

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Thursday, 11th July, 2024, 13:00 – 13:05

PRESENT:

Councillors: Dana Carlin

ALSO ATTENDING: Kodi Sprott, Principal Committee Coordinator, Terese Johansson, Business Manager

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS

There were no deputations/petitions/questions.

6. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR PROVISION OF PATHOLOGISTS

Terese Johansson, Business Manager explained and summarised the report. This report seeks approval for the award of contract for the provision of services to supply pathologists to carry out post-mortem examinations on behalf of the Coroners at the North London Coroner's court.

The aim was to secure better continuity, stability and ensure value for money for the provision of post-mortem examinations over a longer period, by having one contracted supplier arranging the post-mortem examination rotas at the two mortuaries in the North London Coroner's area over a four-year contract period.

Cllr Carlin thanked officers for undergoing this exercise and noted the benefit to all users of the Coroner's Court.

RESOLVED

1. Approval of the award of a four-year contract for pathologists to carry out postmortem examinations on behalf of the Coroners at the North London Coroner's Court, to the supplier with the highest scored bid. The recommended total aggregate value of the contract is £2,500,000, to allow for contingency (details set out in Part B of the report).

Reasons for decision

The decision to engage a single supplier for pathologist services at the Coroner's Court is driven by the principle of obtaining the best value.

The lack of a formal contract has resulted in inconsistent pathologist availability. For years, the court has depended on an agency to fill this role, as it has been unable to secure pathologists at the statutory fee of £96.80 per post-mortem examination (PME).

Whilst coroners are responsible for selecting and instructing pathologists, the Council, as the Lead Authority, has conducted a procurement process to achieve more favourable pricing and to negotiate a comprehensive agreement with a provider.

A formal contract with a single provider will create a structure for accountability and ongoing improvements. This will allow the Council to effectively oversee service quality and make timely modifications to meet changing needs.

The recommendation to engage a dependable pathologist supplier is a calculated strategy to remedy the current issues and ensure best value for the Council.

Alternative options considered

The possibility of maintaining the current practice, whereby the coroners direct pathologists to perform post-mortem examinations without a formalised service contract was considered. However, this method was determined to be fiscally untenable. The approach was deemed financially unsustainable due to the significant costs associated with each post-mortem examination, and this was exaggerated with high volumes of post-mortems carried out each year in the North London Coroner Area.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To exclude the press and public from the meeting as it contains exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985); paras 3 and 5, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

8. EXEMPT - AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR PROVISION OF PATHOLOGISTS

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services considered the exempt information.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date

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