

EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 18 May 2020

Present:

Councillor Simon Fawthrop (Chairman)
Councillor Christopher Marlow (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Gareth Allatt, Julian Benington,
David Cartwright QFSM, Mary Cooke, Ian Dunn,
Nicky Dykes, Robert Evans, Will Harmer, Michael Rutherford,
Michael Tickner, Stephen Wells and Angela Wilkins

Also Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur, Portfolio Holder for Resources,
Commissioning and Contract Management
Councillor Colin Smith, Leader of the Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Mellor submitted apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Fawthrop declared that his wife was an employee of the London Borough of Bromley.

3 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions were received.

4 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5th FEBRUARY 2020 AND THE INFORMAL BRIEFING HELD ON 26th MARCH 2020 (EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2020, and the notes of the informal briefing held on 26th March 2020, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The Committee noted that a report on the Council's Property Portfolio was due for consideration in September 2020. The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management explained that the current COVID-19 pandemic would inevitably have an impact on the revenue stream from the property portion however it had not yet been possible to quantify the impact.

The Committee also noted that there had been no further progress on the emerging proposals for solar farms following the update from the Executive Assistant for Resources, Commissioning and Contracts Management at the Committee's meeting in February 2020.

In response to a question from a Member concerning the percentage of residents currently not paying Council Tax, it was agreed that the Director of Finance would be asked to provide an update following the meeting.

5 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period April 2020 to July 2020.

The Chairman suggested that it would be helpful for the Forward Plan to indicate a timeframe for decisions by reflecting not just a "not before" date but also a "no later than" date.

6 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following Part 1 reports for decision by the Leader on or after 19th May 2020

(1) THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The report provided the Executive with an update on the London Borough of Bromley's response to the coronavirus pandemic as well as a summary of the current situation in relation to COVID-19 cases in the Borough and the local and pan-London resilience structure.

The report also provided an overview of the Council-wide response to the pandemic, as well as the specific responses for each service area, initial plans for social and economic recovery, and an overview of the Council's current financial position.

The Chief Executive introduced the report explaining that there had been a need to take a number of rapid decisions in response to the developing COVID-19 pandemic. A detailed log of these decisions was kept and would be shared with Members in due course. The practice of keeping a decision log was a pan-London one and enabled decision makers to return to decisions and see when and why they were taken.

In response to a question from the Chairman concerning the impact of the virus on BAME staff and the action that was being taken across the Council to ensure that BAME staff in particular were protected from the effects of the virus, the Chief Executive reported that the Council was following the guidance from Public Health England (PHE) and this guidance was routinely discussed at the Council's COVID-19 Strategic Group. In addition, a profile of Council staff had been completed giving HR and managers across the Council a clear indication of levels of self-isolation and sickness. Risk Assessments had been undertaken to

enable the Council to adequately manage the risks involved and a programme of training had been put in place to provide managers with the tools they needed to support staff. The Council was now in the process of developing a handbook for staff to support the phased return to the workplace. The handbook was designed to provide details of the key measures in place to support and protect staff returning to the office environment. In relation to testing, all staff had been encouraged to get themselves tested if they exhibited any of the symptoms of COVID-19 and where necessary BAME staff had been provided with PPE to support them in their roles.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Council had an adequate supply of facemasks for staff use on their return to work as well as hand sanitiser. The newly developed handbook provided comprehensive guidance however where possible staff would still be encouraged to use IT to support working from home. Discussions had taken place with Departmental Representatives and the Chief Executive confirmed that he felt satisfied about the safety of the environment to which staff would be returning. Members were reminded that as Head of Paid Service the Chief Executive had a personal liability in ensuring the health and safety of staff at work.

Councillor Cooke, as Chairman of the Adult, Care and Health PDS Committee, reported that Members of that Committee had been very active in their scrutiny role and had submitted a number of questions in relation to the report. It was agreed that Officers would be asked to provide answers which could then be circulated to the Committee.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive confirmed that Bromley's 4 MPs were provided with regular updates on the developments in relation to COVID-19 across the Borough. The Committee were reminded that data in relation to the number of residents across the Borough who were shielding was provided by the NHS. These numbers had crept up over the 9 weeks of lockdown and there were now 11,000 people across the Borough who were shielding. In relation to testing prior to discharge from hospital to care homes, Bromley had been a pilot for such testing and had consequently performed quite well.

Members of the Committee suggested that it may be helpful if ward level data could be provided in relation to rates of infection. The Chief Executive noted that different data would emerge as part of the move towards increased testing and contact tracing and it was agreed that this would be taken away as an action point to see if ward level data could be provided.

In respect of the phased return of schools, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Director of Education had been liaising with academies across the Borough and as yet no schools had indicated that they would not be implementing the phased return if required from 1st June 2020.

Members further noted that the Government had recently encouraged Council's to make their streets and roads safe for social distancing. The announcement had been made following the publication of the report before the Committee, however Members stressed the importance of progressing the work in relation to

appropriate social distancing as it was important to avoid any trouble spots when schools reopened.

Turning to the issue of the Council's suppliers, in response to a question, the Chief Executive confirmed that he was confident that a good level of support had been provided to the Council's service providers and there was nothing to suggest that any provider would go out of business. The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contracts Management further noted that the procurement team had been in regular dialogue with providers and frank discussions were taking place.

The Portfolio Holder also highlighted that it was Mental Health Awareness week and there was a need to keep in mind that the majority of staff were working from home and consequently some had been working in isolation for a number of weeks. A range of initiatives had been put in place to support staff, such as training and Mental Health First Aiders were available to support staff if required.

The Chairman reported that he often received updates on the decisions taken under delegated powers in respect of procurement and urgent contract awards. It was agreed that once the emergency delegations had been lifted the full list of decisions that had been taken should be published.

Councillor Wilkins proposed, Councillor Fawthrop seconded and the Committee unanimously agreed that an expression of thanks should be made to all staff across the Council for their dedication and commitment during the pandemic. The Chief Executive was asked to forward this vote of thanks from the Committee onto all staff.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. An expression of thanks be made to all staff across the Council for their dedication and commitment during the pandemic and the Chief Executive be asked to forward this vote of thanks from the Committee onto all staff.**

 - 2. The Leader be recommended to note the report and the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, working together with our residents, local businesses, partner organisations, the voluntary and community sector, to support the most vulnerable in our borough safely during this crisis.**
- (2) AWARD OF CONTRACT TO BLOOM PROCUREMENT LTD FOR THE PROVISION OF SPECIALIST RESOURCES
Report CEF20009**

The Council was currently making use of Bloom Procurement Services Ltd via the NEPRO Framework, and the report sought to make further use of that arrangement to support the implementation of a new Social Care Information Management System following a successful first phase. Funding to enable the award of contract was approved by the Executive in a business case to replace

Bromley's Social Care Information Management System (September 2018, Gateway 1 Report ED10868). The programme remained on track, on time and on budget.

The Assistant Director for Strategy, Performance and Corporate Transformation introduced the report explaining that, if agreed, the continued use of Bloom Procurement Ltd would enable ongoing access to the specialist expertise required to effectively implement the programme.

In response to a question from the Chairman concerning the impact of social distancing on implementation of the programme, the Assistant Director explained that Officers were currently working to develop virtual meeting and virtual training solutions to ensure the continuation of a smooth implementation process.

The Committee noted that overall the programme was within budget and as the system would be in place for a number of years it was important that the necessary expertise was secured to facilitate the smooth implementation of the programme.

RESOLVED: That the Leader be recommended to

- 1. Approve the continued use of Bloom Procurement Services Ltd via a direct award on the NEPRO Framework of a further £866k of specialist resources to support the implementation of a new Social Care Management Information System.**
- 2. Delegate to the Chief Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for RR&CC the approval of the award from the framework of individual contracts following further competition as/if required.**
- 3. Delegate to the Chief Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for RR&CC the approval of the award from the framework of individual contracts without further competition, subject to the agreement of the Assistant Director Governance & Contracts, Director Corporate Services and Director of Finance.**

**(3) AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE REPLACEMENT SOCIAL CARE CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
Report CEF20010A**

The report accompanied the Part 2 Report also being considered on the agenda which recommended that the Council award a contract to purchase a replacement Social Care Case Management System.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director for Strategy, Performance and Contracts Management confirmed that advice had been sought from procurement in respect of the contract award. Members noted that Officers had prepared a detailed specification which resulted in a strong bid from the market leader.

RESOLVED: That the Leader be recommended to award the contract for the purchase of a fully integrated Social Care Case Management System as

detailed in the accompanying Part 2 report for a contract period of 5 years, with the option to extend for a further 2 years.

7 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries
refer to matters involving exempt information**

8 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following Part 2 reports for decision by the Leader on or after 19th May 2020

**(4) Award of Contract for the Replacement Social Care Case Management System
Report CEF20010B**

The Committee noted the report and made recommendations to the Leader.

**(5) COVID 19: TRANSPORT PAYMENTS TO CONTRACTORS
Report CSD20068**

The Committee noted the report and made recommendations to the Leader.

The Meeting ended at 7.21 pm

Chairman