

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st July 2021, 6.30 pm

The Lancastrian, Town Hall, Chorley and YouTube

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Agenda

b Minutes of Meeting Thursday, 17 June 2021 of Executive Cabinet

(Pages 3 - 16)

To consider the Executive Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 17 June 2021.

Gary Hall
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Julia Berry, John Dalton, Terry Howarth, Hasina Khan, Samir Khan, June Molyneaux, James Nevett, Aidy Riggott, William Simmance, Kim Snape and Jenny Whiffen.

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84 organisations including developers, RPs and agents operating in the Borough were consulted. In total only 6 responses were received but a number of issues/objections were raised in these responses that needed to be considered before finalising the Framework. Legal advice was sought and as a result several changes were made to the Framework which were outlined in the report as well as the next steps to implement the Framework.

Following queries, Members were advised that the Council as a housing provider would also have to adhere to the Framework. Members supported the proposals and commended the work undertaken.

Decision:

To approve the amended version of the Framework for implementation.

Reason for recommendation(s):

To enable the Council to have direct control of the allocation of affordable units secured through S106 agreements.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

None

21.EC.29 Executive Cabinet Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Sustainable Public Transport

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform), presented the report of the Director of Planning and Development which outlines the response to the recommendations of the Task Group for Sustainable Public Transport. Members noted that all 22 of the recommendations were being agreed.

Following queries on whether personal vehicles such as electric cars, and cycling and walking strategies should be considered separately from the Sustainable Public Transport report, it was proposed that they remain in the report but separate reviews could be undertaken.

Decision:

That the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group be received, and recommendations accepted.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

Sustainable public transport is an important element of a comprehensive approach to tackling climate change and the emergency the earth faces with regards carbon emissions, loss of nature and biodiversity and the obesity crisis. Delivery will contribute to achieving net zero carbon emissions.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

None

21.EC.29a Alker Lane Scheme Name

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform), presented the report of the Director of Commercial Services which advises as to the proposed name for the Alker Lane development.

The Alker Lane scheme commenced on site on the 1st June 2021 and officers have already received numerous expressions of interest in the availability of the units. As part of the marketing strategy, a strong and appropriate identity is required to promote the development and therefore the name 'Strawberry Meadows Business Park' is proposed.

Decision:

That the proposed name, Strawberry Meadows Business Park, be approved.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. To establish a strong, clear identity for the development as part of the wider marketing strategy.
2. To allow the marketing strategy to be implemented.
3. To demonstrate synergy with the adjacent Strawberry Fields Digital Hub.
4. To encourage potential tenants to engage with the scheme.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. Delay the naming of the site. Rejected as this prevents the marketing having full impact with the site having no identity.
2. Consider naming the site 'Alker Lane Business Park'. Rejected due to the lack of synergy with the adjacent Strawberry Fields Digital Hub.

21.EC.30 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 20-21 Outturn

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources), presented the report of the Director of Finance which sets out the provisional revenue and capital outturn figures for the Council as compared against the budgets and efficiency savings targets set for the financial year 2020/21. The accounts are provisional at this stage and are also subject to final checking and scrutiny by the Council's external auditor. Should there be any significant changes to the general fund as a result of this process, a further report will be submitted to Executive Cabinet.

In summary, there is a provisional underspend against the budget at year-end of £57k after taking account of requests for slippage of committed items of £256k that have been approved by the Chief Finance Officer. Members noted that the capital outturn expenditure for 2020/21 is £9.087m. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy reported that working balances are currently maintained at £4.0m due to the financial risks facing the Council. The forecast level of general fund balances as at 31 March 2021 will be £4.057m.

Following queries on the forecasted reduction of bad debt provision for Market Walk in 2021/22 as money is repaid, Members considered what would be a bad result for the council and recognised that based on the unprecedented circumstances any result that will bring in income will be considered positive for the council.

Decision:

1. To note the full year position for the 2020/21 revenue budget and capital investment programme.
2. To note the slippage requests outlined in Appendix 2 of the report to finance expenditure on specific items or projects in 2021/22.
3. To note the 2020/21 outturn position on the Council's reserves outlined in Appendix 3.

4. To approve the capital programme to be delivered in 2020/21 to 2023/24 as outlined in Appendix 4.
5. To approve the changes within the capital programme as detailed in paragraph 84 and 89.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

To ensure the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

None

21.EC.31 Quarter Four Performance Report 2020/21

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources), presented the report of the Deputy Chief Executive which sets out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the fourth quarter of 2020/21, covering the 1 January to 31 March 2021.

The overall performance of key projects is good, with 84% of the projects rated as green, 8% rated as not started, and 8% rated as amber; there are action plans in place for those projects rated as amber.

Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures continues to be closely monitored, with 50% of Corporate Strategy measures and 75% of key service delivery measures performing on or above target, or within the 5% threshold. Given the current challenges and environment the Council is operating in, performance against the agreed measures remains positive, with the Council continuing to work proactively to improve the position for local residents and communities. Where indicators are performing below target, action plans are in place to improve performance. The performance is reflective of national performance trends.

Decision:

That the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

To facilitate the on-going analysis and management of the Council's performance in delivering the Corporate Strategy.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

None

21.EC.32 HR and Payroll System

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources), presented the report of the Deputy Chief Executive which seeks approval to enter into a ten-year agreement with Blackpool Council to provide a managed payroll service with integrated HR service and all associated implementation, support and maintenance services.

Chorley has a service contract with Blackpool council to deliver a managed payroll service which has been in place for over 15 years and due to expire 31 March 2021. A number of suppliers were invited to provide system demonstrations and the council's current payroll providers were also invited to discuss how they could meet the shared

requirements of the councils. Continuing to use the current providers was considered the best option going forward.

The initial contract term will be 10 years following successful implementation and roll out (April 2022 for core HR and Payroll) with the potential to extend for a further 5 years (renewal term). The advantages of this model are outlined in the report.

Decision:

1. To approve the appointment of Blackpool Council for the provision of a managed payroll service with integrated HR system and all associated implementation, support, and maintenance services
2. To delegate the finalisation of the agreement with Blackpool Council to the Director of Governance.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

The council has determined that a ten-year partnership arrangement with Blackpool Council via a section 101 Local Government Act 1972 agreement provides the most effective and best value way to secure a fully managed payroll service with integrated HR system.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. The current HR and Payroll systems contract expires March 2022 and there is no compliant ability to extend this.
2. Procurement via either open tender or a framework requires specialist input to specify, document and evaluate tenders which would be resource intensive and potentially expensive. The market has been explored and found that it is very limited in terms of suppliers that would meet our specification and that the prices that could be achieved are unlikely to be more economical than the partnership approach, particularly as direct contract award to a supplier would incur high implementation costs. A partnership arrangement gives additional resilience to the project and ongoing payroll service unlike a direct award.

21.EC.33 Insurance Portfolio Procurement Proposals

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources), presented the report of the Director of Governance which seeks Member approval to engage in a joint procurement with South Ribble Council to procure all insurance policies within the council's portfolio. The joint insurance tender for the renewal of the insurance covers in place at both Councils is a key project in the Shared Audit and Risk business plan for 2021/22.

Whilst the Insurance Broker contract is shared across South Ribble and Chorley Council's, members are advised that each council maintains its own insurance policy portfolio. The various insurance policies contained within each council's insurance portfolio are contracted under Long-Term Agreements (LTAs) of which expire on the 31 December 2021. It is proposed to tender for the insurance policies using a procurement dynamic purchasing system, similar to a procurement framework.

Decision:

1. That Members agree to the procurement being collaborative with South Ribble Council.
2. That Members agree to the use of the YPO Insurance Placement Dynamic Purchasing System 978.

3. That Members agree the approach to be taken for Evaluation Criteria and Weightings.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. The procurement will be a separate tender for each council's individual insurance portfolio however, running the tender process together will create efficiencies in the officer and broker time.
2. A Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) agreement was used successfully last time the insurance policies were procured.
3. A YPO product was used recently in 2020 to tender for the Insurance Broker and Associated Services Contract, in doing so a working relationship with the YPO team has developed which will support delivery of the insurance procurement.
4. Subject to broker advice a similar approach to Evaluation Criteria and Weightings will be considered.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

The Audit and Risk service has not considered tendering for this procurement via the more traditional route of OJEU as this approach would lead to a longer timeframe to complete and additional officer resource to deliver a more complex tender, for the same or less competitive results.

21.EC.34 Neighbourhood Working

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention), presented the report of the Director of Communities which provides details of the Neighbourhood Working Review and the proposed way forward to revise the delivery of neighbourhood working in Chorley which will ensure the model continues to develop and meets the needs of members and the communities they serve. It also presents the preferred option for new Neighbourhood Area footprint due to the impact of ward boundary changes which came into effect in May 2021.

Following the boundary review changes which came into effect in May 2021, a range of new area model options have been created and the preferred option proposed is to adopt the six Neighbourhood Area Model, which would split the 14 new wards into six areas as detailed in the report. The annual budget of £50k will give each neighbourhood area £8,000 and the opportunity to fund either one large project or allocate to several different projects, although it is proposed that no more than a maximum of four projects are chosen to be delivered. This approach will be piloted and the reviewed.

Following a Member request, it was agreed that the 'Chorley Town North' neighbourhood area be amended to 'Chorley North' based on the geographical nature of the area.

Decision:

1. That the actions and timescales detailed are approved to progress Neighbourhood Working over the next 18 months and then review accordingly to measure the success and make appropriate changes where applicable.
2. To agree the preferred option for New Neighbourhood Area Footprint Model, subject to amending the 'Chorley Town North' neighbourhood area to 'Chorley North'.

3. That Neighbourhood Priority projects proposed by each area group and budget spend will be approved by Executive Member (Early Intervention) via Executive Member decision.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

Neighbourhood working and its associated projects are a key priority within the council's corporate strategy and encourages the improvement of environmental, health, and social features within the identified neighbourhoods of Chorley.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To not support the continuation and development of neighbourhood working across the borough.

21.EC.35 LCC Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention), presented the report of the Director of Communities which provides details in relation to Lancashire County Council's (LCC) Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme and gives details on the proposed delivery model.

LCC have developed a desired model of delivery of the national HAF programme with expectation on local districts to play a key role to deliver locally, help achieve best outcomes, and meet the needs of our local families. Chorley has 2591 children aged 4-16 receiving free school meals. The programme will help address child food poverty during the school holidays and help support many families who struggle during this time. A budget of £242,505 has been allocated to deliver the programme in Chorley. It is proposed that Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports Partnership would be the most suitable partners to be able to deliver this service having all necessary experience and capacity to be able to deliver the programme.

Members queried how it would be ensured that all children who receive free school meals in Chorley can access the support based on the figures in the report. Members were advised that 30% provision indicates the amount of places the programme needs to make available per day based on the national delivery format funding from the Department of Education. This will be covered by the LCC funding and the shortfall will be met by the council working with partners to also help support those in hard to reach areas. For the outlying districts that are covered by a rural premium, there may be local provisions available that the council can buy into to ensure the need in rural areas is also met.

Based on the importance of this work, Members requested that a report be brought back to members on how the programme goes. It was agreed that local level data could be fed back to Members and advised that a full report would likely undertaken by LCC too.

Decision:

1. It is recommended that Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports Partnership will deliver the HAF programme on behalf of Chorley Council.
2. That the total funding from LCC of £242,505 is allocated accordingly to Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports Partnership to be able to deliver the programme.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

To ensure the successful delivery of the HAF programme for children between the ages of 4 and 16 who are eligible for free school meals. The programme will help address child food poverty during the school holidays and help support many families who struggle during this time. Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports Partnership are Chorley most experienced organisations working with children and young people providing high quality services. They have the infrastructure, knowledge, and partnerships to deliver the programme.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To not support the delivery of the programme in Chorley and not to use Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports Partnership to deliver the programme.

21.EC.36 Housing Enforcement Policy 2021

Councillor Peter Gabbott, Executive Member (Homes and Housing), presented the report of the Director of Communities which consults on the proposed Housing Enforcement Policy 2021.

The Policy sets out the council's compliance and enforcement approach to housing standards activities to support improved housing conditions across the borough. This is in addition to the existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy which aims to provide information, advice and enable activities relating to adaptations and supported improvements.

Decision:

To approve the proposed policy.

Reason for recommendation(s):

The principal aims of the Housing Enforcement Policy are:

- To protect public health and safety from housing related standards issues
- To support homeowners in meeting the required housing standards in accordance with the principle legislation
- To improve the overall standards of the housing stock across the borough
- To ensure a consistent a balanced approach when making enforcement decisions

Alternative options considered and rejected:

No known alternatives.

21.EC.37 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Decision: To exclude the press and public for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

21.EC.38 Allocation of CIL - Chorley Health Centre

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform), presented the confidential report of the Director of Planning and Development which seeks approval to amend the Infrastructure Funding Statement

and the allocation of main Community Infrastructure Levy monies to infrastructure projects.

Decision:

To approve the Infrastructure Funding Statement (June 2021) and approve the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy monies for £250,000 subject to conditions for spend on the reconfiguration and modernisation of Chorley Health Centre, Collison Avenue, Chorley.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

To allocate the CIL Infrastructure Fund in the way it is intended and ensure the methodology of how it is allocated is transparent

Alternative options considered and rejected:

An alternative option of funding £500,000 was considered but rejected on the basis of £500k being significant; CIL funding has been used for health on other projects e.g. allocation of CIL funds to the Clayton-Le-Woods GP Surgery project and Eaves Lane GP Surgery relocation and that the strategic CIL fund has limited resources.

21.EC.39 Viability of the Local Plan and Review of CIL Procurement

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform), presented the confidential report of the Director of Planning and Development which seeks authorisation to undertake a procurement process to commission consultants on behalf of the three Central Lancashire Councils to deliver a two-part study on a) Viability of the new Central Lancashire Local Plan and b) A Review of the Central Lancashire Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Decision:

1. Approval to allocate £90,000 of the shared Central Lancashire Local Plan Budget allocated to this piece of work, essentially meaning a cost of £30,000 to each Council.
2. That Chorley Council procures this work on behalf of the three Councils of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble and recoups the contributions of Preston and South Ribble Council following the receipt of final invoice from the contractor.
3. To approve the proposed evaluation criteria as set out in the tender document (see Appendix one, section 17).
4. Approval be given to commence the tender exercise with the decision to award the contract delegated to the Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Sector Reform.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. The viability assessment of a proposed Local plan is a requirement as set out in NPPF paragraph 34.
2. It is best practice to review the CIL as part of a new local plan preparation as they are inextricably linked. The CIL was implemented in 2013 and therefore needs to be reviewed and updated.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To not commission this study would mean the preparation of the new Local Plan is

incomplete and would never meet the requirements of the tests of soundness as applied by the Planning Inspectorate. To have no new Local Plan would place the three councils at risk of speculative development.

21.EC.40 Pod Development Site Pall Mall Chorley

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform), presented the confidential report of the Director of Commercial Services which seeks approval for the terms reported for the disposal of the Pod Development site.

Decision:

That the terms reported in the report be approved.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. To secure development of the site and a capital receipt
2. The site will deliver an attractive development on the edge of the town centre and in doing so link Market Street to the nearby ASDA superstore.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. Joint venture considered but rejected on the basis of too greater risk to the Council for the rental return.
2. Leave the site as an area of open space or possible wildflower meadow.

21.EC.41 Market Walk Rents Position

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform), presented the confidential report of the Director of Commercial Services which seeks approval granting a new lease for Bodycare at units 14/15 Market Walk, approval for the application of Covid Terms in the Sports Direct lease, and seeks delegated authority to conclude a number of outstanding Covid rent relief claims for tenants who are mid-lease.

Decision:

1. To approve the terms agreed in the Heads of Terms (Appendix 1) for Bodycare.
2. To approve the application of Covid Terms contained within the Sports Direct lease resulting in:
 - a) a rent commencement date of 5 June 2022 (subject to any further lockdown periods)
 - b) rent reverting to 5% of turnover for a maximum period of 12 months.
3. To request delegated authority, to Director Commercial Services in consultation with Exec Member for Resource, to negotiate outstanding claims for Covid relief with tenants outside of lease negotiations, but to note that this will be applied by way of credit notes where the tenant is in arrears, a significant amount of which is already accounted for within the bad debt provision for 2020/21.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. The Council will receive a rental income for the occupation of the premises.
2. The Council will avoid having void units and costs associated with managing/reletting them.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. The Premises would remain empty until such time as a new tenant might be found.
2. In the current economic climate it is likely that it would take some time to agree a new letting of the premises.
3. The Council would bear the costs of running and maintaining the empty premises.
4. Any incoming tenant would likely demand similar terms or worse in order to fit out a new store.

21.EC.42 Grant of a lease - Unit 3, Flat Iron Parade, Market Walk

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources), presented the confidential report of the Director of Commercial Services which seeks authorisation for the surrender of the existing lease and grant of a new lease of the premises which have been provisionally agreed recently.

Decision:

That the terms provisionally agreed are approved and the Director of Governance be authorised to complete the legal formalities.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. The current occupier is a longstanding tenant of the Council and have indicated their intention to continue the operation of their business in this location in the long term and have agreed to a number of additional terms to the Council's benefit.
2. This is a rent increase contra to many of the Centre's other tenants seeking reduction of rent and provides useful evidence in other negotiations

Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. Not to offer terms for renewal and to seek repossession at the expiry of the Lease and advertise.
2. In this instance costs would be incurred and a void whilst the letting is advertised, and the legal matters completed
3. Current policy in the management of the Centre is avoid vacancies wherever possible and maintain a strong income stream

21.EC.43 Approval of Tender Evaluation Criteria for Security/Concierge Services

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources), presented the confidential report of the Director of Commercial Services which seeks members' approval for the temporary extension to existing concierge contracts exceeding £100,000, whilst a full-service review is undertaken as well as formalising the initial contract award to Exclusec for concierge service at the Strawberry Fields as the cumulative value exceeds £100,000.

Decision:

1. To approve the extension of the Sector concierge contract for Primrose Gardens and Cotswold House for a maximum of 12 months (with options to terminate at 6 or 9 months should the review be concluded early).
2. To approve the award and extension of the Exclusec concierge contract for Strawberry Fields for a maximum of 12 months (with options to terminate at 6 or 9 months should the review be concluded early).

3. To approve the award and extension of the New Concept security contract for Market Walk for a maximum of 12 months (with options to terminate at 6 or 9 months should the review be concluded early).

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. The concierge and security service across all council assets is currently under a full collective review, rather than as individual contracts, and the existing contracts need formally extending until the results of the review can determine the shape of future 3rd party service requirements.
2. The Covid pandemic has highlighted new ways of flexible working that can be considered as part of a full security (reception) service review to the benefit of the council.
3. The new digital CCTV and radio network allows the CCTV control room to be relocated more easily and for option to be evaluated to integrate that service into a holistic asset security team.
4. 24-hour secure access is listed within the tenants' Lease agreements for all sites and tenants make contributions to cover the cost of service as part of their service charges contributions so savings in contracts may not create direct savings for the council.
5. Sites are advertised as 24-hour access buildings with on-site security/concierge and any changes to this commitment requires advance notice and consultation to assess the impact.
6. A waiver of procurement procedures for all three contracts has been signed by the Chief Executive.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. To continue with existing contracts tendered individually. This would not achieve any economies of scale or service improvements.
2. To combine all existing contracts into one tendering process and award to a single provider. This would achieve economies of scale but not allow for the review of ways of working across the organisation to achieve service improvements.

21.EC.44 Procurement of Electrical Contractor to Undertake Planned and Reactive Maintenance

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources), presented the confidential report of the Director of Commercial Services which seeks approval for the procurement approach including the award procedure, evaluation methodology and criteria for the engagement of electrical contractors to undertake reactive and planned maintenance on council property assets. As well as seeking approval for the award of the contract to be delegated to the Executive Member (Resources) by means of Executive Member Decision.

Decision:

1. To approve the recommendation for the Council to tender for the appointment of a contractors to undertake electrical works for both reactive and planned maintenance. Contract to commence on 1 September 2021 for an initial one-year period, with an option to extend for a further one year to 31 August 2023.
2. To approve the recommendation for the contract to be awarded by the Executive Member (Resources) by means of an Executive Member Decision.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. The Council has statutory obligations to provide quarterly, bi-annual and annual service and testing requirements to comply with health and safety and statutory requirements.
2. The Council has a contractual obligation with its tenants to provide reactive and planned maintenance in a timely manner, providing emergency repairs as necessary.
3. This proposed tender exercise ensures that these services will enable the Council to fulfil its obligations.
4. The Councils Contract Procurement Rules stipulate that Executive Cabinet approval is required for all contracts over £100,000.
5. Tendering the services separately is likely to encourage smaller local enterprises to submit tenders, the prospects of which would reduce if the services were tendered as a combined package.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. The option of seeking a waiver to extend the existing delivery arrangements for the Reactive and Planned Maintenance services was explored but rejected on the basis that there was no reasonable justification for doing this any longer.
2. The option of bringing the services in-house was considered but ruled out due to lack of capacity within the present staffing structure to deliver the service. In addition, there are concerns that insufficient skilled trade's persons could be recruited to provide adequate 24 hour cover. Also it was deemed that overhead cost would significantly inflate the delivery cost.
3. The option of tendering the services in a combined tender with general and heating works was also considered but rejected. The Council's research and past experience in tendering repairs and maintenance services has shown that a limited number of contractors would express an interest. Usually larger contractors are attracted which have the diverse skill base to cover all work categories. This would therefore, likely to deter local companies from expressing an interest in these tender opportunities.

21.EC.45 Handyperson and Affordable Warmth Assistance Service

Councillor Peter Gabbott, Executive Member (Homes and Housing), presented the report of the Director of Communities which seeks approval to re-appoint Preston Care and Repair as the service provider to deliver a Handyperson and Affordable Warmth Assistance service in 2021/22. Member approval is also sought in respect of the proposed financial and procurement arrangements for the delivery of the Handyperson and Affordable Warmth Assistance services from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025.

Decision:

1. That the existing service provider (Preston Care and Repair) is to be retained as the Council's appointed sub-contractor to deliver Handyperson and Affordable Warmth services during 2021/22, at a contract value of £18,750 for Handyperson services for the period 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, with an additional maximum £15,000 to be set aside for the Affordable Warmth Assistance service.
2. That Executive Cabinet approves the recommendation to allow a sum of up to £45,000 funded via the Better Care Fund (using the Disabled Facilities Grant budget) to be set aside annually for Handyperson and Affordable Warmth Services for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 inclusive, providing that present allocation levels of Disabled Facilities Grant are maintained.

3. That Executive Cabinet gives in-principle approval to permit a procurement exercise during the current financial year in order to appoint a contractor to deliver the Handyperson and Affordable Warmth Assistance services with effect from 1 April 2022, with a contract duration of two years with an option to extend for a further year.
4. The proposed tendering arrangements would qualify as a high value procurement and it is proposed that a further report, outlining the procurement approach evaluation criteria and weightings, shall be considered at a future Executive Cabinet meeting.

Reasons for recommendation(s):

1. The Council's Home Improvement Agency (HIA) facilitates a range of services to cater for customers with varying levels of need. These range from Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for major adaptations; Minor Adaptations for items costing less than £1,000, and Handyperson services for small scale "DIY-type" jobs within the home.
2. The retention of Handyperson and Affordable Warmth Services will enable the Council to continue to offer this broad range of appropriate assistance to Chorley residents.
3. Longer term funding commitment will enable consistency in terms of service planning and service delivery as well as being a more attractive proposition for potential contractors, thereby making it more likely to create competition in the market.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. The ending of the Handyperson service was considered, but it is widely recognised that the service is valuable to the customers who use it and that it also acts as a method of preventing vulnerable customers from sustaining injuries through falls which could result in urgent admissions to hospital for lengthy out-patient stays.
2. An option of carrying out a procurement exercise during 2021/22 to tender the Handyperson and Affordable Warmth services was considered but rejected due to the concerns that this would inevitably cause an interruption to vital service (in the case of the Handyperson service) and also because the duration of any contract cannot be confirmed until and unless Members approve any such proposals.

Chair

Date