

Report for: Cabinet Member Signing

Item number: 5

Title: Provision of a Unified Digital Engagement Platform

Report authorised by : Jess Crowe - Director of Culture, Strategy & Engagement

Lead Officer: Nathan Pierce - Chief Digital and Innovation Officer

Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

To approve the award of a contract for the provision of a unified digital engagement platform to replace the council's existing Cisco telephony and Granicus systems.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

We are committed to ensuring residents/ customers to have a consistently good experience of interacting with us, regardless of how they come into contact with us. And we want the experience of interacting with us to make people's lives easier, not harder.

Some of the practical ways that we can achieve this are by: supporting 24/7 self-services, by ensuring that people's queries are resolved as quickly as possible and ideally the first time they interact with us; by telling customers when they can expect to hear back from us and keeping them posted on the progress of their case; and, by ensuring that when people contact us, we have all the information we need to respond to them to hand.

Good digital infrastructure is necessary to help us achieve these aims efficiently and in a way that makes best use of the resources available to us – hence the decision to use previous contracts coming to an end as an opportunity to procure a new solution that better fulfils these aims.

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 self-serve, 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 take action 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.

6. Background information

Procurement of a single digital platform was initiated via a mini-competition using the NHS Shared Business Services Framework, managed by the council's strategic Procurement team. Three suppliers opted into the competition although only one tender response was received from Supplier A. As well as the written submission, the tender response was also scored on a clarification presentation given to the Evaluation Panel. The panel was made up of officers from the Digital, Contact Centre, and Resident Experience Programme teams, supported by a business stakeholder group comprising officers from Waste, Parking, Housing Repairs, Revenues and Housing Needs.

The outcome of the evaluation is shown below:

Supplier	Price	Quality	Social Value	Final Score	Rank
Supplier A	40/40	35/50	7/10	82/100	1 st

The evaluation panel concluded that the solution detailed in Supplier A's tender response will meet all of the Council's requirements for a single digital engagement platform.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026 High level Strategic outcomes'

The procurement of this new solution will make a significant contribution to the Excellent Resident Experience priority outcome in the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026. The solution will add new and enhanced capabilities to support the digital transformation that is required to achieve the current £2.8m Digital savings target and proposed further digital transformation target of £4m over the forthcoming MTFS period.

8. Carbon and Climate Change

It is anticipated that that the digital transformation enabled by the new solution will increase automation and improve efficiency to lower the carbon intensity of operations. There is also a possible reduction in the amount of printing and post postage will have a positive impact on carbon reduction.

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

10. Finance

The £1,546,163 cost of this contract, for an initial period of five years, comprises a combination of one-off implementation and system costs in year 1 and annual managed service costs for years 2 to 5. The one-off costs will be funded from existing provision in the Capital Programme whilst the annual revenue costs will be funded from the retirement of several of the council's existing systems.

The annual managed service costs will have a CPI indexation allowance applied (not included in the above cost). This will be funded as part of the annual contract inflation provision built into the MTFS.

Further details are provided in the Part B exempt report.

11. Procurement

Strategic Procurement have led the procurement exercise for this opportunity.

A further competition was under taken via NHS SBS Patient/Citizen Communication & Engagement Solutions Framework in compliance with CSO 7.01.b.

CSO 9.07.1d permits the Cabinet to award all contracts valued at £500,000 or more at the time of award.

Strategic Procurement support the recommendations in Section 3 of this report.

12. Legal

- 12.1** The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 12.2** Strategic Procurement has confirmed that a compliant procurement process was undertaken by way of a further competition via the NHS SBS Patient/Citizen Communication & Engagement Solutions Framework in line with the Council's CSO 7.01(b)
- 12.3** CSO 7.01(b) and Regulation 34 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR2025) permits the Council to procure a contractor through a Framework and as such the procurement of the contract via the NHS SBS Patient/Citizen Communication & Engagement Solution Framework is in with both Council's CSO and the PCR2015.
- 12.4** Pursuant to the Council's CSO 9.07.1(d), Cabinet has power to approve the award of a contract where the value of the contract is £500,000 and above and as such the recommendation in paragraph 3 of the report is in line with the provisions of the Council's CSO.
- 12.5** The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance sees no legal reasons preventing the approval of the recommendations in the report.

Equality

The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race and ethnicity, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

The decision in question is to approve the award of a contract for the provision of a unified digital resident contact engagement platform to replace the council's existing Cisco telephony and Granicus systems.

In the transition to the new solution, no functionality will be lost which will impact resident access or experience. Moreover, it is intended that this solution will help us to deliver a better customer experience, including by:

- supporting greater 'self-service';
- providing a 'device agnostic' solution;
- providing better visibility for customers on progress with their queries and updates on when they can expect to hear back from us; and,
- better access to up-to-date information by both customers and customer service staff supporting them.

The new solution being procured is Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant and adheres to WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards, meaning that users (both staff and customers) with visual impairments and other access issues will be able to navigate and interact with it.

It also includes translation functionality in its 'chat bot' function for more than 100 languages, which should reduce barriers to service access for speakers of English as another language (EAL).

As such, we expect the procurement of this solution to have a positive impact for all residents, with particular accessibility benefits for disabled people and for members of global majority groups, who are more likely to be speakers of EAL.

11. Use of Appendices

n/a

12. Background papers

n/a