

MINUTES OF MEETING Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Thursday, 14th September, 2023, 3.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Dana Carlin

ALSO ATTENDING: Andy Briggs (Assistant Director for Customer Services), David Graaff (Head of Service Delivery) and Felicity Foley (Committees Manager)

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / QUESTIONS

There were no deputations / petitions / presentations / questions.

6. TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY AND SUPPORT OF A CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP PLATFORM

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Investment considered the report which sought approval to award a contract for the Granicus Digital Customer Relationship Platform (CRM), providing CRM and online MyAccount continuity and improved services as part of Corporate Delivery Plan, Think Haringey First and the Resident Experience Programme.

The Assistant Director for Customer Services advised that the contract would be for a period of 2 years with options to extend for up to 1 further year at a total cost for the 3 years not exceeding £931,497. This would enable the service to consider the future requirements for council services, before looking to retender the contract.

The Cabinet Member requested that consideration be given to a more joined up Customer Relationship Management system across the Council, so that different systems were not being used in different departments and for residents to receive the best service from the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Investment RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the award of a contract for the supply and support of Granicus Customer Platform software for a period of 2 years from 1st November 2023 to 31st October 2025 at the value of £519,498 with the option to extend by a further 1 year to 31st October 2026 at the value of £411,999. The total contract value including draw down options is £931,497 over the 3-year period.
2. Note that the contractually committed cost for the baseline product in year 1 is £171,499 and for year 2 and 3 it is £133,999 per annum making a total baseline product cost of £439,497
3. Note that in addition to the baseline product cost the contract will allow for draw down options. The value of these options is £214,000 for year 2, and £278,000 for year 3 giving a total over 3 years of £492,000. This is required now so spend is approved when the draw down options are required, and their individual business cases and budget have been approved. The options are available but not mandatory or authorised at point of contract award.
4. Note that for the agreed draw down options the Director Culture, Strategy and Engagement or Director accountable for the line of services at that time will have the delegated authority to authorise contractual draw down options without lead member sign off.

Reasons for decision

The current contract for Granicus expires in November 2023. We have already expedited our 2 years plus 2 x 1-year extensions under GCloud 11. The new contract would be under GCloud 13 for 2 years plus 1.

The new contract will enable business continuity of the newly implemented resident digital provisions plus provide the means to significantly enhance the digital service offer to residents, businesses, agencies and services making it easier to access, transact and receive updates on Council services.

Agreeing this new contract under the GCloud13 for 2 years plus 1 will allow the council to do market engagement, peer review with other councils and define the long-term strategic aspirations for a modern council in terms of how it manages customer data and develops its online service offer.

Procurement of the solution allows the Council to maintain the improvement to resident journeys developed as part of Phase 1 of the project, including:

- Housing
- Council Tax and Benefits
- Environment & Resident Experience
- Parking
- Financial Support/Connected Communities

Continued development of the Customer Service Hub (CRM) will improve resident self-service and digital transactions, increase channel shift and improve assisted services for residents who are not digitally enabled

Residents will see benefits from an improved service offering.

- Better utilisation of automation, auto population and smart forms so that residents do not have to repeat information already submitted (shorter call times).
- Increase in customer satisfaction markers.
- Reduction in complaints.
- Haringey branding will remain consistent between the forms and CRM.
- Smooth and easier digital journeys will encourage residents to adopt other digital journeys within Haringey.
- More engaged residents in the digital journey that works for them.
- Reduction in demand failure
- Increased first time resolution.
- Improved single interactions for multiple queries.
- Improved resident journey histories
- Improved case management and history for complex resident service requests.
- Reduction in member escalations.

There will be an increase in online transactions and self-serve.

- Assisted channel shift.
- Integrated payment process
- Increased adoption of customers using digital channels.
- Increased adoption of self service across Council service provisions.

Employee Engagement will improve.

- Creating better resident journeys and visibilities will create more trust with our residents which will reduce conflict on calls with our staff.
- Staff will feel they have more purpose by being able to help residents better, improved communication and resolutions. By reducing fewer complex enquiries staff will be able to provide more support on complex cases for resident's wellbeing
- Staff will be more confident to deal with queries
- Staff will be more confident to deal with escalations
- Improved staff retention.
- Staff will care more which will improve the quality of service to our residents

Alternative options considered

Do Nothing

- If the Council does not re-procure the customer platform, we will see severe disruption to resident experience due to the removal of the newly implemented CRM in the contact centre and housing and the withdrawal of the new resident online digital offering.
- The inability to digitally transact centrally,
- The inability to have conversations with Customer Service using case history (e.g., every time they call, they will have to start from the beginning as no case history is available)
- The end of single sign-on functionality resulting in a fractured digital experience with the Council

This will result in residents having a poor experience and interactions with the Council due to increased voice traffic, increased complaints and increased failure demand impacting on the resident journeys.

By removal of online digital centralised platform and CRM capability in customer service the resident future adoption of digital would be impacted whilst regressing the resident promise to increase trust in Haringey.

Go to open market to procure another CRM.

If the Council were to stop and procure another product in November 2023, we would regress 1 ½ to 2 years whilst we re-initiate a new programme, impacting on residents' wellbeing, present online adoption and digital capability.

If we need run two simultaneously, we will have to pay for 2 contracts at the same time for a year and ½ for the period above. (250k plus new contract value).

Significant investment has been made on the Granicus platform and development which could not be recuperated if we moved to another platform at this time. This would impact future digital adoption by creating a fractured journey, which could delay benefit realisation in the future.

At present we have a team of experienced Granicus developers and delivery, there is a risk dependent on acquiring a new product requiring additional or more expensive resources based on skill set and delivery requirements.

7. SECTION 13A AMENDMENTS

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Investment considered the report which sought approval for the implementation of the new Discretionary Relief Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. The report summarised the proposed changes to the Haringey Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy for the Award of Discretionary Reductions in Council Tax Liability under Section 13A(1)(c) Local Government

Finance Act 1992 to be introduced from 1st November 2023. The report also recommended options to improve the applicant's experience.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Investment RESOLVED to

1. Agree the new Discretionary Relief Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and note that it will come into force on 1st November 2023.

Reasons for decision

The Discretionary Relief Policy is a way the Council can redistribute the financial burden on Council Taxpayers and provide additional support to those in exceptional financial hardship due to extenuating circumstances.

The reasons for proposing the key changes are as follows.

Including homeowners

The key change in the policy is to extend the discretion to include homeowners where previously they were automatically excluded. This means that every request can be considered on its individual merit regardless of tenure type. The previous limitation on the policy that it can only be awarded to non-homeowners has also been removed in order to maximise the Council's discretion to help residents facing hardship. There may be situations where there is little or no value, or even negative value, in a home, or where it might be inappropriate to sell or borrow against a home. This change allows the Council to consider such factors in making a decision on hardship.

Clarifying that a council officer may make an application behalf of the council taxpayer.

This will allow officers to support residents through the process and ensure that the most vulnerable residents are adequately represented.

Providing an email address for applications

This will allow applications to be directed to the decision-maker more quickly

Appending the income and expenditure form and ensuring that applicants provide details of any savings or other assets

This clarifies the information requirements and provides for a structured submission of supporting evidence in the event that a Single Financial Statement is not available.

Amending the scheme to seek to make it easier to understand

The policy has been re-drafted to clarify the criteria and to emphasise the support and assistance with the application process that is available for applicants.

Alternative options considered

No change to the existing Discretionary Relief Policy

This is not recommended because amending the scheme will help council tax payers to access the support on offer and improve their experience.

8. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no new items of urgent business.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date