

Report of: Applications Manager, SS&H Hub

Report to: Chief Officer of Strategy and Policy, Resources and Housing

Date: 22nd June 2020

Subject: Request to waive Contract Procedure Rules No 9.1 and 9.2 to enter into a new contract with Granicus-Firmstep Limited for the provision of their GovDelivery platform for a further one year with the option to extend for a further year

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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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 currently hold a contract with Granicus-Firmstep Limited for their GovDelivery communications and marketing tool which is due to expire on 27th June 2020 with no options to extend. The Council are therefore seeking approval to create a new contract with Granicus-Firmstep Limited to further exploit the full potential of this product.
2. In 2018 a contract was set up with Granicus-Firmstep Limited to provide an improved digital offer to meet both business objectives around communicating and marketing with the public and local stakeholders, who are increasingly comfortable turning to digital solutions to support their information needs.
3. Whilst many services are now utilising GovDelivery, entering in to a new contract with Granicus-Firmstep Limited will allow the Council to continue to work on the strategy of increasing the use of the product to further enhance and realise the benefits of using the communication tool, across all areas of the Council.
4. From a communications point of view, campaigns must be focused, with clearly defined outcomes that can be analysed to understand the value they create as well as improve service performance. The following principles are key to our success:
 - One message does not suit all
 - Getting the right message to the right group of people at the right time so they can use it to make better choices

- Making better use of segmentation and with it the need to amend the same message for different audiences
- Better and more regular engagement with citizens in order to change their behavior

5. It is for these reasons that we need to procure and make use of a communications tool which will give us both the tools and the audience growth, which will enable us to realise both financial savings as a result of behavior change programmes, as well as increased satisfaction through more regular and more granular communications, all in line with the stringent GDPR.
6. A number of email platform providers offer some of the functionality required to meet our communications and behavior change objectives. After a procurement exercise in June 2018 it has become clear that the GovDelivery platform from Granicus-Firmstep Limited best meets our needs in terms of functionality, support and network growth. The public sector-only experience offered by Granicus-Firmstep Limited will support our efforts on multiple campaigns, with the platform already in use across the sector in the UK. Along with The Council existing clients range from small borough councils to Gov.UK and Parliament.
7. Using the Granicus-Firmstep Limited GovDelivery platform will support The Council to continue to work with services and teams across the authority to develop a number of newsletters, alerts and bulletins which will better inform and educate the public, leading them to make better decisions which result in improved outcomes for them and which will reduce the financial strain on the authority.

8. Recommendations

The Chief Officer Strategy and Policy is recommended to waive Contract Procedure Rules 9.1 and 9.2 and enter into a one year contract with the option to extend for a further year with Granicus-Firmstep Limited for their GovDelivery communications and marketing tool, without seeking competition, from 28th June 2020 for 12 months with an option to extend for a further 12 months to 27th June 2022 for the sum of £51,408 per annum.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the Chief Officer Strategy and Policy to waive Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) 9.1 and 9.2 and enter into a 12 month contract with the option to extend for a further 12 months with Granicus-Firmstep Limited via direct award for their GovDelivery communications and marketing tool from 28th June 2020 in the sum of £51,408 per annum.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The current contractual arrangements of the provision of a communications and marketing tool GovDelivery with Granicus-Firmstep Limited ends on 27th June 2020 at a cost of approx. £52,000 per annum.
- 2.2 In June 2018, The Council undertook investigations into improving marketing and communications with the public as part of a wider strategic review into both best practice and service efficiency.
- 2.3 Previously, communication with the public had been done via numerous tools including Outlook, Pure360 and Mail chimp which made it difficult to confirm how widely communications had been read nor specify behavior change as a result of stories and articles run within it.
- 2.4 A procurement exercise was undertaken in June 2018 to provide an improved digital offer to meet both business objectives around communicating with the public and local stakeholders, who are increasingly comfortable turning to digital solutions to their information needs from which Granicus-Firmstep Limited with their GovDelivery tool were selected.
- 2.5 GovDelivery has also meant that the resource effort required in ensuring the integrity of mailing lists has reduced the risk of communications being sent out to incorrect email addresses, and is able to manage bounce backs and those that have unsubscribed effectively.
- 2.6 Customers are able to opt in or out of the type of communications they wish to receive, which is a feature of the GovDelivery product and is a key element of our GDPR compliance. GovDelivery has enabled cross promotion of communications.
- 2.7 To fully meet The Council's strategic vision The Council would like to enter into a further one year contract with the option to extend for a further year with Granicus-Firmstep Limited to further exploit the full potential of this product.
- 2.8 LCC have confirmed 2 options if The Council wish to renew the contract
- a) Option 1 – undertaking a procurement exercise utilising the GCloud11 framework for a one year period with an optional one year extension. If the Council were to utilise the GCloud11 framework based on the current suppliers cost listed within the framework option, this would be £59,736 per annum.
 - b) Option 2 – waive Contract Procedure Rules No 9.1 and 9.2 to enter into a new contract with Granicus-Firmstep Limited as a direct award. Granicus-Firmstep Limited has offered the option of a further one year with the option to extend for a further year period at a cost of £51,408 providing total savings of £592 for the one year extension or £1,184 across 2 years. This option is a preferred to option 1 as Granicus-Firststep Limited are offering a £8,328 reduction on their GCloud11 offer for the one year extension or £16,656 across 2 years if Leeds are to place a direct award.

The Council should also consider a further option:-

- c) Option 3 – Do nothing. This option is not recommended as this would force the Council to move back to multiple communication streams causing confusion for our customers and also not reaping the benefits the project has already brought.

2.10 Recommendation is the preferred option 2 providing the Council with a better value offer than option 1 and will enable to the Council to further roll out GovDelivery to a wider audience.

3. Best Council Plan implications

- 3.1 The award of this contract will support and contribute to the delivery of the following Council policies and priorities:
- The streamlining and improvement of communications for the following priorities outlined in the best council plan
 - Hosting world class events in Leeds
 - Supporting economic growth and access to economic opportunities
 - Enhancing the quality of our public realm
 - Supporting a resilient, inclusive, cultural and creative sector
 - Helping deliver a well-connected transport system
 - This contract supports the Standardise, Simplify, Share policy and will ensure that there is a consistent method of email communications across the Council and provides the opportunity for standardisation of style and content and promotes the avoidance of conflicting messages
 - There has already been significant investment in resources to develop the product to date to enable customers to sign up to receive communications around topics they have chosen. We believe that the procurement of this software will enable the service to be more efficient and increase revenue at paid for events by more effectively streamlining communications to in line with the Council's spending money wisely initiative.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 To fully reap the benefits of the further roll out of GovDelivery, there are significant resource implications.
- 4.2 A Project Board and team will need reinstating to help support the further roll-out of this product across the council. The responsibility and accountability for its use has a wider remit beyond the communications team and will need resources from across key teams within the council to ensure sure the business benefit GovDelivery can bring is realized.
- 4.2 There will be additional resource effort required in promoting and migrating away from other communication tools, Pure360, Mail Chimp, Event Bright etc. but this will bring costs savings associated with the contracts of those other products.
- 4.3 A great deal of effort has already taken place to address the above, and the communications team now have a waiting list of services wanting to on-board on to GovDelivery
- 4.4 This is an invest to save initiative and other local authorities using the solution have shown a proven track record of increased revenue at paid for events as well as savings achieved via channel shift.
- 4.5 By awarding this contract, it will allow the GovDelivery Project Board to continue to work on the strategy of increasing the use of the product to further enhance and realise the benefits of using the communication tool, across all areas of the Council.
- 4.6 The Council has a wealth of information that if shared, can make a difference in people's lives: for example severe weather alerts, school closures, missed bin collections, changes to services and marketing of events which GovDelivery can support.
- 4.7 The Council still has a wide range of digital distribution lists which are service specific and embedded into back office systems outside of GovDelivery. Bringing this information together in a joined up manner using GovDelivery has meant that information is less fragmented and managed by fewer areas within the Council.
- 4.8 The current users of the GovDelivery platform are...

- The Communications & Marketing team,
- Museums and Galleries,
- Childrens Services,
- Visit Leeds,
- Connecting Leeds,
- Flood Alleviation,
- Taxis and Private Hire,
- Waste,
- Clean Air,
- Sports
- Libraries

all of which have been utilising the email marketing tool in GovDelivery to promote leisure and culture services. These services previously used a variety of options to send emails including Outlook, Pure360 and Mail Chimp.

- 4.9 As a result of this channel shift, there has been focus on proactively marketing the take up of services using digital methods. The Council has achieved significant savings by increasing channel shift towards electronic take up of services, but there is considerable improvement we could still make in relation to the achievement of our channel shift strategy.
- 4.10 Leeds City Council would like to continue to consolidate and centralise citizen contact details and communicate with customers by automating and coordinating messages through the single GovDelivery platform. We would like to continue to be able to identify content which has been created or updated on our website or on our social media networks and be able to send proactive notices to targeted communities, thereby improving customer communication and saving the Council time and resources by reducing direct contact time with customers. This approach also enables consistent messages.
- 4.11 In addition, the Council would like to be able to continue to generate increased revenue by increasing attendance at events through improved marketing and raising awareness of paid for services.
- 4.12 Leeds City Council would like to continue to increase subscriber levels by continuation of the GovDelivery network with other public sector organisations, who use the same email communications solution to cross-promote our newsletters and service customers who request information from multiple public sources.
- 4.13 This product will also provide opportunities to cascade joint messages form The Council and partner organisations (VAL etc.)

5. Main issues

- 5.1 The current contractual arrangements for the provision of a communications and marketing tool GovDelivery with Granicus-Firmstep Limited ends on 27th June 2020 at a cost of approx. £52,000 per annum.
- 5.2 Due to the current resourcing issues within the Council that COVID19 has presented, the renewal of this contract has been overlooked and there is no longer time to undertake a procurement exercise for the replacement of this solution. By extending the contract for a further year, this will provide time to undertake a procurement exercise.
- 5.3 In June 2018 LLC procured GovDelivery. The Council have been working to rollout this product, switching over all email communication and marketing platforms to GovDelivery with the aim to complete the switch over for the whole council.

5.4 To enter into a new contract with Granicus-Firmstep Limited for provision of their GovDelivery solution will:-

- enable a one council approach to email communications and ensure and realise the products full potential. This will feed in to the Better Business Management programme by simplifying, standardising and sharing our communications platform which will help us be a more enterprising and efficient council.
- enable the Council to increase subscriber levels by allowing customers to select topics of interest by increasing the number of overlays on our website pages as additional service areas are brought on-stream.
- enable each service area to manage their own topic list and be responsible for the content and frequency of their newsletters and e-bulletins with the communications team having an overall view of uptake and usage, thereby monitoring efficiency and effectiveness of messages and providing advice as appropriate
- for existing users of GovDelivery tool such as Communications and Marketing, Museums and Galleries, Theatres, Sports and Libraries, to see an increase in their subscriber base which results in a strengthening of relationships with their customers and a potential to generate an increase in visits and revenue.
- cross promote information on other areas newsletters and advise subscribers of the alternative topics that may be of interest to them.
- enable the import email address data from council systems such as Civica CX and Academy to further increase email communication reach along with the ability for customers to sign up via the website. Opportunities to link up with housing and their recent project to determine the email addresses of Council Tenants. Waste have also had great results and have been able to enable residents to choose the way the Council communicates with them.
- reduce customer contact via traditional methods as citizens are kept informed of council developments, given updates on service changes and are encouraged to use the website to request services and find information, thereby promoting channel shift and reducing the amount of contact via more expensive channels – telephone and face-to-face
- enable the Council to contact staff with important messages who are not on the council's computer network. This is of increasing importance going forward as staff are increasingly dispersed. GovDelivery enables key messages to be communicated and read at a time convenient to the recipient.

6. Consequences if the proposed action is not approved

6.1 If agreement for the waiver is not approved the Council will not:-

- fully realise the previous investment, going against the spending money wisely and meeting best value.
- be able to achieve the vision of a one Council approach for email and communication methods.
- be able to increase revenue by increasing subscribers to all existing email communications list who may in turn purchase tickets for events.
- be able to increase the contact coming into the Council.
- be able to save money by reducing contact via traditional means.
- be able to increase satisfaction levels as citizens feel more informed with council priorities and developments by creating new topics that citizens can subscribe to.
- have consistency of approach whilst retaining the ability to tailor tone.
- have the ability to review efficiency and effectiveness of communications to inform future (particularly around income-generating activities).

7 Advertising

7.1 The Council are seeking to waive Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) 9.1 and 9.2 and enter into a one year contract with the option to extend for a further year with Granicus-Firmstep Limited.

7.2 Given the lack of time to undertake a procurement exercise prior to the end of the current contract, at this time there will be no opportunity to advertise.

8. Corporate Considerations

8.1 Consultation and Engagement

8.1.1 No public consultation has been taken prior to preparing this report.

9. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

9.1 Equality and Diversity has been considered but there will be no adverse effects on any equality and diversity issues.

10. Council Policies and City Priorities

10.1 In line with the Council's policy relating to governance guidance, support for this proposal requires Chief Officer approval under the delegated decision scheme.

10.2 City Priorities

10.2.1 World Class Events:

Using a web overlay would increase subscriber levels to existing what's on/Leeds inspired/theatres/museums email lists resulting in greater attendance to events and increased revenue for the Council and the city as a whole.

10.2.2 Cutting carbon and improving air quality:

This report relates to the procurement of support and maintenance services for a software system, its impact on climate change initiatives is mainly through the support it gives those services using it. The system directly contributes by facilitating digital working – e.g. electronic document management removing the need for paper copies of letters. Newsletters could be used to widen access to affordable warmth e.g. promotion of White Rose Energy and information on how to reduce energy consumption could be included.

10.2.3 Early intervention and reduce health inequalities:

Newsletters could be used to promote opportunities to be physically active, sports classes, events in parks, walking routes, bike rides. A Get Involved topic could be set up to promote opportunities to volunteer.

10.2.4 More jobs, better jobs:

The existing subscriber base for the jobs and skills emails could be increased through a web overlay and cross promotion on other newsletters to advertise jobs within the council (and with partner organisations).

10.2.5 Strong Communities:

Changing Leeds is the invitation for anyone who lives, works, visits or studies in Leeds to talk about the challenges that public services and communities in Leeds are facing. A council wide email communications platform could be utilised to promote the Changing Leeds engagement by directing citizens to the Changing Leeds website. Newsletters could provide updates on the discussions that are being held and the ideas that are being shared. Email communications could signpost citizens to where they can get involved, find out more information and re-create areas of good work in their community. By using a council wide system cross promotion of this work and the ability to sign up to the topic could be utilised. Postcode information could also be used to promote local events, advise of regeneration schemes, road closures, councillor surgeries and walkabouts.

11. Resources and Value for Money

- 11.1 This proposal will enable to Council to fully realise the previous investment of the current contract enabling a one council approach to email communications and ensure and realise the products full potential.
- 11.2 This will feed in to the Better Business Management programme by simplifying, standardising and sharing our communications platform which will help us be a more enterprising and efficient council.
- 11.3 GovDelivery provides value for money in many different ways; economies of scale by procuring and using only one e-communications tool; a potential reduction in mail and print costs; a reduction in contact to the council; an uplift in visitor numbers to attractions and services.

12 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 12.1 As a Significant Operational Decision this Delegated Decision Report is not subject to Call-In but will be published on the register of decisions.
- 12.2 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information under the Access to Information Rules.
- 12.3 The value of the contract detailed in this report is below the threshold for the application of Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for the procurement of public contracts and therefore is not subject to the full EU procurement rules.
- 12.4 In awarding the contract direct without competition, there is a potential risk of challenge from other providers, to whom this contract could be of interest, that the Council has not been wholly transparent. In terms of transparency it should be noted that case law suggests that the Council should always consider whether contracts of this value could be of interest to contractors in other EU member states, and if it could, the opportunity should be subject to a degree of European wide 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, its 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. The decision maker has considered this and is of the view that the contract would not be of interest to providers in other EU member states.
- 12.5 There is a risk of an ombudsman investigation arising from a complaint that the Council has not followed reasonable procedures, resulting in a loss of opportunity. The complainant would have to establish maladministration. It is not considered that such an investigation would necessarily result in a finding of maladministration; however such investigations are by their nature more subjective than legal proceedings.
- 12.6 Although there is no legal obstacle preventing the implementation of this waiver, the above comments should be noted. In making their final decision, the decision maker should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents best value for the Council.

13 Risk Management

- 13.1 This contract will be proactively managed and monitored regularly to ensure the benefits of the services are maximized. The contractors' performance will be continuously measured over the life of the contract
- 13.2 The resumption of the GovDelivery board will oversee this function
- 13.3 Granicus-Firmstep Limited have completed the Council's GDPR compliance questionnaire which has been evaluated and can confirm no further action is required from this supplier and that GovDelivery currently meets GDPR regulations.

14 Conclusions

- 14.1 As detailed above, GovDelivery has been vital in the key objective of moving towards a single platform and has proven a track record in increasing subscriber levels to communications to citizens of Leeds and internal Leeds City Council staff.
- 14.2 This platform has enabled the tailoring of communications, allowed data segmentation, provided automation and coordination of multi-channelled messages (email, SMS, RSS Twitter and Facebook) to residents without the need to provide additional resources to manage them.
- 14.3 Approval is therefore requested for to waive Contract Procedure Rules 9.1 and 9.2 and enter into a one year contract with the option to extend for a further year via direct award with Granicus-Firmstep Limited for their GovDelivery communications and marketing tool, from 28th June 2020.

15. Recommendations

- 15.1 The Chief Officer Strategy and Policy is recommended to –
- waive Contract Procedure Rules 9.1 and 9.2 and enter into a one year contract with the option to extend for a further year with Granicus-Firmstep Limited for their GovDelivery communications and marketing tool via direct award, from 28th June 2020 in the sum of 51,408 per annum.

16 Background documents

- 16.1 None.

What is your reason for waiving CPRs?

There is a genuine, unforeseeable emergency meaning there is no time to go through a procurement process e.g. to deal with the consequences of extreme weather.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
To purchase supplies or services on particularly advantageous terms due to liquidation/administration.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Requirement to put a contract in place with a current provider whilst a review of the services is completed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Ran out of time to undertake a new procurement exercise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other (please provide summary here)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No