

## Coroner Service Mortuary Facilities Contract

To: Communities. Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 1 November 2022

From: Assistant Director Regulatory Services, Peter Gel

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2022/064

Outcome: The initiation of a procurement process for mortuary provision in the north of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Coronial Jurisdiction.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve the procurement exercise for mortuary provision, as set out in section 2.1 of the report; and
- b) Delegate responsibility for awarding the contract to the Executive Director for Place and Sustainability, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee.

### Officer contact:

Name: Rachel Lovelidge  
Post: Coroners Service Business Manager  
Email: [Rachel.lovelidge@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.lovelidge@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0345 045 1364

### Member contacts:

Names: Councillor Tom Sanderson and Councillor Hilary Cox Condron  
Post: Chair / Vice-Chair  
Email: [Tom.sanderson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tom.sanderson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
[Hilary.CoxCondron@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Hilary.CoxCondron@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398

## 1. Background

- 1.1 For the HM Coroner to be able to fulfil their statutory duties associated with determining the identity of the deceased, together with how, when and where they became deceased, it is necessary to have arrangements in place for mortuary services, including body storage and post-mortem facilities. It is the Council's responsibility to provide the Coroner with such services.
- 1.2 In 2021, 2,905 deaths were reported to the Coroner, of which 1,472 required a post-mortem. Based on the figures for Quarter 1 2022/23, it is anticipated that there will be around 3,200 reported deaths for the service by the end of the financial year, as well as a proportionate rise in post-mortem examinations.
- 1.3 Cambridge University Hospital (Addenbrookes Hospital) and the North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust (NWAFT) at Peterborough City Hospital currently both provide the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Coronial Jurisdiction with full mortuary services, including body storage and post-mortem facilities. All the post-mortems for the service are currently carried out in these two hospitals. There have been two contracts in place, as no one service provider in the area has the capacity to meet the needs of the Coroners Service.

## 2. Main Issues

### 2.1 Procurement of a new contract

- 2.1.1 The contract held by NWAFT for mortuary services expires on 31 March 2023. Therefore, it is necessary to commence a procurement exercise to ensure the tender process is completed in time to ensure a smooth transition to new contractual arrangements from 1 April 2023. Rather than seeking an extension of the current contract, it would be beneficial to review and update the contract terms and go out to tender. The process would be an open tender, and therefore out to market for a minimum of 30 days.
- 2.1.2 In line with other contractual arrangements for the service, the intention is to go out to tender with a three-year contract offer. The value of the contract is expected to be in the region of £900,000, based on the current contract value, although it is more difficult to predict contract values at present due to the prevailing economic climate.
- 2.1.3 It has not yet been decided whether the contract will include an extension option beyond the initial three-year term. The availability of any extension option will be agreed with the Procurement Team and notified as part of the contract notice.
- 2.1.4 During the tender process, a separate question will be included to understand what social value benefits each service provider is intending to offer.

### 2.2 Body Storage

The successful service provider will store bodies under the jurisdiction of the Coroner in refrigerated facilities while investigations are ongoing into the cause of death, and until the

Coroner releases the bodies to the funeral director or other individual appointed by the deceased person's next-of-kin.

## 2.3 Post mortem facilities

The successful service provider will provide the facilities and equipment required to conduct post-mortems. The premises are required to be licensed by the Human Tissue Authority and accredited by Clinical Pathology Accreditation.

## 2.4 Staffing

Staff will be provided by the service provider to complete post mortem examinations, and to care for the bodies. Pathologists will be approved by HM Coroner to conduct all Coroner post mortems.

## 2.5 Post Mortem Examination

Examinations will be conducted as soon as possible, and always within three working days of permission to proceed having been received from the Coroner or Coroners Service.

# 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

## 3.1 Environment and Sustainability

Mortuary provision in the north of the County ensures travel is reduced, positively impacting on carbon reduction and contributing to the Council's carbon reduction target.

## 3.2 Health and Care

Outcomes of pathology examinations feed into the wider coronial investigation, of which findings can help inform improvements required in working practices of partner agencies, and can consequently prevent future deaths and improve the lives of others.

Procurement of mortuary facilities across the County helps support local care trusts by ensuring no one provider is oversubscribed, providing a timely examination, and contributing to efficiency of coronial investigations.

## 3.3 Places and Communities

The Service plays a role in supporting bereaved family members and friends, helping them through a challenging time during a coronial investigation. Adequate mortuary facilities across the County ensures individual cases can be dealt with in a timely manner.

## 3.4 Children and Young People

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 3.5 Transport

Outcomes of pathology examinations feed into the wider coronial investigation, and lessons learnt can help inform future safety of Cambridgeshire's roads, footways and cycle ways.

## 4. Significant Implications

### 4.1 Resource Implications

This cost of this contract is budgeted for within the coroner's budget. This is a Key Decision due to the contract value.

### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The contract procurement will be conducted in accordance with Council Contract Procedure Rules, and with the support of the Procurement Team.

### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide the necessary resources to deliver the Coroners Service. This is also a high-profile service and therefore carries reputational risk implications.

### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.7 Public Health Implications

The Mortuary Service supports the role of the Coroner, who has an important public health role in terms of monitoring deaths, identifying any untoward issues, trends, and avoidable deaths.

### 4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Status: neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Status: neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Status: neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Status: neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Status: neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Status: neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Status: neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement and Commercial? Yes

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Legal Services? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User? Yes

Name of Officer: Elsa Evans

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Amanda Rose

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes or No  
Name of Officer: Peter Gell

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes  
Name of Officer: Val Thomas

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? Yes  
Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

## 5. Source Documents

5.1 None