

WASTE, RECYCLING AND STREET CLEANSING CONTRACT

Item CE 25/13 referred from Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 5 March 2025

Following approval of the strategic approach to the re-commissioning of the Borough Council's Waste Services Contract in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council by Cabinet on 11 February 2025, consideration was given to a set of detailed specifications in relation to the procurement of the joint contract.

As highlighted in the report, when proposing future service provision, consideration had been given to current and pending government legislation, specially related to Simpler Recycling, Extended Producer Responsibility and the Deposit Return Scheme.

During discussion, Members made particular reference to the proposed contract duration, suspension of one collection of garden waste during Christmas period, improvement of street cleansing methodology as part of the areas identified for 'dialogue', inclusion of discretionary contract options and vehicle financing options. The grounds behind the specific proposals were explained and understood, and supported by Members in principle while it was acknowledged that all final tender submissions would still be subject to further consideration by the Scrutiny Select Committee before being presented to Cabinet for approval.

Furthermore, it was noted that the introduction of a 'dialogue' mechanism was regarded vital for the tender process in establishing viability, impact on service provision and the potential scale of contract cost reductions.

Finally, the option to utilise Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in the Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV) to achieve emission reductions was highly supported by Members, although the logistical challenge in respect of installation of or access to an HVO tank and the potential risk associated with the fluctuation in price were recognised. Members also noted that there would be opportunity within the proposed new contract to explore the introduction of electric vehicles when the majority of the fleet would be due for replacement in 2031, when the electric RCV market was anticipated to be more mature.

It was proposed by Cllr M Hood, seconded by Cllr F Hoskins that a joint working group of Officers and Members be established to consider contract variations following dialogue and negotiation ahead of the contractors' final bids on the grounds of the significance of the contract. This motion was defeated.

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the Competitive Flexible Procedure procurement route and timeline as outlined in Section 5.1 of the report, be agreed;
- (2) the proposed contract length of 12 years, as outlined in Section 5.2.1 of the report, be agreed;

- (3) joint delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Infrastructure and the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services to agree contract variations following dialogue and negotiation ahead of the contractors' final bids, as outlined in Section 5.1.5 of the report;
- (4) the proposed Specification amendment, highlighted in Section 5.3 of the report, be agreed and reflected in the tender pack;
- (5) the proposed areas of dialogue, as highlighted in Section 5.4 of the report, be agreed;
- (6) the proposed contract options, as highlighted in Section 5.5 of the report, be agreed;
- (7) the approach to vehicle finance options, as highlighted in Section 5.6 of the report, be determined by the Partner Authorities' Finance lead officers and be reported to the appropriate Committee and Cabinet;
- (8) the proposed method of contract indexation, as highlighted in Section 5.7 of the report, be agreed;
- (9) the proposed tender evaluation be progressed in accordance with Section 5.8 of the report; and
- (10) the proposed approach to decarbonisation, as highlighted in Section 12.7 of the report, be agreed.

***Recommended to Cabinet**