

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 1st APRIL 2021

TITLE OF REPORT: HOUSING SYSTEM PROCUREMENT

Report of: Head of Community Services

Cabinet members: Councillor Stuart Bailey,
Portfolio Holder for Community

Councillor Simon Ambler
Portfolio Holder for Digital

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the outcome of the procurement process undertaken to implement a new integrated housing advice software solution, and to seek approval to appoint the preferred supplier.
- 1.2 To request authority to draw down from housing earmarked reserves to fund the procurement of the new housing IT system.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the award of the contract to the highest scoring supplier (Supplier A), following the detailed evaluation process that has taken place between December 2020 and February 2021 by the project evaluation team as set out in paragraph 4.5.
- 2.2 That Cabinet endorse the proposed initial contract term of 24 months for the new system, with the option to extend annually for a further 24 months, as laid out within the Crown Commercial Services G- Cloud 12 framework as set out in paragraph 3.4.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approve the use of earmarked reserves for the procurement of new housing IT system as set out in paragraph 5.2 & 5.3.
- 2.4 That Cabinet approves the officer recommendation to proceed with implementation as set out in paragraph 5.4.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The existing housing advice IT system currently being used by Hart District Council has been in place for approximately 15 years. This system provides residents, on the housing register, the opportunity to bid on homes as they become available, in accordance with the Councils current Allocations Policy.

The system also allows the Council to carry out Homelessness duties in accordance with Homelessness regulations.

The current system has limitations in functionality, particularly in terms of reporting. There will be IT integration issues in the future should we retain the existing system, that will in time, compromise system functionality.

- 3.2** Recognising these concerns, in line with the constitution and procurement regulations, the Council instituted a competitive procurement process.
- 3.3** The process began with a detailed exercise of soft market testing between June 2019 and July 2020. This included attending demonstrations, assessing innovations in the marketplace and discussing system provider software experiences with colleagues in other local authorities, in order to get a comprehensive understanding of what was available.
- 3.4** Having established the most appropriate specification, Hart District Council established that the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) 'G-Cloud 12' Framework and Digital Marketplace would offer the most cost-effective way (compliant with contract standing orders), to complete the procurement process. G Cloud 12 is the latest version of a government framework that helps customers in the UK public sector find and buy cloud computing services. Any G-Cloud 12 call-off will have an initial maximum duration of 24 months with two extension options of up to 12 months each and must be specified in the initial contract terms.
- 3.5** In December 2020 Hart District Council formally commenced a procurement for the supply and installation, of a fully managed and hosted integrated housing advice software solution, offering a full case management and resident self-service portal system to cover the Council's legal housing functions, which included: -
- Administration of the housing needs register for the district.
 - Advertising and allocating of social and affordable rented housing through a Choice Based Lettings system.
 - Provision of a homelessness advice service and administration of homelessness statutory duties in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as amended.
 - Recording and reporting of data and sensitive information in relation to the above functions.
- 3.6** The system will effectively allow Hart District Council to carry out their legal functions, including administration of the housing needs register for the district, advertising and allocating of rented affordable housing through a Choice Based Lettings system, and the provision of a homelessness advice service and administration of homelessness statutory duties in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as amended.
- 3.7** In line with CCS 'G-Cloud 12' guidance, the project evaluation team formulated a 'long list' call-off of potential suppliers and then created a short list based on the documentation provided within CCS 'G-Cloud 12' Digital Marketplace.

