

From: Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

Rebecca Spore, Corporate Director, Infrastructure

Zena Cooke, Corporate Director, Finance

To: **Roger Gough, Leader of the Council**

Decision No: 20/00034

Subject: Procurement of Temporary Body Storage Facilities

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

To support the COVID-19 response, and the statutory obligation for KCC to provide mortuary space in an excess death scenario, it is necessary to establish and maintain additional temporary body storage solutions throughout Kent and Medway (at one or more locations yet to be decided).

This paper seeks approval to provide delegations to allow preferred sites to be scoped, enabling works to be completed, necessary land arrangements and contracts to be put in place to facilitate the provision and operation of additional mortuary capacity that may be required to support the COVID-19 emergency response.

Recommendation(s):

The Leader of the Council is asked to approve the procurement and setup arrangements for temporary morgue facilities to provide additional capacity projected to be required as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This approval includes agreement;

I. to approve the virement of £11m from reserves to support the procurement and management of temporary body storage solutions throughout Kent and Medway (at one or more locations extent to be decided) to provide additional capacity as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Such solutions shall include, but not be limited solely to, site preparation, installation of temporary structure and equipment, management of the site, security and access control, facility management, ICT and technical systems support, body storage management, transportation and traffic management services to and from the location(s), demobilisation and site clearance including any decontamination; management and staffing and

II. to delegate authority under the Scheme of Officer Delegations to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Corporate Director for Finance and the Monitoring Officer, to take relevant actions, including but not limited entering into contracts and other legal agreements required to ensure the effective operation and delivery of the increased mortuary capacity, as necessary to implement this decision; and

III. to delegate authority under the Scheme of Officer Delegations to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, the Corporate Director for Finance, the monitoring officer and the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport to direct the use of KCC land and/ or finalise the terms and enter into the necessary contracts and legal land agreements required to enable the provision and operation of the mortuary capacity, and take other appropriate actions in relation to Property Management and Infrastructure activity, necessary to implement this decision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 12 January 2020, it was announced that a new coronavirus had been identified. COVID-19 is highly contagious and the World Health Organisation has declared the risk and spread of the disease as a pandemic with Europe now at its epicentre. Although the Government has taken action to control the spread and rate of infection, there is expected to be a higher number of deaths resulting from the disease, than would ordinarily be experienced from other causes.
- 1.2 To support the COVID-19 response and the statutory obligation for KCC to provide mortuary space in an excess death scenario, a number of sites have been identified to support requirements determined by national planning assumptions.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 As the understanding of the virus' epidemiology is rapidly evolving, KCC has been instructed to respond to national modelling figures. KRF's EDMG has translated these assumptions into local demand forecasts.
- 2.2 The initial estimate is that funding up to £11m will be required to rapidly respond to a number of potential scenarios based on a range of options for body storage. The Section 151 Officer has confirmed that this funding can be drawn down from reserves. It is anticipated that all costs will be reimbursed to KCC via National Government funding allocations.
- 2.2 This initial estimate is to provide, but not be limited solely to, site preparation and enabling works, installations of temporary structures and equipment, procurement of equipment and services to facilitate site operation, security provision, facilities management, ICT and technical systems support, body storage management, transportation and traffic management services to and

from the location(s), demobilisation and site clearance (including any decontamination works) and management and staffing costs.

2.3 This initial estimate considers 3 separate locations with an overall maximum storage capacity of 3,000.

2.4 It is expected one facility is required to operate for 40 weeks, one for 30 weeks and one for 20 weeks.

3. Policy Framework

3.1 KCC has an obligation under the Civil Contingency Act 2004 to take the lead in responding to humanitarian impacts that result from an emergency that straddles more than one District within the county.

4. Report

4.1 Urgent work is underway to identify preferred sites, equipment and service providers, sector specific supply chain, facilities and management organisations to ensure consistent and industry standard operation.

4.2 Current delivery risks are outlined below;

1. Unable to secure an appropriate site or issues with securing a third-party site outside of KCC's ownership.
2. Regulatory delays such as environmental health and planning requirements.
3. Unable to secure supplies and labour to complete any enabling works.
4. Increased costs due to high demand and speed of implementation.
5. Community tension as a result of the sensitive use of site.
6. Costs are not recovered from Government.
7. Fatalities exceed stipulated planning assumptions and the facilities provided fail to support the required capacity.

4.3 Officers will seek to mitigate each risk at the appropriate time using the most up to date available modelling and commercial information.

5. Equality, Legal and Data Protection Implications

5.1 An EqIA is attached.

5.2 KCC has an obligation under the Civil Contingency Act 2004 to take the lead in responding to humanitarian impacts that result from an emergency that straddles more than one District within the county.

5.3 KCC also has a statutory obligation to make provision for the storage of bodies of deceased persons whose death is referred to the coroner.

5.4 There are no data protection issues arising from the procurement decisions.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 COVID-19 is highly contagious new coronavirus which the World Health Organisation has declared as a pandemic. Although mortality rates from the disease are lower than for other viruses (for example SARS), the level of contagion means that a high proportion of the population are likely to be infected, with older people and those with underlying health conditions at most risk.
- 6.2 In line with Government modelling and KRF EDMG planning assumptions, KCC has to secure the provision of additional body storage solutions through Kent and Medway to cope with the forecast number of excess deaths.

7. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s): The Leader of the Council is asked to approve the procurement and setup arrangements for temporary morgue facilities to provide additional capacity projected to be required as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This approval includes agreement;

I. to approve the virement of £11m from reserves to support the procurement and management of temporary body storage solutions throughout Kent and Medway (at one or more locations extent to be decided) to provide additional capacity as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Such solutions shall include, but not be limited solely to, site preparation, installation of temporary structure and equipment, management of the site, security and access control, facility management, ICT and technical systems support, body storage management, transportation and traffic management services to and from the location(s), demobilisation and site clearance including any decontamination; management and staffing and

II. to delegate authority under the Scheme of Officer Delegations to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Corporate Director for Finance and the Monitoring Officer, to take relevant actions, including but not limited entering into contracts and other legal agreements required to ensure the effective operation and delivery of the increased mortuary capacity, as necessary to implement this decision; and

III. to delegate authority under the Scheme of Officer Delegations to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, the Corporate Director for Finance, the monitoring officer and the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport to direct the use of KCC land and/ or finalise the terms and enter into the necessary contracts and legal land agreements required to enable the provision and operation of the mortuary capacity, and take other appropriate actions in relation

to Property Management and Infrastructure activity, necessary to implement this decision.

8. Background Documents

8.1 Coronavirus Emergency Legislation

9. Contact details

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