint procurement exercise with Swindon Borough Council, there would be separate contracts between each Authority and the Contractor.

The Cabinet member, Cllr Philip Whitehead, also explained that 65-70% of services within the previous contract had been retained by the Council and would run for another four years, therefore the new contract award was for the remaining 30-35% of the services within the previous contract.

The committee then discussed the report raising points including the following:

It was noted that score weighting for assessing the tenderers on price and quality had been amended from the previous contract to give a greater emphasis on the quality of the offer, moving from a 70/30 split between price/quality to 60/40. The Committee welcomed the change.

Concern was raised over the amount of road closures that BBLP undertook in the past, in order to service the highways. It was explained that the current preferred new contractor had their own health and safety systems and thus, road closures would continue, if this was deemed appropriate when carrying out work on Wiltshire's highways.

The Committee sought and received from the Cabinet Member and Corporate Director assurance that performance on the new contract would be monitored closely from the commencement of the contract, and performance levels would continue to be published, with the contract including termination clauses if necessary. It was also confirmed full referencing and proper assessment of all those who had submitted tenders had been undertaken.

The Committee especially welcomed the emphasis given to the role of Parish Stewards as a co-ordinating role in the process for the new contract, and requested detailed specifications of what the role would entail, and that this be made available as widely as possible. The Committee also recommended that a guide for councillors on common maintenance issues and the level at which intervention could be authorised would be of assistance to councillors and parish councils in dealing with queries, which would also reduce some need for reporting matters to the council directly.

Lastly, some members queried the description in the report of Overview and Scrutiny involvement in the process as having been 'active', with appreciation that involvement prior to the decision had occurred, but that it had been limited in nature and contributed to only 5% of the scoring of the process, while welcoming the receipt of a report ahead of Cabinet's determination. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the query and stated the description would be amended accordingly.

The Cabinet member stated in response to queries that the KPIs for the new contractor would continue to be published. He also welcomed the opportunity for further discussions on the level of information that could be made available to councillors on service intervention levels.

6 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved: To agree that in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Number 7 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Reason for taking item in private:

Paragraph 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

7 New Highways Contract Award (Part II)

The Committee received the confidential report on the new highways contract award along with a presentation on the key aspects from Peter Binley, Head of Highways Asset Management and Dr Carlton Brand, Corporate Director. Details were provided on the process and results of the evaluation of each company which had submitted a tender, and how the preferred bidder had been selected.

It was resolved that:

- **The Environment Select Committee accepts the recommendations of officers to Cabinet as detailed in the report.**
- **The Environment Select Committee wishes for all councillors to receive a detailed specification for the proposed parish steward role.**
- **The Environment Select Committee requests that all councillors are informed of all intervention levels in a summary format.**

- **At the next full Environment Select Committee meeting, the Committee will consider whether the Highways and Streetscene Task Group should continue in its present format and establish how Overview and Scrutiny will best monitor, as early as possible, the implementation of the new contract (including reviewing KPIs).**

(Duration of meeting: 15:00-16:34)

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