

Minutes

FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

21 June 2023



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors John Riley (Chairman), Wayne Bridges (Vice-Chairman), Kaushik Banerjee, Narinder Garg, Gursharan Mand and Stuart Mathers (Opposition Lead)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Steve Clarke (Democratic Services Officer) Rebecca Reid (Democratic Services Apprentice)</p>
3.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence but it was noted that Councillor Bhatt was not present.</p>
4.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
5.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 19 APRIL 2023 (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 19 April 2023 be approved as an accurate record.</p>
6.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 11 MAY 2023 (AGM) (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 11 May 2023 be approved as an accurate record.</p>
7.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items of business were marked as Part I and would therefore be considered in public.</p>
8.	<p>SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW FINDINGS: "PROCUREMENT WITHIN HILLINGDON: SECURING VALUE FOR OUR RESIDENTS" (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman introduced the report and highlighted the importance of the review regarding its impact on residents and businesses, the Committee were grateful to the officers and stakeholders for the evidence and testimony throughout the review. Members attention was drawn to the suggested areas for recommendations arising from the review provided by the Director of Procurement and Commissioning at the</p>

Committee's previous meeting. Additionally, the Chairman had drafted a number of possible recommendations which the Committee discussed.

Firstly, in an effort to increase ease of internal transparency, Members felt that there should be established a 'Register of Contracts' for sight of Directors, managers, Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen. That all contracts over a certain value, the value to be determined by Procurement Officers, were to be placed onto a matrix with the name of the contract, its value, who the contract was with, its construct, for example one off or rolling, and the contracts start and termination date so that relevant officers, Cabinet Members and Chairmen could see at a glance the scope and nature of the contacts in their work and portfolio areas. Additionally, the same personal should understand the volume of contracts that the Council runs. It was deemed that this would make for a better decision-making tool for all concerned. The Committee commented that this would be useful for the Council's Bid Team in terms of seeing symmetry among contracts across the Council. To that end the Committee were minded to include a recommendation that there should be established and created a master contract list for ease of sight and knowledge.

The Committee discussed the potential parameters of the 'Register of Contracts' suggesting that data within the register could show how many contracts were with local or regional suppliers. Any change in the breadth and use of local suppliers could then be easily visualised.

A further suggestion for a possible recommendation to take forward was that there be established and imbedded within the Council a culture of Framework Agreements. It was felt that this would relieve the Procurement team from initiating multiple contracting and tendering exercises for similar works. The Committee suggested that for example within the Capital Programme, where there were multiple works to be done, a framework of up to 5 trusted companies could be sought and assessed, and invites to a few chosen companies would establish a framework of trusted contractors who could be approached for works without the additional need of the initial due diligence and detail that came with the tendering process. It was also suggested that this programme of Framework Agreements could be refreshed roughly very five years. It was stated that this could bring significant benefits where there was a common requirement across multiple services such as enforcement. It was also highlighted that Members understood that the Procurement Team were the experts in the field and it was important that they were free to explore whether these initiatives would add value and not become too entrenched in detail.

The Committee were minded to ensure a recommendation in relation to the consolidation of contracts was included in their final review report. It was felt that decision makers, Cabinet Members and scrutiny committees, needed to have an understanding of repeat contracts, why they were repeated, and how they were reviewed and scrutinised; Especially long term and long-established contracting companies that the Committee felt should be reviewed to ensure value for money was being attained.

Members were in agreement with the Chairman's suggested recommendations and commented that they could coincide with the promotion of social values and meeting climate goals, in addition to the promotion of the use of local suppliers, whilst noting that value and quality came first. To that end, the Committee sought to explore an additional recommendation regarding engagement with the local business community to encourage local companies to engage with the tendering and procurement process.

	<p>This could result in a number of suggested scenarios including possibly an event inviting local suppliers, trade organisations, working groups and stakeholders with an eye to informing local businesses of how to bid for Council contracts; another suggestion included the dissemination of information and training on bid writing as the Committee noted that small businesses may be put off by the level of information required and complications of writing tenders. Members invited officers to explore the feasibility of such a recommendation.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring that suppliers and contractors were actively endorsing and moving towards reducing their carbon emissions. The Committee felt that a question within each bid could pertain to the Council's efforts to move towards net zero carbon emissions. It was highlighted that tenders were reviewed on a 50% cost, 50% quality basis, and that perhaps the environmental aspect of a supplier could factor into the quality criteria. The Committee sought to request with the Procurement Team whether environmental factors could be built into the quality facet of reviewing tenders.</p> <p>Although not a suggestion for a formal recommendation, the Committee sought to include within their final report a comment regarding resourcing levels within Procurement and whether extra support may be needed in managing contracts.</p> <p>The Committee thanked officers for their input throughout the review and noted that they looked forward to finalising the Committee's report to be submitted to the Cabinet.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee discussed and considered possible conclusions, findings and draft recommendations in relation to their major scrutiny review into Procurement within Hillingdon.</p>
9.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.</p>
10.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Members discussed the Committee's work programme and noted the items coming forward to the next meeting in July. The Democratic Services Officer highlighted that, due to recent commitments regarding the Uxbridge and South Ruislip by-election, it was likely that the final draft report for the Committee's review into Procurement would slip to September's meeting.</p> <p>Members briefly discussed potential topics for the Committee's next major scrutiny review, which would be discussed in more detail at their following meeting. Some initial ideas pertained to the Transformation Programme, home working policies, and recruitment challenges since the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Committee raised a number of suggestions for information reports to be added to the Work Programme when appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following, the by-election on 20 July 2023, that the Committee receive an information item on how the implementation of the requirement for voter identification was received. • That a high-level information item be added to the work programme regarding cyber security and the Council's activities undertaken to ensure IT systems

	<p>remain functional and secure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That an information item be added for the Committee to receive a report on the usage, successes and challenges of the residents' online 'MyAccount' service. <p>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted and updated with the discussed amendments.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.09 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Democratic Services at democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk
Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.