

Report to: Executive Cabinet Member
Environmental Services

Date: 11 Feb 2019

Report of: Director of Place

Report No: ECMES/485

Contact Officer: Kevan Roberts

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Report Title: **Municipal Funeral Contract**

**Confidential /
Non Confidential:**

This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public.

Purpose:

To request approval from the Executive Cabinet Member to carry out and complete the procurement tender process for the provision of a Municipal Funeral Contract.

Recommendations:

The Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services is requested to:

- a) Delegate authority to the Director of Place to tender for the provision of a Municipal Funeral Contract (Type 1 Funerals) in conjunction with the Council's Corporate Procurement team.
- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Place to appoint the most economically advantageous tenderer with effect from 24th May 2019 and to negotiate and complete a contract for the provision of Type 1 Funerals in accordance with the advertised tender documentation.
- c) Delegate authority to The Borough Solicitor to carry out all the necessary legal formalities in relation to the above.

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

11 Feb 2019

Summary:

1. Background

- 1.1. The Council has a statutory obligation under the Public Health Act 1984 to arrange the disposal of any person who dies within its boundary where no other funeral arrangements are being made ("Type 1 Funerals"). The Council has the power to recover costs from the deceased's estate, if available. The Coroner is responsible for searching for relatives and the Coroner will only release the body of a deceased person to the Council once investigations have been completed.
- 1.2. Currently, the Council also assists Bolton residents with limited funds by contracting with a provider to offer a simple, lower cost funeral package with a named funeral director. This is a "Type 2 Funeral" and is arranged directly between the deceased's family or friends and the funeral director in accordance with the contract that the Council has put in place. There is no direct involvement from the Council except to make residents aware of the service, where appropriate.
- 1.3. The current contracts for the delivery of Type 1 Funerals and Type 2 Funerals is held by Funeral Services Ltd trading as the Co-Operative Funeral Group. Both current contracts expire on 23rd May 2019.
- 1.4. It is proposed that the Council tenders for the delivery of Type 1 Funerals for a term of 2 years with the option to extend that term for another year.
- 1.5. The delivery of Type 1 Funerals is a statutory obligation managed by the Dept of People; annual costs for 16/17 were £27,729.00 and approximately 40% of costs were recovered by the Council (£11,107.07 towards the funeral costs & £1592.30 in Admin Fees). This framework agreement detailing a funeral package option places no financial commitment on the Bereavement Services budget.
- 1.6. It is proposed that the Council does not tender Type 2 Funerals, as detailed below.

2. Why are external funeral services required?

- 2.1. Over the past 3 years there have been between 24 and 26 Type 1 Funerals each year. In 2018 there have been 18, up to the end of November.
- 2.2. In 2014/15 there were 30 Type 2 Funerals. Over the following 3 years there were 26 in total (6 from January 2018). This declining trend is due to the introduction of competitively priced simple funerals offered by a number of other funeral companies on the market. These alternatives are often provided at a lower cost than the current Type 2 Funerals and allow customers to shop around for their preferred provider.
- 2.3. Due to the increasing availability of lower cost alternatives it is therefore recommended that Type 2 Funerals are no longer offered via the Council.

3. Tender Process

3.1. It is proposed that a new contract for Type 1 Funerals be tendered in accordance with Standing Orders relating to Contracts for a term of two years with an option to extend the contract for a further year, subject to performance.

3.2. The proposed tender process would follow standard Council procurement practice, with an indicative timeline as follows:

Tender process start date – 18 Feb 2019

Invitation to tender – 6 March 2019

Contract starts – 24th May 2019

4. Tender Evaluation Process

4.1. A contract for the delivery of Type 1 Funerals would be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender to the Council based on the evaluation criteria of (50%) Price, (40%) Quality and (10%) Corporate Social Responsibility (including Sustainability and The Social Value Act).

5. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

5.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council must have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

5.2. It is important to consider how the proposals contained within this report may positively or negatively affect this work. After initial equality screening, it has been determined that the services outlined in this report related to ongoing operational practices, which are subject to external procurement, where initial impacts on user groups is an essential criterion. It is not anticipated therefore, that the proposals within this report will have a differential impact on any of Bolton's diversity groups, including staff. A full EIA screening form is therefore not required.

6. Recommendations

6.1. The Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services is requested to:

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- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Place to appoint the most economically advantageous tenderer with effect from 24th May 2019 and to negotiate and complete a contract for the provision of Type 1 Funerals in accordance with the advertised tender documentation.
- c) Delegate authority to The Borough Solicitor to carry out all the necessary legal formalities in relation to the above.