- 3.8** A list of six 'short listed' suppliers were selected based on whether they could supply all the required specification including: Housing Register, Choice Based Lettings and Homelessness.
- 3.9** To help with the evaluation of the short-listed supplier offerings via CCS 'G-Cloud 12' Digital Marketplace, each supplier was invited to respond to a 'Clarification Note' by completing a detailed specification document. An evaluation score sheet template (**Appendix 1**) was also provided outlining how the returned information within the specification document would be assessed by the Hart District Council evaluation team, to ensure suppliers met the essential requirements of the solution.
- 3.10** The evaluation team carried out a detailed evaluation of each service offering using the via CCS 'G-Cloud 12' scoring methodology. The team comprised experts from Housing, IT, and Procurement.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1** The current housing IT system requires considerable upgrades, giving officers limited functionality, particularly in terms of reporting. Continued long term use is not viable, as it is no longer supported by the provider. The current annual charges are no longer value for money.
- 4.2** A new system would offer an improved digital experience for residents and staff. Several key functions will be automated, and the resident will hold a personal account, where they are able to check the status of their housing application, giving increased knowledge, control and accountability. A number of paper-based processes will be replaced or streamlined, making for a more efficient and user-friendly service.
- 4.3** The Customer Portal will allow residents to have more control over uploading their own supporting evidence and correspondence directly to the system. The website and all online forms provided by the new supplier will be fully responsive so can be used with any mobile or tablet device. A mobile 'app' is also available for both Android or Apple devices, therefore providing residents with more choice on how to access the system.

5 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	Yes
	Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
	Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

- 5.2** The procurement proposal is within the Service Plan. Previous years earmarked reserves were set aside to assist with the upfront costs for the procurement of the IT system as laid out in **Confidential Appendix 2 Table 2 & Table 3**.

- 5.3 On system go-live, over a 48-month contract, there will be savings made to Housing IT system costs as laid out in **Confidential Appendix 2 Table 5**
- 5.4 Staffing resources have been identified and an implementation plan has been produced. This will be further developed on completion of the award of the new contract, but the key target dates are set out in the table below:

Key implementation timelines	
April 2021	Contract Award Letter Issued
July 2021	New system ready for testing by Council
September 2021	New system complete
September 2021	Staff Training
October 2021	System go-live

- 5.5 The outcome of the procurement exercise shows one clear preferred supplier, based on a combined assessment of cost and quality. The evaluation team is agreed that Supplier A should be awarded the contract as laid out in **Confidential Appendix 2 – Table 1.**
- 5.6 The total life costs of the contract represent a significant investor save over both the existing contract's annual costs and of alternative suppliers evaluated in the procurement process as laid out in **Confidential Appendix 2 – Table 4.**

6 ACTION

- 6.1 That Cabinet approve the award of the contract to the highest scoring Supplier A, following the detailed evaluation process that has taken place between December 2020 and February 2021 by the project evaluation team.
- 6.2 That Cabinet note that the proposed initial contract term of two years for the new system, with the option to extend annually for a further two years.
- 6.3 That Cabinet approves the use of ear-marked reserves to fund this project.

Contact Details:

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Appendices / Confidential Appendices

Appendix 1 - Hart District Council evaluation template for procurement of Housing Register, Choice Based Lettings & Homelessness Module.

Confidential Appendix 2: -

Table 1 - Housing system re-procurement shortlisted supplier quality and cost evaluation score summary.

Table 2 - Four-year costing comparison of Supplier A vs Current System

Table 3 - Requested Earmarked Reserves

Table 4 - 4 Year Annual Costing Comparison of Supplier A vs Current System

Table 5 - Net Cost Savings over 4 years

APPENDIX 1



Hart District Council evaluation template for procurement of Housing Register, Choice Based Lettings & Homelessness Module.

This evaluation template is provided in conjunction with the specification document. The returned information within the specification document will first be assessed by the Hart District Council evaluation team to ensure suppliers meet the essential requirements of the solution.

The evaluation team will then carry out an evaluation of each service offering using the scoring method as outlined in table below. The quality criteria will be assessed based on the returned specification document, clarification detail and the documentation provided within G-cloud.

The contract, if awarded, will be awarded, based on the following criteria.

