

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to approve the procurement and award of framework contract for the provision of removal of bodies for the Coroner
Date of decision:	19 December 2024
Decision maker:	Director of Governance and Law
Authority for delegated decision:	The chief executive's scheme of delegation Under general delegations the Director of Governance and Law has delegated power to act on behalf of the council in relation to any incidental operational matters within the service areas for which they are responsible, including spending decisions, and shall be in accordance with contract and financial procedure rules and approved capital and revenue budgets.
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	Not required. Internal staff, the Coroner and Coroners Officers (who are employed by the police) will be involved in this tender exercise.
Decision made:	Agree the procurement and award a contract for the provision of a service for the removal of bodies required by the Coroner, for a period of up to 5 years (4 years plus possible 1 year extension) at a total cost of up to £110k.
Reasons for decision:	The current contract which operates as an approved list was procured in 2022 for a 1 year period with the possibility of extension for a further 2 years on an annual basis. The current extensions will expire in March 2025. A number of new funeral directors have requested to join this approved list. In addition, costs have increased, as they have generally, and therefore need to be reviewed.
Equality Considerations	All necessary accessibility requirements will form part of the invitation to tender.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	This award of contract for up to 5 years will require a financial commitment of up to £110k. It will be a framework contract arrangement with no guarantee of volumes of work. Funeral Directors accepted onto the framework, will respond to requests from the Coroners staff for the removal of a body, and this has to be achieved within a set time limit of 1.5 hours. Bodies will need to be transported to a mortuary either within or outside Herefordshire, or stored by the Funeral Director if necessary. The invitation to tender lays out the standards of service required for this work, including Health and Safety arrangements and best practice guidance in the storage, transportation and staffing requirements. Providers will need to be a member of either the National Association of Funeral Directors or the Society of Allied and Independent Funerals or have

	a minimum of 3 years' experience providing funeral directing within Herefordshire or a neighbouring County. This will all form part of the evaluation of tenders received.
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Continuation of the current contract with no exercise to include additional providers. Rejected as having additional providers will offer more flexibility and cover for the service. Continuation of the current contract and run a tender exercise to allow additional providers to potentially join the existing approved list. Rejected as the work required to run a tender purely for this is much the same as to run a full tender, which would need to be done anyway in 2025.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None declared

Signed.....Claire Porter..... Date: 19.12.2024