

# Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 20 June 2023 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm  
Concluded 7.06 pm

## Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	GREEN	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
K Hussain Wheatley Kausar Mitchell Steele Choudhry (Alt)	Herd		R Ahmed

Observers: Councillor Sarah Ferriby

Apologies: Councillor Anna Watson and Councillor Liz Rowe

## Councillor K Hussain in the Chair

### 1. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made in the interest of transparency:

- (i) Cllr Hussain declared that his brother owns a food business in the district in relation to the item on the Food Service Plan (Minute No. 7).
- (ii) Cllr Ahmed and Cllr Herd declared that they each own a food business in the district in relation to the item on the Food Service Plan (Minute No. 7).

### 2. MINUTES

**Resolved –**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023 be held as a correct record.**

**3. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no referrals received by the Committee.

**4. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There were no appeals submitted to review decisions to restrict documents.

**5. PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL CEMETERY PROVISION AT BOWLING CEMETERY**

The Strategic Director, Place presented a report (**Document “A”**) that notified the Committee that the intended spend in relation to the extension of Bowling Cemetery may be in excess of £2m. The report detailed the progress that had been made and provided the Committee with an update on cost. It was highlighted that due to inflationary pressures in the construction industry the intended spend may increase. Officers highlighted how the report lined up with the wider Bereavement Services Strategy and how the extension of Bowling Cemetery would create additional burial space. The Committee were informed that the work would likely be carried out by pre-approved contractors.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and gave the opportunity for Members to ask questions the details of which, and the responses given, are as below.

Members of the Committee sought further information regarding the cost and how it might be affected by delays. Officers informed the Committee that the contract value of £1.9m included a provision for inflation, it was however acknowledged that the construction market remained volatile and unpredictable, therefore costs may be dependent on the market at the time. Officers added that the overall budget was £2.38m which would offer a buffer against inflation and market volatility. Members were advised that at present no delays had arisen. Officers addressed a question about potential delays and assured the Committee that the buffer would weather any short-term delays.

A Member inquired how close the final cost would be to the original estimate. Officers told Members that previous projects had been completed close to the original estimates and that they were hopeful this would be no different.

A Member asked about the sustainability implications referenced in the report and how the biodiversity gain would be achieved. Officers told the Committee that a biodiversity gain and enhancement would be achieved by landscaping and planting wildflowers.

A Member of the Committee stated that it would be beneficial to envisage the

plans and requested that in the future a visual sketch of what is planned be brought to the Committee. Officers agreed that this would be beneficial and that a visual sketch would be presented in the future.

**Resolved –**

- (i) **That the progress made to date on delivering the Council's Bereavement Services Strategy be noted.**
- (ii) **That the intention to tender the construction of new infrastructure at Bowling Cemetery at a value potentially in excess of £2m be noted.**

**Action: Strategic Director, Place**

**6. TENDER FOR "STORES FACILITY MANAGEMENT" - UPDATE FROM MARCH 2023**

The Strategic Director, Place presented a report (**Document "B"**) in line with Contract Standing Orders, that provided the Committee with an update on the provision of Stores Facility Management that is currently provided by the incumbent third party Contractor and the need to renew the contract. The Principal Officer presenting the report addressed the progress that had been made since the previous meeting of the Committee in March 2023. The Committee were informed that Fleet Factors had won the tender and that the contract was ready for the start date in September 2023. The Principal Officer highlighted the options that had been considered as outlined in the report (**Document "B"**) and stated that insourcing may be looked at in the future but at present was not a preferred option due to staffing, IT systems, expertise and buying power which could not match that of a private contractor.

Officers were thanked for the report and Members were given the opportunity to ask questions the details of which, and the responses given, are as below.

The Committee sought further information about the potential option of insourcing and asked if this was actively being explored. Officers advised that due to the reasons outlined in the report insourcing was not currently viewed as viable, however it was explored in so far as costs of parts were monitored and checked to see if it would be cheaper to do it internally. The Principal Officer added that the IT infrastructure that would be required is not available to the Council at present and that there are many benefits to the contract.

Members asked about other bidders and why Fleet Factors had been selected. Members were told that Fleet Factors met the specification that was requested, and they were the only bidder on the framework. It was noted that competitors such as Euro Car Parts and GSF did not bid.

The Principal Officer was asked why there was a delay in the report coming to the Committee. The Principal Officer explained about the previous miscommunication regarding the process and the use of the framework which was referenced in the report under the March 2023 update. Members were informed that there would be no impact on the contract start date.

Members of the Committee asked several questions about the previous contract held by Fleet Factors, specifically the value of the previous contract and an evaluation of how the contract went. The Principal Officer explained that the value of the previous contract was roughly the same as the contract within the report, roughly estimated at £1m per year, but advised that costs could vary due to changes in the fleet and parts that may be under warranty. In relation to the evaluation of the previous contract Members were told by the Principal Officer that Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) were available, and that the contractor had outperformed expectations, and had gone above and beyond in the previous contract. The Committee requested that a brief update be attached to annual waste management reports in the future and that they include KPI measures.

A Member asked about the risks associated with the contract and highlighted that many other authorities were bringing the service "in-house" due to several external companies going insolvent. The Principal Officer told Members that financial solvency checks were carried out prior to an award of contract by both Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) and the Council's finance teams. It was added that YPO had already completed their assessment and further noted by the Principal Officer that the contract was demand driven and the Council only pay for what they use hence the risk was minimal.

A Member asked about the length of the contract and when a new contract would be looked at. The Committee were told that the contract would run for 4 years with an option to extend for 1 further year. The Principal Officer explained that options would be explored early in the fourth year of the contract and added that this would include the option to bring the service back in house.

A Member of the Committee asked why no trade union implications had been indicated within the report. The Principal Office advised that this could be investigated further.

**Resolved -**

- (i) That it is noted that it is the intention of the Strategic Director, Place, to award a new contract for 'Stores Facility Management' to a third-party contractor, through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) Framework, to commence on 1 September 2023 and run for four years with the option to extend for one further year.**
- (ii) That it is noted that the estimated value of the 'Stores Facility Management' contract over five years is in excess of £5 million and this matter is therefore reported to the Committee in accordance with Paragraph 4.6 of Part 3G of the Council's Constitution (Contracts Standing Orders).**
- (iii) That a brief update on stores facility management including Key Performance Indicators (KPI) be attached to the annual waste management reports in the future.**

**Action: Strategic Director, Place**

## 7. **FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2023/24 - FOOD SAFETY IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT**

The Strategic Director of Health and Wellbeing submitted a report (**Document “C”**) that outlined the Food Service Safety Plan and requested Members to support the plan. The Environmental Health Manager summarised the report and told the Committee that the Council is required by the Food Standards Agency to have a documented and approved Food Safety Service Plan. Officers highlighted that the number of premises contained in the report was 4289 and advised that this figure had returned to a pre-pandemic level. The Environmental Health Manager acknowledged the backlog of premises awaiting inspection and spoke about staff allocation and the national shortage of Environmental Health Officers. Officers highlighted the amendments that had been made in Section 4.1 of the report, that the current ratio of 10 FTE officers in post to premises in Bradford was 429 per FTE and that the team should have at least 17 staff in order to meet the statutory function.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and gave the opportunity for Members to ask questions the details of which, and the responses given, are as below.

The Committee asked several questions about “dark kitchens” which refers to a premises with no physical storefront or dining area where orders are instead placed online. Officers were asked how many “dark kitchens” they were aware of, how they become aware of them and if any recent enforcement had been taken. Officers told the Committee that they are aware of a few and that if they are not registered then they are reliant on intelligence gathering as well as reports and complaints from the public to find out about them. The Committee was informed that no recent calls for prosecution had been received but the Environmental Health Manager acknowledged that “dark kitchens” are growing increasingly due to the online market as businesses can set up anywhere.

Leading on from the discussion about “dark kitchens” Members asked if the Environmental Health department consulted with online platforms and if premises required approval prior to joining a platform. Officers advised Members that consultation with online platforms was carried out by the Food Standards Agency rather than the Local Authority. It was added that the main online platforms agree to a code of conduct and check that a premises is registered with a local authority and also set a minimum food hygiene rating.

The Committee sought information about the programme of inspections and was told that premises are categorised according to risk and that this would determine the frequency of inspection, for example a high-risk premises would be inspected every 6 months. The Environmental Health Manager added that most inspections are unannounced although in certain instances it was necessary to arrange a visit time for example businesses from domestic premises. Members were told that inspectors manage their own workloads and that no record is kept regarding whether an inspection was carried out during the day or in the evening. Members were told that inspections are only undertaken when a business is open, so if a business only opens in the evening then that is when an inspection would be undertaken.

Members of the Committee raised concerns regarding the potential trade union implications due to the considerable workload and the potential pressures on staff particularly if they were new and still undergoing training. Officers acknowledged the considerable workload and the qualifications that are required to carry out premises inspections. Members were assured that the staff workload was monitored, and that both one-to-ones and team meetings take place regularly to consult with staff.

Discussion moved onto the workforce as it emerged that several staff were approaching retirement, Members expressed concern that there would be a depletion of experience in the workforce. The Environmental Health Manager talked about current recruitment and told the Committee that current staff were building up experience. Members were informed that there was currently one trainee but there were hopes to recruit five across the service and they would be fully qualified after 12 months. Upon being asked about the staff development plan and engagement with local universities, officers described the engagement with Leeds and the Environmental Health Degree and Apprenticeship routes they offer.

Members asked when the team would be at full capacity and when the backlog of inspections would be reduced. The Committee was informed that the backlog of inspections should be cleared by the end of the year and that it had already been reduced since April. The Environmental Health Manager told Members that the team should be at capacity within 12 months as interviews were scheduled.

It emerged during discussions about inspections that roughly 500 inspections were contracted out to Osborne Richardson in a joint contract with Leeds and Wakefield Council. Officers acknowledged that the contractor was not always able to meet the demand however the Council only pay upon completion of an inspection, which was therefore cost effective.

**Resolved –**

- (i) That it is noted that the proposed approach to performance monitoring and management of resources provides the necessary assurances that the delivery of food safety controls are in line with expectations.**
- (ii) That it is noted that preparing for UK City of Culture will have a significant impact on delivery of baseline requirements.**

**Action: Strategic Director of Health and Wellbeing**

Chair

**Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER