

Andrew Barrett-Miles

Chairman of the Environment, Communities
and Fire Select Committee

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Dear Pieter,

At its meeting on 21 September 2018, the Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee was updated on the work to procure a new Highways Maintenance Contract. The scrutiny was undertaken in part II.

Questioning focussed in the main around the project control and governance regime, which appears to have followed the standard Council practice for large scale procurements.

The members raise several concerns about the governance of this procurement process including:

- The relationship between the senior project board and the project team and their roles and responsibilities.
- An uncertain decision-making process, resulting in some important decisions being made by relatively "junior" individuals in the project team
- No designated person in charge of the project i.e. a project director
- An over-reliance on consultants, both technical and legal
- Lack of risk analysis when critical decisions were made.

The Committee observed that these concerns could also apply to all large procurements undertaken by the County Council.

At the conclusion of the item, the Committee agreed I should write to you, requesting that the Performance and Finance Select Committee considers establishing a Task and Finish Group (TFG) to examine the governance arrangements applied to large scale procurements, in the light of the Highways Maintenance Contract experience – with a view to addressing any shortcomings in our processes identified by the Group. This would complement the recent TFG led by Mr Roger Elkins, which considered the steps needed to improve monitoring of the performance and control of the delivery of services from large procurement contracts.

Please let me know in case it would be helpful to discuss this in more detail with you.

With best regards,

Andrew Barrett-Miles

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Barrett-Miles', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chairman, Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee