

Report of **Citizens & Communities**

Report to **Chief Officer, Customer Access**

Date: **5 February 2014**

Subject: **Approval to commence a procurement for Web Chat services**

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

Summary of main issues

1. The Council has a contract in place for the provision of Web Chat software, which expires on 31st July 2015.
2. The introduction of Web Chat has proven a valuable tool to assist customers who are unable to locate specific information on the council web site. Web chat enables Customer Service Officers (CSOs) to guide customers to the information they wish to access. The CSOs also use the customer experience to inform improvements to the website, thereby giving us the opportunity to constantly update and improve.
3. A procurement is required to award a new contract to a supplier.

Recommendations

That the Chief Officer, Customer Access approves the commencement of procurement for Web Chat software with a contract term of three years and the option to extend by two further periods of twenty four months.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report is to seek approval to commence a procurement for Web Chat software.

2 Background information

- 2.2 The Council has a contract in place for the provision of Web Chat software provision, which expires on 31st July 2015.

3 Main issues

- 3.3 There is a requirement to ensure the on-going delivery of Web Chat services to the customers of Leeds.
- 3.1 Utilising the information gained through the web chat contact with customers, we are able to quickly update information, on our web pages, to assist future customers to quickly access accurate, up to date information.
- 3.2 Using web chat we are able to help customer to self-serve, both at the time of contact and in the future – thereby decreasing the service delivery costs to the council.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The Chief Officer, Customer Access, will be consulted prior to the award of the contract.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 There are some issues for accessibility which have not been addressed currently, across the market place, by all suppliers.
- 4.2.2 We are seeking guidance from accessibility experts on how we can ensure that suppliers are aware of the need to be able to have software which is accessible to the widest range of customers.
- 4.2.3 This will not be an essential requirement within this procurement as it is not available, but we will want a supplier who is prepared to take this issue on board and look to find resolution.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 Web chat will help customers to self-serve, thus promoting channel shift which is a priority for the council's customer access strategy. Utilising software which enables this to happen has to be an essential element of council priorities.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 An EU restricted competition will be undertaken to ensure value for money.

4.4.2 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.4.1 The anticipated value of the contract puts it within the Public Contract Regulations
The decision is not subject to call in.

4.5 Risk Management

The procurement will be managed by the ICT Sourcing Team and a contract management plan will be put in place for the resulting contract.

5 Conclusions

5.1 A new contract for the provision of Web Chat Software is required.

6 Recommendations

That the Chief Officer, Customer Access approves the commencement of procurement for Web Chat Software with a contract term of three years and the option to extend by two further periods of twenty four months.

7 Background documents

7.1 None.