

Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee Meeting held on 12 February 2014

Present: Brian Edwards (Chairman)

Ann Beech
Maureen Compton
Mark Deaville

Geoff Martin
Geoff Morrison
Neil Taylor

Also in attendance: Mark Winnington (Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure)

Apologies: George Adamson, Len Bloomer, Rachel Kidd-Smithers, Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf, Diane Todd and Ellen Wright

PART ONE

39. Declarations of Interest

There were none on this occasion.

40. Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 24 January 2014

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 24 January 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

41. Infrastructure+

The Committee considered the report of the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive that gave details of a decision due to be taken by Cabinet to select a partner to deliver services in relation to physical infrastructure.

The report highlighted the competitive dialogue approach that had been taken to develop the new outcome based contract approach rather than a traditional input output contract. It also included details of the reasons for taking this approach, the intended outcomes and services that were in scope. A detailed procurement process had been undertaken and AMEY LG Ltd had been selected as the preferred bidder and it was recommended that Cabinet agree to enter into a strategic partnership at its 19 March 2014 meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure highlighted the innovative nature of the proposed strategic partnership, which had led to national interest in the process. He emphasised the importance of democratic input into the process and confirmed that one of the key drivers was improved feedback mechanisms for the public. The Head of Place Delivery Ventures outlined key points from the business case for the project, including:-

- The intention had been to move away from a traditional infrastructure based contract to improve outcomes for the public, within the context of financial challenges facing the authority whilst allowing for future growth and benefit.
- The ending of the current highway maintenance contract, had provided an opportunity to include additional linked services in the overall scope and internal work had been undertaken to identify appropriate services to include.
- He summarised key elements of the procurement process, including work to assess the value of the individual elements of the contract, not just the overall cost. This had included assessment of identified cost elements such as staffing and the preferred bid from Amey had key benefits in this area through the life of the contract.
- Other key benefits from the preferred bid included learning from work in other areas that would deliver efficiency as well as technical benefits including linkages with the Council's Customer Relationship Management system. The bid also identified growth areas, including the environmental specialists managing Cannock Chase and a proposal to locate a 'design hub' in Staffordshire for wider work.
- Details were given of engagement with staff and other key stakeholders, which had been vital in developing a sustainable vision for the future. There would some staff transferring to Amey as a result but overall accountability for delivery of functions would remain with the Council.
- Discussions were ongoing around the detail of governance arrangements, in particular an effective approach to managing the contract given its innovative nature.
- Key risks for the project were also highlighted, in particular reputational issues due to the high visibility of the services involved. Other risks included outcome delivery and financial considerations relating to pensions.

During the discussion, Members raised the following points.

- The importance of the strategic partnership delivering benefits for the public was emphasised. In particular, Members highlighted the need to improve feedback and demonstrate service improvements such as effectively linking repair work to avoid double jobs.
- Members asked specifically about the plans for the management of Cannock Chase and the Head of Place Delivery Ventures highlighted the desire of Amey to retain current expertise and potentially grow the service. In response to a further question, he confirmed that they had experience of similar work in other parts of the country. The Cabinet Member also highlighted the unique nature of the contract and Amey's desire to create a centre of excellence.
- It was noted that the governance arrangements for monitoring the contract were still under development. Members suggested that the Select Committee should play a role in this process. The Head of Place Delivery Ventures commented that performance management would take place at different levels and that specific measures were under development. The Cabinet Member highlighted scrutiny's role in clearly monitoring outcomes.
- Members queried the impact of the strategic partnership on the management of Shugborough. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the partnership would include grounds maintenance but there was the potential for further developments that he would be happy to discuss with the Committee.
- The Head of Place Delivery Ventures was asked if there were plans to review linkages with District and Borough Councils. He highlighted areas such as grass cutting where there was current and potential overlap. Such areas were always

open for review to ensure both value for the public and improved services where possible. In response to a further question, he confirmed that the district highways liaison role was valued and would be maintained.

- In response to questions about staff transferring, it was confirmed that some staff would 'TUPE' to the new organisation. This would be where Amey could demonstrate that there were benefits in doing so and, as such the Head of Place Delivery Ventures was not able to give specific details. The Cabinet Member commented on the potential benefits for staff in progressing within a wider organisation.

RESOLVED – That

- 1) The recommendations to Cabinet be endorsed in principle.
- 2) Cabinet be asked to consider including a role for scrutiny in the contract monitoring arrangements.

42. Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. The Scrutiny and Support Manager commented on the number of items scheduled for the March and April meetings and confirmed that she was in discussions with relevant officer to determine the priority of individual items. She also confirmed that a request had been made to add an item on Household Waste Recycling centres and she was seeking further detail on this.

Members asked whether there would be value in undertaking further work on flood risk assessment and it was agreed that this would be added for consideration in the next municipal year along with the suggestion from the Cabinet Member in relation to Shugborough.

RESOLVED – That

- 1) Subject to further clarity on the timing and content from the Scrutiny and Support Manager, an item on Household Waste Recycling Centres be added to the work programme.
- 2) The work programme for the March and April 2014 meetings be confirmed by the Chairman following confirmation on the priority of individual items.
- 3) The recommendation of the Select Committee in regard to raising their concerns with Defra over the channelling of future flood risk funding be deferred until later in the year. This matter had been agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

Chairman