

Supporting Report Reference Officer(s) Decision To Replace The Council's Contact Centre Supporting Technology

Date: 12/06/19

Executive Summary:

This Officer report details the decision to replace the existing contact centre technology and support contract.

The cost of the renewal is £11,498 per annum with a one off implementation charge of £9,560 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:

Incoming calls to the Council's main telephone number 01255 68 68 68 are answered through contact centre technology. Additionally, the contact centre provides customer 'front line' telephony service for our Revenues and Benefits Service, including; Council Tax, National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and Housing Benefits etc.

Moving forwards as a key element of our digital transformation programme the contact centre is increasing its 'front line' customer telephone mediated service capabilities as we develop and introduce new self-service capabilities through the new *My Tending* customer self-service portal. It should be noted that whilst we continue to work towards customers transacting with the Council through our website and self-service we will not be removing face to face nor telephony access for those residents who chose to contact us in this way.

Reasons For The Decision:

The Council has used Mitel contact centre technology for the past three years but Mitel have just announced that strategically they will no longer be supporting integrating with Microsoft Skype/ TEAM telephony from the end of the year.

As Microsoft Skype/ TEAM play a key strategic role in the Council's converged communications moving forwards this poses us with a significant problem. The Mitel contact centre solution has not been as reliable as anticipated and this may have caused some reputational damage for the Council.

Additionally, the Council is half way through a programme to move its data storage and software to 'the Cloud', predominantly the Microsoft Azure platform. Officers have therefore obtained Mitel quotations for software upgrades and new operator hardware necessary to move Mitel to 'the Cloud' and these are cost prohibitive. This option would give us operational issues when connecting calls to staff continuing to use Skype etc.

The logical conclusion is therefore to replace our Mitel contact centre with a cloud-based solution that is fully compatible with Microsoft Skype / TEAM. Having engaged with contact centre staff with regards to the technology change and in ensuring that the replacement solution meets their operational requirements the Head of Customer and Commercial Services and the Head of IT and Resilience Services have jointly made this officer decision to purchase new replacement Five9's contact centre replacement technology.

Key consideration has been given to ensuring that the chosen supplier will be able to have the Council operational before the Mitel Skype support is ended.

The FIVE9's solution will be implemented as transparently to our residents and customers as can be achieved.

Financial Summary:

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

The contract will cost £11,498 per annum for 3 years with a one off implementation charge of £9,560. The total value of the contract is therefore £44,053.

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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