

MINUTES OF MEETING Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Wednesday, 3rd August, 2022, 12.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Ruth Gordon, Cabinet Member for Council House Building, Placemaking, and Development

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13. INTERIM ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY PROGRAMME - ALEXANDRA HOUSE & 48 STATION RD - AUDIO VISUAL CONTRACT AWARD

The Cabinet Member considered a report which sought approval for the award of a contract to carry out installation of Audio-Visual Equipment, following the approval of the Station Road Refurbishment Works programme at Cabinet in November 2021 and the Contract award for Alexandra House and 48 Station Road refurbishment works at Cabinet Member Signing on 18 March 2022.

The Cabinet Member sought assurances around the extent to which the price was locked-in, and that the Council wouldn't be incurring any increased costs from what was set out in the report. In response, officers advised that they had, as much as they were able to, tried to ensure that the price was fixed with the contractor. However, market conditions were quite volatile with long supply chains and inflationary pressures on AV goods and services. Officers had provided the contractor with a detailed price specification to provide as much price certainty as possible but there was still a chance that costs could fluctuate due market conditions. Officers advised the Cabinet member that there was a contingency set out within the report to cover upward fluctuation in the cost of the contract.

RESOLVED

The Cabinet Member for Council House-Building, Placemaking, and Development:

- I. Pursuant to Contract Standing Order 9.07.1 (d) (All contracts valued at £500,000 (five hundred thousand pounds) or more at the time of award may only be awarded, assigned, or novated by the Cabinet), approved the award of a contract to Supplier B for an estimated contract value of £786,013 (Seven hundred and eighty six thousand and thirteen pounds) for Audio-Visual equipment supply, installation and support in the Alexandra House and 48

Station Road buildings subject to the further provision recommended in paragraph 2.1 of the exempt report.

- II. Pursuant to Contract Standing Order 9.07.3, approved the issuance of a letter of intent for up to 10% of the contract value, totalling £78,600 (Seventy eight thousand, six hundred pounds).

Reasons for decision

The report “Station Road Refurbishment Works” approved at Cabinet on 9th November 2021 gave three reasons for the programme.

Firstly, to deliver office accommodation improvements, noting the poor standard of existing office accommodation, and the need for essential maintenance as well as interior redecoration.

Secondly, to enable the continued adoption of flexible working, so that officers can work in and for the borough. The plans will modernise Audio-Visual equipment, office layouts and furniture to provide a variety of work settings to enable greater cross service collaboration and partnership working.

Thirdly, it supports short-term goals in the Accommodation Strategy, such as the release of 40 Cumberland Road to be repurposed as an Enterprise Hub. This aligns with the overall aim of relocating core office and civic functions to the refurbished Civic Centre in 2025, by ensuring the buildings the Council occupies in the interim are maintained in suitable condition.

The proposed contract enables the Council to meet these objectives and achieve value for money in the delivery of the new Audio-Visual equipment needed on refurbished floors.

The letter of intent is required to enable the preferred contractor to begin mobilisation at an early stage, thereby expediting delivery of the goods in advance of the formal contract being fully finalised. The rationale for a letter of intent is further detailed in the exempt part of the report.

Alternative options considered

Do Nothing

This option, which would involve not awarding a contract to deliver new Audio-Visual equipment, would leave staff and visitors without the digital tools to stay informed or those required to facilitate flexible meetings, is not recommended as the Council would fail to achieve the agreed accommodation objectives as set out in the November cabinet report.

This would mean the Council would be left without suitable office workspace for its staff, and significant operational difficulties in achieving plans for more flexible working.

Ad-Hoc Audio-Visual Rollouts

Pre-pandemic this was the approach adopted by the Council. However, having multiple installations, standards and support models often left technologies unused, or poorly maintained.

A piecemeal approach is not realistic or appropriate in a context where the Council is refurbishing its core offices. The Council needs to provide AV technology in approximately 40 meeting rooms, and a common approach will achieve economies of scale, as well as a better experience for building users, including Members, staff and visitors.

14. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR ALEXANDRA HOUSE AND 48 STATION ROAD FURNITURE PURCHASING

The Cabinet Member considered a report which sought request approval to award a contract for furniture supply, following the approval of the Station Road Refurbishment Works programme at Cabinet in November 2021 and the Contract award for Alexandra House and 48 Station Road refurbishment works at Cabinet Member Signing on 18 March 2022.

In response to the Cabinet Member's concerns about increasing costs, officers advised that the costs involved in the furniture contract were fairly well locked down and that there was considerably less risk of any upward fluctuations in cost than with the AV contract.

RESOLVED

The Cabinet Member for Council House-Building, Placemaking, and Development:

- I. Pursuant to Contract Standing Order 9.07.1 (d) and Contract Standing Order 16.02, approved an award of contract to Wagstaff Bros Ltd (t/a Wagstaff Interiors Group) for the sum of £900,000 (Nine hundred thousand pounds) for furniture supply.
- II. Pursuant to Contract Standing Order 9.07.1 (d) and Contract Standing Order 16.02, approved the issuance of a letter of intent for up to 10% of the contract value, totalling £90,000 (Ninety thousand pounds).

Reasons for decision

The report "Station Road Refurbishment Works" approved at Cabinet on 9 November 2021 gave three reasons for the programme.

Firstly, to deliver office accommodation improvements, noting the poor standard of existing office accommodation, and the need for essential maintenance as well as interior redecoration.

Secondly, to enable the continued adoption of flexible working, so that officers can work in and for the borough, whilst maintaining a good work-life balance through the adoption of flexible working. The plans will modernise audio-visual equipment, office

layouts and furniture to provide a variety of work settings to enable greater cross-service collaboration and partnership working.

Thirdly, it supports short-term goals in the Accommodation Strategy, such as the release of 40 Cumberland Road to be repurposed as an Enterprise Hub. This aligns with the overall aim of relocating core office and civic functions to the refurbished Civic Centre in 2025, by ensuring the buildings the Council occupies in the interim are maintained in suitable condition.

The proposed contract enables the Council to meet these objectives and achieve value for money and delivery of the new furniture needed on refurbished floors.

The intention is to re-use the new furniture in the newly refurbished Civic Centre and/or other Council buildings.

The letter of intent is required to enable the preferred contractor to begin mobilisation at an early stage, thereby expediting delivery of the goods.

The proposed budget is fully covered within the Station Road budget approved at Cabinet on 9 November 2021.

Alternative options considered

Do Nothing

This option, which is not to appoint a new contractor to deliver new furniture and only re-use existing furniture, is not recommended as the Council would fail to achieve the agreed Accommodation objectives as set out in the November cabinet report.

This would mean the Council would be left without suitable office workspace for its staff, and significant operational difficulties in achieving plans for more flexible working.

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as Item 5 contained exempt information, as defined under paragraph 3 & paragraph 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

16. INTERIM ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY PROGRAMME - ALEXANDRA HOUSE & 48 STATION RD - AUDIO VISUAL CONTRACT AWARD - EXEMPT

The Cabinet Member noted the exempt section of the report.

17. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR ALEXANDRA HOUSE AND 48 STATION ROAD FURNITURE PURCHASING - EXEMPT

The Cabinet Member noted the exempt section of the report.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date