

Finance and Assets Policy Development Advisory Group
20 MARCH 2017

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Chairman), David Coldwell,
Leonard Crosbie, Nigel Jupp and Adrian Lee

Apologies: Councillors: John Bailey, John Chidlow, Paul Clarke, Tim Lloyd,
Stuart Ritchie and Simon Torn

22 **TO APPROVE THE NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The group approved the notes of the meeting held on 16 January 2017.

23 **APPROVAL OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR A FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT
FOR THE PROVISION OF AGENCY STAFF FOLLOWING A TENDERING
EXERCISE**

The Director of Corporate Resources introduced the shared Procurement Officer to the group and explained the background to the report on a framework agreement for the provision of agency staff.

The Council had been in contract with Comensura via the Pro 5 MSTAR agreement since May 2012 for the supply of agency staff. The agreement officially expired in June 2016 and had been informally extended to date. An audit information report went to Accounts, Audit & Governance Committee on 23 March 2016 and a commissioning options report went to the Senior Leadership Team in April 2016. One of the main issues identified in both reports was the amount of off-contract spend and this has continued to prove an issue with just under two thirds of total spend on temporary agency staff being spent with agencies other than Comensura.

In April 2016, the Senior Leadership Team decided to move forward with a joint tender for the provision of agency staff with Crawley Borough Council and Mid Sussex District Council.

Crawley Borough Council had, following a formal tendering exercise with full participation from Horsham District Council officers, established a framework agreement for the provision of temporary agency staff from April 2017 to March 2021 with Horsham District Council being a named party. This would enable Horsham District Council to access agency staff from a group of suppliers who met the requirements of the Council. This would ensure a speedy process that meets requirements at short notice from a larger “pool” of qualified temporary staff and suppliers. The new framework would commence on 1 May 2017.

At the invitation of the Chairman, members discussed:

- The benefits of the improved approach
- The approval process for officers using the framework
- Whether there was any risk in any one of the partners exceeding the spend limit

Officers responded that:

- The framework would provide compliance and mitigate the risk of aggregated spend, officers would be fully briefed on using the framework
- The risk implications had been considered as part of the report to Cabinet

The Chairman noted the views of the group; and the group supported the proposal.

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RE-PROVISION OF THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE

The Director of Corporate Resources reminded Members at the Cabinet had agreed in January to issue notice to withdraw from the CenSus Revenues and Benefits Partnership leading to the Partnership's dissolution. Consequently, consideration of the re-provision of the service was underway. The Forward Plan identified that a decision was scheduled for May 2017.

The group heard the range of options under consideration as follows:

- An existing 'out of area' local authority partnership
- The establishment of an 'in area' local authority partnership
- An 'in house' option
- Private sector provision

Officers explained each of the options in full, and having sought the advice of experienced consultants, each of the options had been appraised according to a clear specification and ranked accordingly. The specification was extensive and included

- Governance arrangements
- Performance, including processing times
- Customer service, including 'channel shift'
- Software
- Data cleansing
- Human resources
- Financial implications

Members expressed their thanks for the clarity of the explanation of each of the options and agreed that two of the options would not meet the needs of the council. Members felt that one of the options was particularly strong and offered the endorsement of the group to that option at this stage, noting that the group would be consulted again before the decision was made.

The meeting closed at 18:25

CHAIRMAN