

EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 24 May 2022

Present:

Councillor Simon Fawthrop (Chairman)
Councillor Shaun Slator (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Jeremy Adams, Mark Brock,
David Cartwright QFSM, Robert Evans, Kira Gabbert,
Julie Ireland, Simon Jeal, Jonathan Laidlaw,
Ruth McGregor, Tony Owen, Will Rowlands and
Mark Smith

Also Present:

Councillor Kate Lymer, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder
for Children, Education and Families

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Melanie Stevens.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of interest.

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 24 MARCH 2022 (EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)

With regard to Minute 96a: North Block Solar PV Installation, the Chairman advised Members that the tender process for a solar photovoltaic system on the rooftop of North Block (based at the Civic Centre) would take battery back-up and solar panel efficiency lifespan into account. A Member noted that a review of operational property including car parks was underway and it was important to ensure the Local Authority's estate was as energy efficient as possible, particularly in light of rising fuel costs.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee meeting held on 24 March 2022 (excluding exempt information) be agreed and signed as a correct record.

5 MATTERS OUTSTANDING AND WORK PROGRAMME

The report dealt with the Committee's business management including the proposed work plan for the 2022/23 municipal year.

In considering the proposed work plan, Members noted that the Local Authority's existing contract for provision of IT services was due to end in December 2023, and a Gateway report outlining the procurement process would be presented to the Committee in Autumn 2022. It was anticipated that a report on the Biggin Hill Airport Noise Action Plan would also be presented to the Committee in Autumn 2022. In response to a query from a Member, the Assistant Director of Governance and Contracts advised that legislation on post-Brexit commissioning changes was currently being considered by Parliament and a report outlining the possible impact of this legislation on the Local Authority would be presented to the Committee in Summer 2022.

In discussion, Members agreed not to reconvene the Committee's Housing and Capital Finance Task and Finish Group for the 2022/23 municipal year as any arising business in this area could be considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

6 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions presented key and private Executive decisions covering the period May 2022 to July 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

7 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 25 May 2022:

(6) BROMLEY HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND Report HPR2022/026

The report provided details of a recent Government announcement to extend the Household Support Fund from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 to assist the most at-need households with significantly rising living costs.

The Head of Compliance and Strategy introduced the report and advised that due to the short timescales for implementation, it was proposed to continue with the existing Bromley Household Support Fund through which Bromley residents identified as being in need, including families with children and older people, were issued with food vouchers.

In opening the discussion, the Chairman observed that the food vouchers could be used in a broad range of large and small supermarkets and could not

be used towards the purchase of cigarettes, alcohol or vape materials. The application process was relatively straightforward with the first vouchers anticipated to be issued in the coming weeks; however, all eligible households would need to make a new application to qualify for the extension scheme. A Member queried whether fuel vouchers could be allocated in place of food vouchers and the Head of Compliance and Strategy advised that as fuel voucher options were limited, a decision had been made to offer food vouchers only which should free up the income of eligible households to help fund energy costs. The Local Authority had alternate arrangements in place to support households struggling with fuel poverty, including a debt management service and a welfare fund.

Another Member underlined the need to ensure that families with infants were referred to the scheme, including refugee families who were new to the borough. The Member further noted the importance of encouraging refugee families to apply for Pupil Premium for their school-aged children, and this would be raised with the relevant Lead Officer by the Head of Compliance and Strategy outside of the meeting. There was a contingency of £56k within the scheme for eligible households which did not fall within identified grant allocation areas, and this would be reviewed in late-July 2022 to ensure that all funds were allocated by the scheme's end date in September 2022. The Head of Compliance and Strategy advised that the Bromley Household Support Fund would be publicised in a range of ways, including via the Bromley website, education and childcare providers, the Adult Social Care team, and Age UK.

The Chairman presented the report recommendations to the Committee, and these were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to:

- 1. Note that Bromley Council's allocation for the Household Support Fund (HSF) was £1,868k;**
- 2. Approve the full utilisation of this ringfenced grant, in 2022/23, as detailed in paragraph 3.8 of Report HPR2022/026 and;**
- 3. Agree that any final changes be delegated to Chief Officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Renewal, Recreation and Housing and Resources, Commissioning and Contracts Management.**

8 INFORMATION ITEMS

The items comprised:

- Risk Management

An Information Item on Health and Wellbeing Centre Viability was withdrawn.

RESOLVED: That Information Items be noted.

**9 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**

**10 PART 2 CONTRACTS REGISTER AND CONTRACTS
DATABASE UPDATE**

The report presented the Corporate Contracts Register for May 2022 and provided both the Council-wide larger value (£200k+) contracts register and the £50k+ register specific to the Executive, Resources and Contracts Portfolio. The register presented in the non-public (Part 2) part of the agenda included a commentary to inform Members of any issues or developments on each contract.

The Assistant Director of Governance and Contracts explained that whilst most existing contracts had a 'Green' RAG rating, a small number of contracts were rated as 'Amber' which indicated live action was being undertaken, such as work to prepare for a tendering exercise, or that decisions were due to be actioned soon, including contract extensions.

A Member underlined the need to ensure the Committee had sufficient time to consider the cost implications of upcoming contract extensions or renewals. The Assistant Director of Governance and Contracts confirmed that all contract extensions with a cumulative value of £100k or over were subject to Member decision-making which should be taken at least six months before contract-end. This was closely monitored and reported to Members via the Contracts Register. In addition, extension decisions were supported by the Gateway process which set out the full range of options and delivery models considered and recommended, including but not limited to third-party procurement, joint-tendering or in-sourcing, and was required to be completed before any extension contract could proceed to procurement decision (subject to Member decision for all contracts valued at £500k and above).

In response to a question from another Member, the Assistant Director of Governance and Contracts advised that the Part 2 Contracts Register included a commentary which flagged the expected next procurement action

for each contract and the recommended timescale for action. As part of a discussion on inflation issues, it was agreed that the commentary be expanded to include a reference to the inflation mechanism applicable to each contract. It was further confirmed that Contract Owners of all current contracts had been requested to discuss the application of inflation and that this would be an ongoing exercise.

The Chairman requested that an Excel spreadsheet of upcoming contracts be provided to Members alongside the Part 2 Contracts Register for future reporting. Another Member requested that the latest annual spend information for each contract be included in the commentary and the Assistant Director of Governance and Contracts would take this forward following the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The Meeting ended at 7.59 pm

Chairman