

Use of Government framework to engage a supplier to deliver new RPA solutions that support the digital transformation work necessary to support financial savings work

Date: 22nd September 2022

Report of: Head of Portfolio Management Office

Report to: Chief Digital & Information Officer

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

As part of the significant financial challenges being faced by the council, coupled with the drive to digitise and modernise services, there is an urgent need to exploit technology that will increase automation and streamline service delivery.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) solutions will save time and human effort as they automate the execution of repetitive tasks. RPA provides increased productivity and reduces errors. As RPA's automated software robots are programmed more effectively, these bots can perform a greater number of routine tasks, extending our human staff resource even more. With more low-level customer requests handled automatically, those customers will have a better experience. Increased RPA across the authority will generate efficiencies to support the financial challenge by digitising and modernising the delivery of council services and back-office processes where these are currently heavily manual.

Significant work has already taken place on identifying priority service areas, along with potential savings / income generation targets. However, additional capacity and expertise is required from an experienced supplier to move this work on at pace.

Recommendations

- a) The Chief Officer of Integrated Digital Service (IDS) is recommended to approve the procurement of experienced specialist technical resources to supplement IDS resource in the delivery of RPA solutions that will support the financial challenge work currently underway.

What is this report about?

- 1 As part of the significant financial challenges being faced by the council, coupled with the drive to digitise and modernise services, there is an urgent need to exploit technology that will increase automation and streamline service delivery.
- 2 Robotic Process Automation (RPA) solutions will save time and human effort as it automates the execution of repetitive tasks. RPA provides increased productivity and reduces errors. As RPA's automated software robots are programmed more effectively, these bots can perform a greater number of routine tasks, extending our human staff resource even more. RPA solutions will also provide enhanced customer interactions as it moves processes faster and more efficiently than human staff. With more low-level customer requests handled automatically, those customers will have a better experience. Increased RPA across the authority will generate efficiencies to support the financial challenge by digitising and modernising the delivery of council services and back-office processes where these are currently heavily manual.
- 3 The work will involve:
 - Review of the areas affording the greatest opportunity.
 - Compilation of a Product Backlog.
 - Development and delivery of solutions (minimum viable product) that drive the greatest savings / income generation opportunities.
 - Development of a repeatable methodology and approach to adopting, implementing and supporting solutions developed RPA technologies.
- 4 Significant work has already taken place on identifying priority service areas, along with potential savings / income generation targets. However, additional capacity and expertise is required from an experienced supplier to move this work on at pace.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 5 The proposal allows IDS to supplement its internal resource with additional highly skilled and experienced technical resource so that solutions can be developed and deployed more rapidly, thus releasing savings / income generation opportunities far quicker. This will help support the budget challenges the council faces.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 6 This will see the introduction of technology that will contribute to the automation and streamlining of services and the realisation of financial savings as well as improving the citizen experience when accessing council services.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: N/A

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 7 Consultation between senior staff within IDS, Central Finance, and Directorates has taken place and this approach agreed.

What are the resource implications?

- 8 This will involve internal resources working alongside a delivery partner to augment existing internal IDS resources. This is to facilitate the speedier delivery of solutions and to build and embed a repeatable methodology and approach to adopting, implementing and supporting solutions developed using RPA tools. The ongoing support of any solutions developed and deployed be undertaken by existing resources within IDS. There are no other resource implications.

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

- 9 Key risks relate to not being able to deliver the work required in a timely manner. This will be managed by ensuring robust contract and supplier management arrangements are in place to track and monitor that the technical solutions delivered will support automation, streamlining and services and realise financial savings.

What are the legal implications?

- 10 There are no legal implications.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 11 IDS has assessed the routes available to secure appropriately skilled and experienced resources to supplement the internal team. This has included going to the contractor market via the existing contractor framework that IDS has in place. However, IDS believes the best value will be derived from engaging a delivery partner that can provide all required resources in a timely manner.

How will success be measured?

- 12 Implementation of RPA technologies that are deployed across the council that show a reduction in cost of delivery of services and the realisation of financial savings within required timeframes. Specific financial savings will be identified as part of this work.
- 13 IDS staff trained in how to further develop and support any solutions developed.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 14 The work will commence work in November 2022 and the Head of Digital Change is responsible for implementation.

Appendices

- ECDI Screening Document

Background papers

- N/A