

To approve the extension of call off contracts with Temporary ICT staff provided by Rullion Recruitment Ltd, Care Futures Limited, Modis International Limited and LA International Ltd.

Date: 6th October 2021

Report of: IDS Senior Resourcing Officer

Report to: The Director of Resources

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Summary

- There is growing demand for Digital solutions and innovation to improve how the Council, CCG and the wider City operate, to deliver efficiencies and to transform the customer experience through delivery of intuitive and effective services. Coupled to this demand, we have a changing technology landscape away from on-premise solutions and toward Cloud hosted platforms and services with a focus on mobility and device agnostic services.
- There have been long standing issues with our ability to recruit and retain technical skills due to the salaries on offer and market forces. Within this context, the internal DIS team do not have sufficient capacity and in some cases the specific skills needed, to meet demand. There is also a need to be able to flex our resource pool up and down in response to short term spikes in demand.
- Integrated Digital Service (IDS) currently has a Framework Agreement in place Temporary ICT Staff Framework – for the supply of ICT resource, which came into effect on 14/01/2020 and will run until 13/01/2024. There are 6 approved recruitment agencies on the Framework.
- However, a number of legacy contractors continue to be supplied through agencies on a previous framework (DN189804) and we request approval to continue with these contractors until their skills are no longer required.

Recommendations

The Director of Resources is recommended to approve the extension of contracts with the suppliers named in this report to supply the legacy contractors and also source suitably qualified and experienced ICT resource where these cannot be provided by the suppliers on the Temporary ICT Staff Framework.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 A number of legacy contractors continue to be supplied through agencies on a previous framework (DN189804) and we request approval to continue with these contractors until their skills are no longer required.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 2 The reason for this report is to ensure compliance with Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations. Producing one report for these services saves time and resources involved in obtaining individual waivers for each contract.

The suppliers listed below are covered under this report:

- **Rullion Recruitment Ltd**– For the provision of temporary ICT staff. The contract to expire on the 31st March 2022 with an estimated contract sum of £842,000 per annum.
- **Care Futures Limited** - For the provision of temporary ICT staff. The contract to expire on 31st March 2022 with an estimated contract sum of £120,000 per annum.
- **Modis International Limited**- For the provision of temporary ICT staff. The contract to expire on the 31st March 2022 with an estimated contract sum of £588,000 per annum.
- **LA International Ltd**- For the provision of temporary ICT staff. The contract to expire on the 31st March 2002 with an estimated contract sum of £842,000 per annum.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 3 Consultation has taken place with IDS Senior Management to consider the most effective and flexible way IDS can ensure that a comprehensive, effective, efficient and economic service for the supply of temporary ICT resource can be provided.

What are the resource implications?

- 4 The challenge of recruiting and retaining staff with specialist ICT/Digital skills is increasing. The use of contractors with specialist skills is essential to ensure that the ability to maintain core 'lights on' service and to deliver projects and programmes which support efficiencies and service improvements.

What are the legal implications?

- 5 This is a Key Decision and was subject to Call In. There are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential under the Council's Access to Information Rules.

Whilst the risk of legal challenge is considered low due the nature the way the recruitment market operates, awarding the contracts direct to the providers in this way could leave the Council open to a potential claim from other providers, to whom these contracts could be of interest, that it 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 on 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 would be 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 Chief Digital and Information Officer has considered the above and, due to the specialist nature of the services required, is of the view that the scope and nature of the services is such that it would not be of interest to providers in other EU member states.

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. Obviously, 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.

In making the final decision, the Chief Digital and Information Officer should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents best value for money.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 6 The supply of IDS resource is monitored by the IDS Senior Leadership Team to ensure it is appropriate for the requirements.
- The individual appointments and recruitment agencies will be managed and reviewed on a regular basis by the Senior Resourcing Officer and approval will be requested from IDS Senior Leadership Team for any ad-hoc recruitment requirements via recruitment agencies not on the Framework for specific ICT resource.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 6 The delivery of robust 'lights on' support, project change delivery, proactive protection against cyber-attack, management of our information compliance regime, digital leadership and data analytics all directly support the three key pillars.

The combined team for Council and CCG directly supports the health & Wellbeing agenda.

The move to Cloud based computing, increased Digitisation and Digitalisation support Climate Emergency through reduction in energy and paper usage plus a reduction in staff travel.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 7 IDS relies on temporary ICT resource to work on specific projects, or to backfill for members of staff, who are working on projects which are capital funded. Funding is provided within project budgets to cover this temporary headcount increase, and the use of external temporary ICT resource is the most effective way of managing these short/medium term resourcing demands which often require specific technical skills for the duration of the project.

Use of market rate salaries to improve chances of recruiting and retraining technical staff – further outsourcing of roles or additional use of agency/staff could be done however there will be a significant cost overhead which is not deemed viable.

How will success be measured?

- 8 Project & portfolio reporting to measure delivery and benefits realisation of projects.
9 Ongoing review of the contractor tracker and IDS resource capacity

What is the timetable for implementation?

- 10 Upon approval.