Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Report to the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation)

Date: 01 April, 2014

Subject: Waiver Report for Internet software relating to the access of Traffic Regulation Order information

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	☐ Yes	☒ No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	☐ Yes	☒ No

Summary of main issues

1. Since the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, it has been acknowledged that Leeds City Council needs to improve the way it allows members of the public (and other interested parties) access to its Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) records. The information we currently display on the council's website is no longer fit for purpose and is considered by many to be inadequate.

2. A suitable tried and tested internet based software product has been identified and this report seeks approval to waiver the Corporate Procurement Rule relating to enable the purchase the licence of a proprietary piece of software from a single supplier.

3. This software package is currently being used by colleagues within the Combined Authority boundary and is compatible with other LCC applications. There are no other known software products on the market that have been developed that meet the specific TRO needs of highways.

Recommendations

4. The Chief Officer Highways and Transportation is requested to approve the waiver of Contract Procedure Rule: 8 between £10K and £100K Intermediate Value Procurement and approve the purchase of Traffweb Software for a period of 3 years extendable annually for a further 6 years.

1   Purpose of this report

1.1   The purpose of this report is to seek approval to purchase a specific piece of business software for use by the Traffic Regulation Order Team (and Parking Services).

1.2   The software package that that has been identified to meet the needs of the service requires a waiver of the CPR to invite a tender from a single supplier.

2   Background information

2.1   The Traffic Management Team currently has in the region of 3,000 TRO'S that are all paper based, some dating as far back as the 1930's. The current system is outdated and prone to loss of data. The requested software will ensure our records are more accurate, accessible and up to date and are urgently needed to for such a progressive and forward thinking authority.

2.2   In April 2009 Highways procured a specialist GIS/TRO database called Parkmap, which is a map based inventory of parking and moving traffic regulations that can be accessed quickly. Integrated within the software is the full support for the order making process, which aids productivity and ensures that permanent records are kept updated.

2.3   Since the procurement of Parkmap, the TRO team have consolidated a number of wards into the system and are currently in the process of ensuring that all remaining wards are inputted within the next 4 to 6 months.

2.4   Once Parkmap is fully populated it is considered that there would be real benefits in making this information available to all interested parties, specifically to the general public and to colleagues in Parking Services via Traffweb.

2.5   Publishing information and data contributes to the council values and in working towards best council, best city aspirations. In addition, Leeds has a vibrant digital community which has aspirations of its own in becoming a leading UK digital city. Publishing increasing amount of council data has a number of drivers which not only result in benefits for the council but also benefits the wider city. By publishing its TRO data the council will:-

- Improve openness and transparency contributing to the council value of 'Being Open, Honest and Trusted';

- Improve partnership working – the council is working increasingly with partners from the public, private and 3rd sectors to deliver high quality services;

- Permit developers to re-use council data into their web and mobile phone applications to provide new and improved services and potentially stimulate economic growth;

- Improve Data quality as a consequence of it being published. Services will ensure that published data is as accurate as possible. Improved data quality will benefit the service through reduced costs and enable better decision making;

2.6   The Traffweb Software, developed by Buchanan Computing, allows users to obtain the information they need in an extremely simple and straightforward way. However complex the central databases the users will only see the data that has been configured for their needs. They can then click on the map to 'drill down' to reveal more detail, for example PDF copies of the sealed TRO, photographs and other documents. Currently the Traffic Management Section receive several requests each day for copies of TROs and this often results in staff spending large amounts of time scanning or photocopying paper records that are often in a poor condition. As a consequence, this software would significantly improve the flow and quality of information and will greatly reduce the time taken to currently answer these queries. This will free up staff time and help to provide a service to wider user base.

2.7   Traffweb will be hosted by the supplier and will be deployed on a web server allowing users to access Traffweb using their normal internet browser (including smart phones) with no local installation required.

2.8   Traffweb also has the potential to be used as a consultation tool for proposals whereby members of the public can fill out tailored questionnaire and formally object/offer their support to schemes. Results of this consultation can then be presented in numerous formats, for example, the distance the objector lives from the scheme etc.

3   Main issues

Reason for Contracts Procedure Rules Waiver

3.1   Traffweb is developed by the same creators as Parkmap. The GIS Data Base prepared for the Parkmap data can be simply uploaded onto the server with minimum effort with no requirement to re-input data. This provides major savings on resources and cost and enables the system to be available to the public much quicker.