Criteria		Score
Price The percent share will be given the maximum score available. Other scores will then be calculated as a proportion of this based on the formula below. (Lowest price / Price of next quote to be considered)		30%
Quality (which is scored on against the sub-criteria below):		70%
Section 1	Integration, Security, Audit & Data Protection, Passwords.	10%
Section 2	Requirements Applicable to all Modules.	10%
Section 3	Housing Register.	10%
Section 4	Choice Based Lettings.	10%
Section 5	Homelessness Casework Management.	10%
Section 6	Training, Support & Quality Management.	10%
Section 7	Implementation.	10%

Each section in the Quality criteria will be scored by the evaluation team using the following template:

Descriptor	Mark awarded
The Supplier's Service Offering (Service Definition, Terms and Conditions, and Supporting Documentation) provides information of such a poor standard as to provide no confidence that the service meets the requirements.	0
The Supplier's Service Offering (Service Definition, Terms and Conditions, and Supporting Documentation) provides little confidence that the Service meets the requirements. The response shows many or all of the issues listed at mark awards 2.	1
<p>The Supplier's Service Offering (Service Definition, Terms and Conditions, and Supporting Documentation) demonstrates some clear strengths but giving some concern, because some of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach described appears to only partially meet the requirement; and/ or • The approach described appears not to deliver expected levels of (as appropriate) functionality, performance, environmental performance, outcome, ease of use or other relevant characteristics; and/or • The approach does not reflect accepted good practice; and/or • The response is insufficiently specific; and/ or • The supporting documents are of insufficient quality, depth or relevance. 	2
The Supplier's Service Offering (Service Definition, Terms and Conditions, and Supporting Documentation) demonstrates degree of weakness but where the weakness does not cause fundamental concerns and is outweighed by the strengths.	3
<p>A good Service Offering (Service Definition, Terms and Conditions, and Supporting Documentation) where the strengths clearly outweigh any minor weakness(es), and the majority of aspects below apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach described fully meets the requirement • The approach reflects accepted good practice • The response is specifically meets our organisational requirements and, where relevant, to the organisations specific circumstances • The approach offers good levels of (as appropriate) functionality, performance, environmental performance, outcomes, ease of use and other relevant characteristics; and • The supporting documents are of good quality, relevant and of sufficient depth. 	4
A robust and fully comprehensive Service Offering (Service Definition, Terms and Conditions, and supporting Documentation) with all relevant bullet points from a mark of 4 applying.	5

Shortlisted Supplier TEMPLATE

Section 1 - Integration, Security, Audit & Data Protection, Passwords

The following quality criteria will be assessed based on the returned specification document, clarification detail and the documentation provided within The Supplier's Service Offering on G-cloud 12

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
1. Integration				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
2. Audit & Security Requirements				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
3. Data Protection				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
4. Passwords				

Section 2 - Requirements Applicable to all Modules

The following quality criteria will be assessed based on the returned specification document, clarification detail and the documentation provided within The Supplier’s Service Offering on G-cloud 12

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
5. Reporting				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
6. Document & Information Storage and Management				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
7. Customer Portal				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
8. Letter Generating and Editing				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
9. Additional general requirements				

Section 3 - Housing Register

The following quality criteria will be assessed based on the returned specification document, clarification detail and the documentation provided within The Supplier’s Service Offering on G-cloud 12

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
10. Online Applications				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
11. Application Renewals				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
12. Management of Housing Register Applications				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
13. Housing Register Workflow Requirements				

Section 4 - Choice Based Lettings

The following quality criteria will be assessed based on the returned specification document, clarification detail and the documentation provided within The Supplier’s Service Offering on G-cloud 12

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
14. General Requirements				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
15. Advertising				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
16. Shortlisting and Allocation Requirements				

Section 5 - Homelessness Casework Management

The following quality criteria will be assessed based on the returned specification document, clarification detail and the documentation provided within The Supplier’s Service Offering on G-cloud 12

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
17. General Requirements				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
18. Homelessness Casework Management Workflow Requirements				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
19. Homelessness Casework Management Statutory Recording Requirements				

Section 6 - Training, Support & Quality Management

The following quality criteria will be assessed based on the returned specification document, clarification detail and the documentation provided within The Supplier’s Service Offering on G-cloud 12

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
20. Training				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
21. Support				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
22. Quality Management				

Section 7 - Implementation

The following quality criteria will be assessed based on the returned specification document, clarification detail and the documentation provided within The Supplier’s Service Offering on G-cloud 12

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
23. Implementation Timetable & Consultancy				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
24. ICT Evaluation				

Service Offering	Score	Areas of particular strengths	Areas of particular weaknesses	Rational
25. Technical Requirements				