

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2022

PRESENT

Councillor K. Procter (in the Chair).

Councillors J. Holden (Vice-Chair), D. Jerrome, A. New, J.D. Newgrosh, D. Western, Mr. C.E.J. Griffiths, Mr R. Brown and A. Rudden

In attendance

Dominique Sykes Deputy Monitoring Officer
Alexander Murray Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr. S. Carr, Councillor J. Dillon, Councillor S.J. Gilbert, Councillor P. Myers, Mr. D. Goodman, N. Jackson and Mr M. Whiting

12. MINUTES

Mr Griffiths drew the Committee's attention to several typos within the minutes. Mr Griffiths asked whether the changes proposed by the Committee had been made to the proposed code of conduct and the progress made regarding the publishing of Members addresses. The Deputy Monitoring Officer responded that the proposed changes had been made and the work on publishing councillor address had progressed according to the steps provided within the report provided at the last meeting.

RESOLVED: Following the amendment to the typos raised by Mr Griffiths that the minutes of the meeting 12 December 2021 be agreed as an accurate record.

13. CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Monitoring Officer delivered a presentation on the Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) to the Committee. The Committee were informed of the purpose of the CPRs and that they had last been agreed when STAR Procurement was originally set up. The review had considered changes in legislation including Brexit and attempts had been made to future proof the CPRs by looking at expected legislative changes. Trafford had led the review from September 2021 and following its conclusion the updated CPRs had to be approved by all four authorities who were members of STAR Procurement. The majority of the CPRs had remained the same, as they were dictated by legislation. One of the main changes was that the level of expenditure which needed only one quote had been increased from £4999 to £9999. The change was made as it had been found that gaining three quotes for small amounts was difficult and caused delays. Provision was provided within the CPRs for local rules to be added for each authority. As it stood no Council had put any local rules in place.

The review provided an opportunity to revise how the CPRs allowed modifications to contracts, especially following lessons learned from the pandemic. The process for extending a contract in exceptional circumstances had been streamlined, as

Standards Committee
14.3.22

the previous process was arduous and had caused delays during the Covid pandemic. The revised process gave additional grounds to allow the extension of contracts in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of Monitoring Officer or 151 officer.

The final slide detailed the process the CPRs had been through for approval with them being taken to Scrutiny on the 15th of March, the Executive on the 21st of March, and Council on the 25th of May 2022. The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that if they had any series concerns then the CPRs could be taken back to address those issues before moving forward.

Following the presentation, the Chair went over the recommendations of the report then gave the Committee the opportunity to ask questions. Councillor Newgrosh asked what percentage of the contracts within the Council were to be affected by the changes. Did not have that to hand but can get that information for Councillor Newgrosh.

Mr Brown asked what provisions were in place for conflict resolution between the different STAR Local Authorities. The Monitoring Officer went through the Governance arrangements in place for STAR Procurement and the STAR Joint Committee.

Mr Brown noted the number of acronyms used in the document and asked whether it was due to being an internal document or if they required simplifying. The Monitoring Officer drew Mr Brown's attention to the definitions provided within the document.

Mr Brown asked if there was a training and implementation plan for the changes. The Monitoring Officer responded that it would not lead to any great changes in how people worked but training would be provided to the procurement team who would disseminate the information to their colleagues within their respective Councils.

Following the questions and responses the recommendations were moved and agreed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and recommendations agreed.

14. SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Governance Manager gave an overview of the report to the Committee. The review had identified that all the elements required for having successful scrutiny were all present in Trafford, as noted by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. The changes proposed by the review would be an evolution rather than revolution in the Council's approach to turn good scrutiny into great scrutiny.

The Chair noted that the report was very positive and picked out some of recommendations he felt would be aid in improving the Council's Scrutiny function.

Standards Committee (14.3.22)

Mr Brown noted that there was no reference to the Standards Committee within the report and wondered if there would be any role for the Committee in the Scrutiny function. The Governance Manager explained the role of Scrutiny and how the Standards Committee would only be involved in the Scrutiny Function in exceptional circumstances.

Councillor Jerome highlighted that one of the key elements was getting the work of scrutiny to be more well known within the Council and enabling more Councillors to be involved.

Councillor Western spoke of the desire for pre-decision scrutiny and how the recommendation to have meetings with Executive Members and Lead Officers would improve the Scrutiny Function.

Mr Griffiths expressed it was a very good report, but scrutiny was a function that he was not aware of. The Governance Manager responded that one of the areas for improvement identified was to increase the publicity of scrutiny and Connection to residents.

Following the questions the Chair moved the recommendations, which were seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and recommendations agreed.

15. MONITORING OFFICERS REPORT

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that nothing had arisen since the last meeting which needed to be brought to their attention.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.15 pm

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