

Record of Officer's Decision

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Date of Decision:	12/12/2025
Decision Maker (Officer):	Richard Barrett
Authority for Delegated Decision (Cabinet/Committee Decision or Scheme of Delegation – provide reference):	Part 3, Schedule 3 – Responsibility for Executive Functions delegated to Officers paragraph 4.3 (1) – the Corporate Director has delegated authority to discharge executive functions within their respective service areas (Part 3.38). All delegations are subject to consultation where considered appropriate in the circumstances (paragraph 4.3 (4(ii) – Part 3.39). The Corporate Director Finance and IT has delegated operational matters relating to the proposed procurement / function.
Identify which Portfolio Holder(s)/Committee Chairman consulted?	Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder
Ward Member(s) consulted?	N/A
Is it a Key Decision?	No
Is it subject to call-in?	No
Decision Made:	To appoint Bottomline Technologies Ltd to provide the Council's platform for BACS payments and bulk direct debit collection, including support for a period of 2 years. This would be by direct award on the G-Cloud 14 framework. <i>(Contract period 1 December 2025 – 30 November 2027)</i>
Reason for Decision (if a report was produced to support the Decision, refer to or attach it):	The Council's BACS payment requirements and bulk direct debit collection has been supported by Bottomline Technologies Ltd on a specific software platform on a rolling contract since 2011.

	Bottomline Technologies Ltd informed the Council earlier in the year that they will no longer be supporting this platform and that if the Council wanted to continue with existing arrangements then it will need to upgrade to the latest cloud-based version. This would need to be considered within the context of a new procurement process as it would not be able to be treated as a continuation of existing arrangements / terms. Bottomline Technologies Ltd services have been identified as being available on the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) G-Cloud 14 framework. The G-Cloud 14 framework allows for a direct award on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender principle. This allows for a supplier to be selected on the basis of technical merit and functional fit. In terms of the non-price factors, given that the current supplier is heavily embedded within the Council's payment systems, the resource implications of changing supplier would far outweigh any potential savings from changing supplier, which has been reflected in the required MEAT evaluation. There are no other significant underlying amendments to the current arrangements with Bottomline Technologies Ltd with the proposed service remaining broadly unchanged, albeit on an upgraded / supported platform. The relationship with Bottomline Technologies has / and is expected to continue to operate on an adequate / effective basis, including the provision of the necessary IT security implications as set out below.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	Financial Considerations The cost of the contract per annum following direct award via the G-Cloud 14 Framework would be £24,000 (an approximate increase of £12,000 when compared to the current cost of the historic and now unsupported system.) In the context of this annual increase, the key value for money considerations have been set out above. An additional sum of £12,000 was agreed as part of the Q2 Finance Performance Report 2025/26 that was considered by Cabinet on 14 November 2025 along with its inclusion within the developing forecast and budget for 2026/27 onwards.

	Legislative Considerations: Local Government Act 2000 The facilitation of BACS payments is a banking arrangement so under part 5 section 13 of the Councils Constitution the Chief Financial Officer has delegation to amend arrangements as and when they are required. Equality Act 2010 An impact assessment is not required under the Public Sector Equality Duty under The Equality Act 2010 as BACS payments and direct debits are available to all suppliers/customers who wish to receive or make payment using this method and the proposals are a continuation of existing arrangements. Cyber Security and Information Governance Bottomline Technologies Ltd hold the following Security Governance Certifications: ISO/IEC 27001 2013 standards. All actions required under the terms of the associated framework will be undertaken as necessary.
Details of Local Government Reorganisation and/or Devolution considerations	The proposed contract period is two years. This provides a balance between maintaining existing services whilst having the flexibility to explore arrangements with our local partners over the next two years.
Details of any Alternative Options Considered and rejected (together with reasons):	Moving to another supplier following competition via framework/open bids. The current platform for BACS payments/ bulk direct debit collection is 15 years old, and if the Council were to change supplier it would be expected to upgrade to the most up to date platform, so it is unlikely that a cost pressure could be avoided by changing supplier. It is likely that savings from moving to an alternative provider would be outweighed by the administrative costs and risks associated with changing a system that is already embedded within the Council's systems and processes. The Council processes just under 700,000 payments per annum via BACS for paying suppliers, paying

	housing benefits and collecting Council Tax/business rates and housing rents. Bottomline have been the Council's supplier for many years and have a good relationship with the Council. Changing supplier for such a high-profile service to also upgrade to a new platform is likely to present risks of having to learn a new system with a new platform. This would be costly in administrative time and could result in reputational risks if the BACS payments/collections were to fail. These risks will outweigh any potential financial savings from moving to a new supplier. It is for the above reason that the Council considers a direct award as justifiable on grounds of the system being embedded within the Council's systems and processes along with the price element as per the MEAT evaluation above.	
Details of any declarations of interest (by Portfolio Holder/Committee Chairman who was consulted by the officer, which related to the decision) If relevant, a note of the dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer:	N/A	
Reason Decision, or supporting Report, is not published: <i>Tick one or more of the specific exemptions,</i> <u>and</u> <i>Give more information in the final box with regards to why the exemption applies and outweighs the public interest test (which is in favour of disclosure).</i>	x	Not applicable – Decision [and report] to be published
		The report supporting the Decision contains confidential information
		The Report supporting the Decision falls within an exemption pursuant to Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 Information:
		• Relates to an individual
		• Likely to reveal the identity of an individual
		• Relating to financial or business affairs of a person or organisation
		• Relates to a claim for legal professional privilege in legal proceedings
		• Reveals that the Council proposes to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or

		to make an order or direction under any enactment
		• Relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime
	<u>And</u> is exempt if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information Reasons:	

Officers

Signed:

Title:

Signed:

Title:

In consultation with:

Signed:

Portfolio Holder For Finance & Governance

Signed:

Section 151 Officer (if required)

Signed:

Monitoring Officer (if required)

Dated: