

Supporting Report Reference Officer Decision To Replace The Council's Cyber Security Firewall Technology Solution

Date: 08/05/19

Executive Summary:

This Officer report details the decision to place the existing cyber security firewall management contract together with a fundamental re-design of our protective security architecture with trusted suppliers Intergence Systems Ltd.

The cost of the renewal is £33,624 per annum funded through existing budgets. The procurement route is a direct award through the UK government G-Cloud 9 framework which is in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy framework.

Background:

The Council uses and is reliant upon large amounts of resident data in order to undertake both its statutory and non-statutory duties and to provide services to residents and customers.

This data represents a £ multi-million financial value to cyber criminals and fraudsters resulting in the Council systems, staff and members being actively targeted by cyber criminals. Attacks occur on a daily basis and through a range of different technologies and activities including; system hacking attempts, malware and virus attacks, phishing emails, social grooming etc.

The Council maintains robust cyber security measures to protect this data and to maintain its data connection with central government. This cyber protection and user access management is delivered through a number of ageing and different vendor 'Firewalls' with specialist cyber security management support provided through contract holders Secure Data. This contract expires in May 2019.

The Council is half way through a two year Digital Transformation programme which includes re-design of our corporate data network in support of our Office Transformation programme. As a second strand of work we are migrating around 80% of all of our on-site 'private cloud' data storage to the Microsoft Azure platform 'public cloud'. Both of these significant pieces of work have been commissioned with Intergence Systems Ltd with whom the Council has built a relationship based upon technical professionalism, value for money and trust over the last two and a half years.

Reasons For The Decision:

A number of factors have all lead to a significant re-think with regards to the renewal of the Firewall management/ Cyber Security contract, including; the expiry of our existing Cyber Security Firewall management contract, the fundamental shift

in our data storage strategy from that of on-site 'private cloud' to Microsoft hosted 'public cloud' migration, significant corporate network re-design and works to support the Office Transformation programme, a legacy mix of different vendor and multiple Firewall configurations that was becoming overly complex to support/maintain.

In addition, the above mention programme of works require a significant amount of Firewall 'rule' change work to seamlessly support the network architectural changes.

All of the above factors sign-posted officer thinking that the time was right to include a Firewall renewal and rationalisation programme into the renewal of the outsourced management contract. And that in addition to delivering this contract within budget, a key qualitative factor in awarding the contract would be confidence that the specialist contractor had an in-depth understanding of the programme of modernisation the Council is delivering and a capacity to react quickly and flexibly to change requests.

Key consideration has been given to the very significant and real strategic cyber security risks surrounding the renewal of this contract, together with the potential for catastrophic Council reputational loss should we suffer a large loss of data. Given the level of access to information necessary to manage the Council's Firewalls and cyber security the Council needs ultimate confidence in the specialist cyber security knowledge credentials and process management in placing the new contract.

The Council's IT Cyber Security and Systems Support Manager and its IT Technical Operations Manager independently recommended to the Head of IT and Resilience Service that the new contract be awarded to Intergence Systems Ltd on the basis of; cheapest price, enhanced technical cyber security monitoring/specification beyond that specified, confidence and trust in professional competence, confidence in flexibly delivering the required technical Firewall architecture and security change work to demanding project timescales, confidence in the contractor's ongoing commitment to the Council and its Digital Transformation and Office Transformation strategic programmes.

Financial Summary:

The new three year contract will be paid for from within existing IT and Resilience Team Service budgets.

The contract will cost £33,624 (thirty three thousand and six hundred and twenty four pounds) per annum for 3 years.

Legal:

This proposed investment is in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy framework.

The procurement route will be through the UK government G-Cloud 9 framework which is fully compliant with the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) procurement regulations and can be used in accordance with the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules.

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