

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 28 OCTOBER 2024
REPORT ON: CUSTOMER SERVICES PLATFORM
REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES
REPORT NO: 290-2024

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To propose the ongoing use of a digital platform to continue to provide internet-based customer services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the following:-

- (a) approves the procurement exercise in respect of the project described, based on the sourcing strategy, summarised in this report; and
- (b) delegates authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Services to award a 3-year contract to Granicus on the Crown Commercial Services - G-Cloud 14 Framework Agreement, with the option of extending by a further single year.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Licensing and support for 3 years for the product is estimated at £223,000 to be funded from existing Corporate Services revenue budgets. Firm costs have been agreed for the 4th year (optional extension). This produces a cost avoidance of £4,578 from overall contract value.
- 3.2 Staffing costs to support the deployment of the products to be met from existing Customer Services and IT staffing budgets.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Digital Strategy 2023-2027 which was approved at Policy and Resources Committee on 15 May 2023 (Report 141-2023, article IV refers), and the IT Strategy which was approved at the City Governance Committee on 4 March 2024 (Report 62-2024, article VIII refers). The Council's Digital and IT strategies set out to deliver secure, robust, and affordable IT platforms. Helping to enable digital services, mobile and flexibly accessible services through a cloud first approach.
- 4.2 The Granicus platform was originally agreed on in Report 412-2016 (article III refers) of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 12 December 2016, then named Firmstep. Dundee City Council implemented the platform to deliver a Customer Service Platform (CSP) in Dundee City Council to provide citizens a clear platform to transact with the Council digitally. The platform has proven to be a success within the Council and its renewal was approved in Report 192-2021 (article VI refers) of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 21 June 2021. The latest contract is now nearing completion, and future arrangements must be considered.
- 4.3 The Granicus platform is implemented through the Council's website. Requests and Enquiries are raised digitally on the platform and are then work flowed through Customer Services and Service departments to fulfilment. The platform is also now used to digitally workflow internal Human Resources processes.

- 4.4 Since Granicus was implemented, the Council has realised many of the benefits identified in the original and subsequent reports, moving these transactions from the substantially more expensive channels offered through face-to-face and the telephone. This is empowering citizens to embrace digital services in their day-to-day lives and accessing Council services in a manner convenient to them, providing online transactions which are simple and easy to use.
- 4.5 The Council now has 342 services deployed through its Granicus platform. Since implementation, over 1,500,000 digital processes and transactions have been carried out on the platform. In the year to March 31, 2024, 236,460 processes and transactions were carried out on the platform.
- 4.6 The timescale to adopt alternatives to Granicus and associated costs would be considerable. The Council has many years' experiences in deploying Digital and Customer Services solutions utilising the Granicus platform. A steep learning curve would be required to deploy an alternative. It is also likely duplicate costs would be encountered to support the existing platform whilst a lengthy project was progressed to adopt a new platform. There would be considerable risk of disruption to citizens during this process as each of the 342 forms and processes would require to be deployed and tested in an alternative environment. The cost of change would outweigh the benefit of re-procurement.
- 4.7 A call-off contract will be entered into via the G-Cloud 14 Framework (Crown Commercial Services approved Framework).

5. SOURCING STRATEGY SUMMARY

- 5.1 Call-off from the Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud 14 Framework is a compliant contracting route (in accordance with Procurement Regulations and Framework Call-off Rules).
- 5.2 A compliant contract will be created via the G-Cloud 14 Framework Agreement.

6. RISK ANALYSIS

Description of Risk	Actions required to manage Risk
Commercial Risk - That either the price objectives are not achieved up front or there are other costs that arise during the contract and diminish the overall benefits.	The Council's specification will detail specific product requirements which publicly available pricing is provided for.
Technical Risk - This concerns the difficulty in being able to specify the desired outcome and on the market being unable to deliver to the specification.	The Council currently deploys these robust, stable products and is proficient in their use. There are defined processes for reporting and resolving issues arising.
Performance Risk - This concerns the ability of suppliers to perform consistently over the life of the contract to deliver the planned benefits.	The contract will provide several KPIs governing service response times.
Contractual Risk - Being able to remedy the shortcomings in the contractor's performance without severely damaging the contract and about avoiding reliance on the contracted supplier as the contract develops.	The contract will put a reliance on contractors but there will be reviews and contact with the contractor to assure the fulfilment of duties.
Procurement Risk - where a procurement is found unsound in law, through the public procurement rules.	Procurement will be carried in a compliant manner using Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 utilising the G-Cloud 13 Framework.

7. CONCLUSION

The approval of this report will allow for procurement to begin as soon as possible, the maintenance of existing processes and services and the delivery of further process efficiencies within the Council and improvements in service and choice to citizens and businesses.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

9. CONSULTATIONS

The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

28 OCTOBER 2024