



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Procurement**

Remotely via Teams

Thursday, 24 June 2021 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

P Downing
L R Jones
M Sherwood

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
J W Jones
T M White

Councillor(s)

I E Mann

Other Attendees

David Hopkins

Cabinet Member - Delivery & Operations (Deputy Leader)

Officer(s)

Adam Hill
Chris Williams
Michelle Roberts

Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Resources
Head of Commercial Services
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): B J Rowlands

1 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interest

None

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

4 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

5 Updated - Strategic Overview of Procurement

A detailed updated strategic overview of Procurement was presented to the Panel by the Cabinet Member for Delivery and Operations and Chris Williams, Head of Commercial Services. The report covered the following points and will form part of the inquiry evidence/findings report:

- Procurement Rules and Regulations
- Contract Procedure Rules
- Procurement Functions
- Procurement Methods and Processes
- Developments
- Beyond Bricks and Mortar
- Future Challenges and Opportunities; and
- Routes to the market
- Case study 1 – Framework Agreement for the Provision of Domiciliary Care and Respite at Home Services for Older People and Younger Adults with Physical Disabilities and/or Sensory Impairment
- Case study 2 – Swansea Highways

Following the discussion on the report the following points were raised and noted:

- Cabinet Member said he was proud of what we have done here in Swansea in relation to procurement, that we have a positive and active procurement team and he is proud of the work they have achieved.
- The Head of Commercial Services outlined two case studies which evidence how robust the system is and these give practical examples of how we deliver on the ground.
- How do we make it possible for some of our smaller local businesses to tender for contracts, when some contracts are so large, was asked. The Panel heard that some of our larger contracts are split into smaller portions so that smaller and medium sized providers can consider tendering. Procurement is constantly working on this aspect and is a core part of the Council's Covid Recovery Plan to include local providers. That all contracts are advertised on the Sell2Wales website. It is important to help the local area to prosper.
- Variations to contracts was raised, price variation after contract agreed. The Panel heard that there are two types of variation: time variation and cost variation. Changes to costs are agreed by Head of Service and Procurement Manager. We will work between both the contract procedure rules and the law and these determine whether changes are made.
- Importance of supplier awareness days recognised as a good opportunity for local companies and potential job creation. Panel asked how many people were on the local list. The Head of Commercial Services said he would find out and get back to the Panel. He also said that the Council does a lot of outreach with local companies so they are able to tender for contracts locally. The Panel agreed that how we grow these local businesses was as important as value for money and competitiveness.
- Do we work with Education/schools to ensure procurement practice is consistent and correct procedures are being used, was asked? The Panel heard that training is provided and that a factsheet has been produced so they understand the procedure rules and tendering. We also work with education around issues that might be highlighted through internal audit.
- Local procurement and how effective is that aim presently, example of Preston was raised? The Panel heard that the Council is absolutely committed to this approach and do so currently via the Public Service Board locally and with Welsh

Government, as well as engaging with a number of other organisations. We can see what others are doing in Wales via the Mid and West Wales Procurement network. The Panel agreed that this is a critical issue for the Council and will look in more detail at the impact of social procurement contracts.

The report today and these discussion points will form part of the panels evidence pack and findings report at the end of the inquiry.

6 Planning the Inquiry into Procurement - Terms of Reference

The Panel discussed and agreed their Terms of Reference and amended Project Plan for the inquiry which will start with a meeting with the Council's Internal Audit on 27 July 2021.

The meeting ended at 11.40 am

Chair