

MINUTE EXTRACT

CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Thursday 20 February 2025

25 REVIEW OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Director of Law and Corporate Services presented the report, which comprised the biennial review of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) which regulated the way in which the Council's contracts were procured. The last review took place in June 2022.

Since that review public procurement law had been significantly changed by the Procurement Act 2023 which came into force on 24 February 2025. The review incorporated into the Contract Procedure Rules referenced the changes that would be required when the Act became law.

Members queried why figures for contracts to be signed off by legal officers between £100,000 and £250,000 had not changed for a significant period of time.

Members welcomed the changes to the procedure rules. They commented that a revised Social Value policy would support these changes, and that this was the start of a long project of work.

The Head of Procurement informed members that officers had revised the Social Value policy, and that this was being presented to Directors for comment. The new policy would reflect that officers had recently engaged with the social value portal to help them track and monitor social value deliveries and commitments. In regard to the changes to the Procurement Act 2023, officers were organising events to inform local communities on the impact of the changes.

Members asked for reassurance that smaller local businesses would be provided with insight in how to submit bids to the Council, following the changes to the Procurement Act and the refreshed Social Value policy. The Head of Procurement confirmed that the intention was to support small businesses and ensure a level playing field. Officers were aware of the need to adjust the situation regarding social value. Council officers also offered a brokerage service to support the voluntary sector in the borough. The Head of Procurement also confirmed that there was training on Flo for both officers and members on the new Procurement Act.

In response to a question on how officers supported medium to small businesses, the Head of Procurement informed Members that they could not confirm that officers knew all of the businesses within the borough. There was ongoing work on this.

Members discussed the need to encourage local businesses taking on apprentices and the importance of opportunities for young people on the Wirral. It was agreed

that an update from the Assistant Director for People and Organisational Culture would be circulated on the number of apprentices within the Council and the Council's approach to this. Members also discussed the possibility of the Council's Communications Team of advertising for procurement opportunities to local businesses, which ward councillors could share on social media.

Resolved –

- 1. That the Constitution and Standards Committee approves the changes to the Contract Procedure Rules that were highlighted in the appendix to this report and recommend their adoption by the full Council as part of the Council's Constitution when the Procurement Act 2023 comes into force.**
- 2. To note that the Constitution and Standards Committee looks forward to a further progressive approach arising from the discussions in hand with local suppliers.**