

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held as a virtual meeting on the **10th November 2020**.

Present:

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman)

Cllrs. Blanford, Burgess, Campkin, Chilton, Farrell, Hayward, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Krause, Ledger, Mulholland.

Also Present:

Head of Corporate Policy, ED & Communications, Head of Corporate Property & Projects, Procurement & Contract Manager, Compliance & Data Protection Manager, Governance & Data Protection Officer, Policy & Scrutiny Officer, Member Services Officer.

120 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of this Committee held on the 13th October 2020 be approved and confirmed as an accurate record.

121 External Contract Procurement Presentation

The Procurement & Contract Manager introduced this item, and gave a comprehensive summary to the Committee. Points of interest covered in the presentation included:

- The Team
- Business opportunities and how to do business with the Council
- The rules that govern procurement
- Public Sector procurement
- The route to procurement
- Procurement process
- Financial thresholds
- Category Management
- Procurement procedures
- Tender process

The report was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions and points were raised: -

- A Member asked whether Portfolio Holders were still involved in the opening of Tenders and the Procurement & Contract Manager explained that owing to the Procurement Portal and increased governance around that, there were less people involved now with the opening of Tenders. She went onto explain that there was no discussion about the bids at the opening stage, as this was now undertaken by the Project Team as they evaluated on price and quality.
- In response to a question asking whether external consultants were sourced via the Team, it was explained that this was dependent on value and whether the Department needed procurement advice. There was an approval process in place for any consultancy.
- A Member asked how the weighting was allocated to each Tender and it was explained that it depended entirely on each individual project; there was complete flexibility and no set elements. It was important to determine the market conditions and supplier availability.
- When asked whether there was ever any flexibility for negotiating economic factors with Tenders, the Procurement & Contract Manager confirmed there was not. This was because the Council had to be strict with funds from the public purse and any negotiations could potentially lead to re-procurement.
- In response to a question asked how Members were selected to be involved with the tendering process, it was confirmed that there was no set procedure and Members were open to join the process at any time. The Head of Corporate Property & Projects added that especially on larger projects, and sometimes political developments, Member engagement was sought. The Chairman added that it would be nice for the Toolkit used by the Team to include the suggestion that the Ward Member for any significant project be considered a stakeholder concerning contract procurement. The Procurement & Contract Manager confirmed that this suggestion could be added into the Toolkit. A Member added that he welcomed taking steps to include the elected Ward Member for projects, since there were past occasions where no involvement had been sought.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

122 Corporate Performance Report

The Governance & Data Protection Officer introduced the Quarter 2 Performance Report, which covered the period from July to September 2020. The Report summarised the Council's performance against the Key Performance Indicators introduced in the Recovery Plan, which had the aim of setting out the Council's approach to making a timely and successful recovery from the impact of Covid-19.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

123 Membership of Budget Scrutiny Task Group

The Chairman invited Members to volunteer for the Task Group. Cllrs Chilton, Farrell and Ledger volunteered alongside Cllr Ovenden. The Policy & Scrutiny Officer invited any other Members wishing to volunteer to email her directly.

124 Future Reviews Tracker

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact
membersservices@ashford.gov.uk

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