

Law & Governance

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Date: 08 March 2023

Dear Councillor Snowton, Chair of Scrutiny Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Head of Law & Governance to seek your agreement that the deferral of an urgent key decision which has not been notified on the Forward Plan for 28 days, as required by the Council's Constitution (Part 15.17), would not be reasonable.

The urgent decision to be taken on 10 March 2023 concerns the submission of a bid for the contract to deliver the South & Vale Home Improvement Agency (HIA) and provision of assistance to South & Vale to deal with a backlog of applications for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). The HIA contract would amount to an income to the Council of up to approximately £1.8m over 5 years and the provision of assistance with the DFG backlog would amount to an income of up to approximately £200,000 to the Council.

This will be a key decision due to the value of the decision amounting to expenditure over £500,000 in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, but there is insufficient time to notify the decision on the Forward Plan for 28 days due to the submission deadline for the bid being on 13 March 2023.

It is proposed that a single Cabinet Member decision is taken by the Cabinet Member for Housing to approve the submission of the bid and provision of assistance with the backlog of DFG applications, delegation of authority to the Executive Director (Communities and People) to submit the bid and enter into the contract up to a value of £1.8m if the bid is successful, recommendation to Council around relevant budgetary provisions (income) and delegation of authority to the Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety to enter into a contract up to a value of £200,000 for the assistance with the DFG applications backlog.

Key decisions are normally required to be notified on the Forward Plan for 28 days before being taken but the law and the Council's Constitution (Part 15.17) provide for urgency rules where a key decision can be taken without prior notice if the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee agrees that it would not be reasonable to defer the decision.

Key decisions are also subject to call-in by the Chair of Scrutiny or any four councillors within 2 clear working days of the notice of decision being published. Urgency rules set out in Part 17.9 of the Council's Constitution enable the waiving of the call-in period where the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision to be taken is both urgent and reasonable and the delay caused by the call-in process would not be in the interests of the Council or the public.

Due to the timescales required in respect of this decision, in this case the fact that the submission deadline for the bid is 13 March 2023, there is insufficient time to allow for the usual two day time period for call-in, therefore I am seeking your permission to waive members' rights to call-in the decision under Part 17.9 of the Constitution. Provided you agree, this would mean that the decision can be taken and implemented immediately.

Please note that a copy of this letter will be attached to the public decision notice of this urgent key decision and the urgent key decision will be reported to a meeting of Council in due course.

With best wishes,

Alice Courtney

Alice Courtney
Committee & Member Services Manager (Interim Acting)