3.2   There are no other known products available on the market that have been fully developed and tested that can webhost our traffic data relating to TRO's.

3.3   An alternative would be is to use a combination of the Parkmap product and some of the council's existing internal systems. In theory this is potentially possible but the effort required to make it work was considered un-economic and the outcome would not be as efficient.

3.4   ICT Services have been consulted about whether external hosting is appropriate in this case and they have conditionally agreed that there is no reason why this cannot be done. A formal request for this work will be commissioned to ICT Services and this will help formulate discussions about the proposed hosted service. This will provide the platform and ensure ICT Services provide the necessary advice before the software and service is procured.

Consequences if the proposed action is not approved

3.5   Without some form of viable system to ensure that proposed and sealed TROs are available to be viewed online by interested parties; will result in a need to

maintain our existing working practices of scanning and photocopying. Whilst the Service try to deal with every request as promptly as possible, there is clearly a requirement for a modern approach particularly as requests for information is growing due to people choosing to challenge Penalty Charge Notices at adjudication. Facilitating these on-going and ever increasing requests in the current outdated format is a financial drain and a waste a valuable resource.

4   Corporate Considerations

4.1   Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1   No consultation has taken place with elected members.

4.1.2   The service has had a full demonstration of the software by the provider and invited colleagues from IT support, Parking Services, Legal Services and fellow Engineers within Traffic Management. The demonstration was well received and internal partners support the move to the new product.

4.2   Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1   It is currently not applicable for an Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening/ Impact Assessment to be undertaken at this time, as the proposals are purely administrative and therefore have no impact on the equality characteristics.

4.3   Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1   The proposed procurement of this software has not been completed on the basis of an open bid situation. The reason for this is that the cost of producing a procurement specification and documentation would be very costly when compared to the cost of the product itself.

4.4   Resources and value for money

4.4.1   The initial product cost is £14,521 with a cost of £2,425 per annum thereafter (£1500 web hosting and £825 maintenance) which is considered to represent very good value for money.

4.5   Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1   The report is not subject to Call In and there are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential with the Council's Access to Information Rules.

4.5.2   Awarding contracts directly to the contractors in the way proposed could leave the Council open to a potential claim from other contractors to whom this contract could be of interest. In terms of transparency, it should be noted that it is a requirement of European case law that contracts of this value are subjected to a degree of advertising. It is up to the Council to decide what degree of advertising is appropriate. In particular, consideration should be given to the subject-matter of the contract, the estimated value, the specifics of the sector concerned (size and structure of the market, commercial practices, etc.) and the geographical location of the place of performance.

4.5.3   In approving this waiver without subjecting the contract to competition, there is a risk of challenge to the Council from other potential providers that have not been given the chance to tender for this opportunity. It is suggested, due to the matters set out at section 3 above, that the risk of challenge is very low in this instance.

4.5.4   Although there is no overriding legal obstacle preventing the waiver of CPR 8, the above comments should be noted. In making their final decision, the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents best value for money.

4.6   Risk Management

Without some form of viable system to display sealed and proposed TRO records, the Council would continue to struggle with the ever increasing demand for copies of TRO's and may be viewed as a less than transparent Local Authority. There may be a possible risk in increased challenges to Penalty Charge Notices, which in turn may result in Leeds City Council losing more appeals at Parking Adjudication.

5   Conclusions

5.1   The existing TRO system has long since been viewed as being out-dated and as more TRO's are promoted and amended, the system is gradually becoming more difficult to maintain. It is becoming increasingly common for a sealed TRO to be missing from the records when needed and as such an electronic system that can be accessed by all would be of major benefit

5.2   The options available to the Service are extremely limited but the product produced by Buchanan Computing is deemed to be ideal and the set up cost of £14,521 with an annual maintenance/support cost of £2,425 from year 2 onwards represents very good value for money.

6   Recommendations

6.1   The Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation, is requested to approve the waiver of Contract Procedure Rule 8 between £10K and £100K Intermediate Value Procurement and approve the purchase of Traffweb Software for a period of 3 years extendable annually for a further 6 years.

7   Background documents[1]

7.1   None.

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