

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Monday, 6th January, 2025, 10:00am – 10:30am

PRESENT:

Councillors: Dana Carlin

ALSO ATTENDING:

13. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

15. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

17. PROVISION OF A UNIFIED DIGITAL RESIDENT CONTACT ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

Officers were committed to ensuring that residents and customers consistently had a positive experience when interacting with them, regardless of the communication channel. The goal was to make interactions easier for people, not harder. To achieve this, they focused on several practical measures, such as offering 24/7 self-service options, resolving queries quickly (ideally on the first interaction), informing customers of expected response times, and ensuring that staff had all the necessary information to address inquiries. A solid digital infrastructure was essential to achieving these objectives efficiently and maximizing available resources, leading to the decision to procure a new solution when existing contracts ended.

The council's existing Cisco telephony and Granicus CRM systems were no longer adequate to support its strategic goals. With contracts for these systems expiring the following year, the council saw an opportunity to transform its technology, improving resident experiences. The Digital team conducted a comprehensive options appraisal

and began the procurement process for a unified digital engagement platform, encompassing telephony, CRM, a customer portal (My Account), and a low-code development solution. After concluding the procurement process, it was determined that Supplier A's solution met all the council's requirements. In addition to replacing outdated technology, this unified platform would enhance capabilities, supporting the digital transformation necessary to meet savings targets and ensuring a superior experience for residents.

The new platform is expected to be instrumental in delivering major council change initiatives, such as a new customer service operating model. This model aimed to reflect customer preferences, improve resident experiences, enhance efficiency, and generate cost savings. The platform would also make it easier for customer service staff to serve residents effectively and enable self-service through automated telephony, web, email, SMS, social media, or webchat. It was designed to streamline and automate end-to-end transactions, reducing staff workload. Furthermore, the platform would provide data capabilities for a comprehensive view of customer interactions, supporting predictive analytics and data-driven decision-making across the organization. It was stated that the council's Granicus contract was due to end in 9 months from now.

The Cabinet Member queried:

- It was queried whether the new system the council is going to adopt has been trialled with other boroughs. It was stated that this system has been extensively trialled and a number of other boroughs are using it.
- Whether this procurement would affect another system that is also due to come to end of contract.-It was stated that it would be terminated as planned.
- If as a council, there would be internal expertise on the software. It was explained there were a few members of staff with the expertise, but recruitment is currently underway to fill the void.
- The Cabinet Member stated she would like updates on next steps. It was explained June would be a key delivery date and an update will be provided in June.

RESOLVED:

It was recommended that the Cabinet Member:

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet (Cabinet Member Signing) approves, in accordance with Contract Standing Order (CSO's) 7.01b and 9.07.1d, the award of a contract for the delivery of unified digital engagement platform to Supplier A.

The contract would be for an initial period of five years, at a cost of £1,546,163, with the option to extend the contract with Supplier A for a sixth year, and a subsequent

option to extend the contract for a seventh year, should it be deemed beneficial. The contract will therefore have a maximum term of seven years. The contract will commence from February 2025.

4. Reasons for decision

The council's existing Cisco telephony and Granicus CRM systems are no longer fit for purpose and will not support the Council's strategic objectives. The contracts for these systems, which are critical to Customer Services, expire next year presenting an opportunity to transform the technology the council uses to deliver services and drive improvements in resident experience.

The Digital team have conducted a thorough options appraisal and initiated the procurement of a single digital engagement platform that includes telephony, CRM, customer portal (My Account), and a low-code development solution. The procurement exercise has concluded that the solution offered by Supplier A will meet all of the council's mandatory requirements for a unified digital engagement platform.

As well as replacing outdated and inadequate technology, the unified platform will add new and enhanced capabilities to drive the digital transformation that is required to achieve the current Digital savings target. It will also support the successful delivery of our ambition to ensure residents have an excellent experience when accessing our services.

The platform will be a key enabler for the successful delivery of the council's major change initiatives and will facilitate the implementation of a new customer service operating model that better reflects customer expectations and preferences, delivers excellent resident experience, drives efficiency improvements and delivers financial savings. It will also make it easier for Customer Service staff to serve residents effectively and for residents to selfserve, whether via automated telephony, web, email, SMS, social media, or webchat.

The platform will also drive improvements in the way resident-facing services are designed and delivered, providing the opportunity to streamline and automate transactions end-to-end so that there is less work for staff to do. It will also provide new data capabilities providing a comprehensive 360-degree view of customers' case history, preferences and interactions to support predictive analytics and data-driven decision-making across the organisation.

The Supplier A platform will also enable the sharing of other council's digital solutions as they develop new features which is something we have not been able to achieve from other suppliers in the past.

5. Alternative options considered

Officers considered the following alternative options:

Do Nothing

The 'Do Nothing' option for the council entails maintaining the existing systems and processes without pursuing any changes to the current infrastructure. In the context of the contact centre, this means continuing to operate the on-premise Cisco contact centre telephony solution until the contract expires on 30th June 2025, at which time there would be a significant increase in licencing costs. This would perpetuate the limitations of this technology and integration challenges, ultimately impacting service delivery.

For the CRM, customer portal and low-code development platform, opting not to act would mean remaining with the govService platform, which has been assessed as having a number of risks.

To avoid perpetuating the limitations of the outdated technology and the integration challenges experienced today, and to provide the necessary digital and data capabilities required to drive digital transformation, doing nothing is not an option.

18. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Item 7 was subject to a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as contains exempt information as defined in Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972. (As amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985); Paras 3 and 5, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

19. EXEMPT REPORT - PROVISION OF A UNIFIED DIGITAL RESIDENT CONTACT ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

The Cabinet Member considered all exempt information.

CABINET MEMBER:

Signed by CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Dana Carlin

Date: 09.01.25