

Authority to Procure a new Network Hardware, Maintenance and Support Contract by way of a call-off from the Crown Commercial Service Technology Products & Associated Services 2 Framework

Date: 11/09/2024

Report of: ICT Technical Resource Manager

Report to: Director of Strategy and Resources

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The existing contract for Network Hardware, Maintenance and Support is scheduled to conclude on 31st December 2024. This contract, held by the incumbent supplier, spans a four-year term without an extension option. It encompasses the procurement of all network-related hardware, including Layer 2 and Layer 3 Cisco and Meraki switches, as well as Wi-Fi access points. Additionally, the contract provides vital support and maintenance for crucial network infrastructure within our data centres, which includes core Layer 3 switches, security firewalls, and appliances. Professional Services and technical support are also supplied by the incumbent's technical staff. Vendor support is provided by Cisco, the Original Equipment Manufacturer, when required. This high-value contract is estimated at approximately £3 million over its duration. It is recommended we use RM6098 on Lot 1 - Technology Products & Associated Services 2 Crown Commercial Services as our route to market.

Recommendations

The Director of Strategy and Resources is recommended to –

- Approve a procurement exercise for a new Network Hardware, Maintenance and Support contract by way of a call-off from Lot 1 of the RM6098 Technology Products & Associated Services 2 Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Framework.
- Note that the proposed call-off mechanism is a mini competition to be conducted by way of a quality/price separated approach.
- Note that the estimated value for this procurement is £3,000,000 (three-million-pounds).

What is this report about?

- 1 This report is to seek approval to go out to tender by way of a call-off from a CCS Framework for a new contract to provide Network Hardware, Support and Maintenance across the Council's estate.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 2 Without this contract the Council would have no provision to buy Network hardware such as Layer 2 and Layer 3 Switches and Wireless Access Points.
- 3 There would be no support and maintenance for any of the Council's network infrastructure. Potentially this would have a major impact as equipment in the datacentres could fail, meaning IT access would be affected across the Council.
- 4 By ensuring that an agreement for the provision and maintenance of hardware is in place, the Council is minimising such risks to ensure all functions provided by the Council continue to be delivered without any interruption.

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

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

- 5 The establishment of this contract is pivotal in ensuring the fulfilment of three critical objectives. Information Technology (IT) is integral to the operations of the Council, permeating nearly every aspect of its functions. It facilitates remote work capabilities, thereby promoting a harmonious work-life balance for employees. Additionally, IT usage has seen a significant uptick among city residents, with enhanced connectivity now more accessible than ever. This aligns with the Council's commitment to Digital Inclusion for the residents of Leeds. Such advancements would not be feasible without the requisite network equipment and its corresponding support infrastructure. Furthermore, the tender process will include a stipulation for bidders to exhibit their dedication to environmental sustainability and a Zero Carbon footprint.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: N/A

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

What are the resource implications?

- 6 The resource implications of the tender process are multifaceted, necessitating contributions from various key personnel. This includes the Datacoms Team Manager, the Security Team Technical Lead, the Senior IT Infrastructure Manager, and the internal Procurement Team. Their collective expertise and coordination are essential to the successful execution of the tender process.

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

- 7 The principal risk is the impending conclusion of the current contract on 31st December 2024, which lacks an extension provision. It is imperative to undertake a procurement exercise to ensure the timely awarding of a new contract. This measure is crucial to prevent any discontinuity in service that could potentially disrupt the IT support provided to the council's services. Without a contract in place then we cannot meet the Council's service needs as almost all areas of the Council now rely on the use of IT equipment.

What are the legal implications?

- 8 Given that the estimated costs related to this procurement exceed £500,000, this was placed on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions on 26 July 2024 and therefore this decision report is a Key Decision and is eligible for Call In. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.
- 9 The framework has been established by a third-party and the Council is entitled to procure contractors from this framework by way of a mini-competition call-off. The overarching framework terms and conditions, along with the call-off terms, have been reviewed and approved by the Procurement and Commercial Services Legal Team, in line with CPR 12.2. The Legal team is satisfied that the third-party framework was procured in a compliant way, and any subsequent call-offs in line with the requisite terms are a compliant route to procure an agreement.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 10 Option 1 - Do nothing: This is not a viable option as the service currently provided by IDS is crucial for IT connectivity across all Council sites as well as providing the ability to work remotely. If the current agreement lapsed with no new arrangements in place, this would negatively impact multiple service areas and their ability to conduct their daily tasks.
- 11 Option 2 – Extend the current agreement: An inquiry was conducted to explore the possibility of extending the current contract with the incumbent supplier for an additional year. However, it was determined that such an extension is not feasible under the terms of the existing contract.
- 12 Option 3 – Use of an Internal Service Provider (ISP): In line with the obligations set out at CPR 3.1.4, the use of an ISP was considered. However, it has materialised that no suitable ISP exists for the provision of the service sought.
- 13 Option 4 - Call-off from an existing framework: (Recommended)

Option 5 – Undertaking a new procurement exercise: This option is not suitable because there is already a Framework suitable for our needs that already exists and would therefore save resource effort and time.

How will success be measured?

- 14 Success will be determined by a thorough appraisal of all tenders to secure exceptional value, necessary support, and timely access to products and technical expertise. The Council also expects to receive strategic technology roadmaps that offer cost-effective solutions and future-proof the technological estate.

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

15 The initiation of the tender process is of utmost urgency to allocate sufficient time for the evaluation and selection of the most suitable bidder. This is essential to facilitate a seamless transition from the current supplier. The new contract must be finalised by the termination date of the existing contract, which is 31st December 2024.