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:	2 November 2026
Decision Maker (Officer):	Director of People
Authority for Delegated Decision (Cabinet/Committee Decision or Scheme of Delegation – provide reference):	The Director of People is authorised to take this decision under the officer delegations set out in Part 3, Schedule 3 of the Council's Constitution, within the approved Budget and Policy Framework and following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder. The original decision that this decision relates to is as follows: decision on the procurement of a new Payroll and HR IT System, dated 29 August 2023. This authorised the award of the MHR iTrent contract for a four-year term (3 + 1).
Identify which Portfolio Holder(s)/Committee Chairman consulted?	The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance.
Ward Member(s) consulted?	Not applicable. The decision relates to a Council-wide corporate HR and Payroll system and does not directly affect a specific ward.
Is it a Key Decision?	No. The original procurement and four-year (3 + 1) contractual arrangement were approved as a Key Decision on 29 August 2023. This decision exercises the extension option already provided for within that approved arrangement.
Is it subject to call-in?	No.
Decision Made:	Following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance, the Director of People approves the exercise of the contractual option to extend the Council's call-off contract with MHR International (UK) Limited for the provision of the MHR iTrent HR and Payroll system for 12 months, from 9 October 2026 to 8 October 2027, in accordance with the four-year (3 + 1) contract arrangement approved on 29 August 2023, and

	authorises completion of the required contractual notice and associated documentation.
Reason for Decision (if a report was produced to support the Decision, refer to or attach it):	The extension will maintain continuity of the Council's HR and Payroll system and associated support beyond the initial three-year term. Exercising the existing option is consistent with the procurement and contractual arrangement approved on 29 August 2023 and avoids the operational, payroll and data risks that would arise if the service ended at the expiry of the initial term. It also supports organisational resilience while Greater Essex LGR proposals remain under review. During the extension period, officers will commence the necessary work to review future requirements, taking account of further Government announcements, and prepare for the procurement of an appropriate replacement arrangement before the extended contract expires on 8 October 2027. In terms of the performance of the contract to date, the system has met the needs of the Council, which is therefore expected to continue over the 12 month extension period proposed.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	Finance: the cost of the extension can be met from within existing budgets and will remain within the value and terms of the original four-year call-off contract. Legal and procurement: the extension option is expressly provided for in the original 3 + 1 arrangement and does not constitute a new procurement, subject to completion of the required contractual notice and final checks. Operational: not extending the contract would create a significant risk to payroll delivery, employee records, statutory reporting and service continuity. Equality: no direct adverse equality implications have been identified; continuation of the existing system maintains current access and service arrangements.
Details of Local Government Reorganisation and/or Devolution considerations	On 29 October 2026, the Government reaffirmed its commitment to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). For Greater Essex, the decision withdrawn in September remains withdrawn, and the area is included in a wider review of LGR proposals. All previously submitted Greater Essex proposals remain under consideration, with an update on the outcome of the review expected in early 2027. In this context, the contract extension will maintain continuity of the Council's HR and Payroll system and associated support, protect accurate workforce and payroll information, and support organisational resilience. Future requirements will be reviewed during the extension period, taking account of further Government announcements. This decision does not determine any future LGR configuration or devolution arrangements.

Details of any Alternative Options Considered and rejected (together with reasons):	The alternative considered was not to exercise the one-year extension and to allow the contract to end after the initial three-year term. This option was rejected because it would risk interruption to a business-critical HR and Payroll service and would require an alternative arrangement to be procured and implemented. Exercising the existing extension provides service continuity and makes use of the full term contemplated by the original procurement. It is important to highlight that based on current market conditions, it is not considered that improved value for money would be achievable via any alternative approach to that proposed.	
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:**	No declarations of interest have been identified in relation to this decision.	
Reason Decision, or supporting Report, is not published: *Tick one or more of the specific exemptions,* ***and*** *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).*		Not applicable. The decision will be published.
	If Report is not to be published – tick one of the following boxes:	
		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

	And 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 No exemption is being relied upon for publication of the decision notice.

Officers

Signed: kwilkins Title: Director of People

In consultation with:

Signed: Cllr Mark Stephenson Title: Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder
for Corporate Finance and Governance

Dated: 2 November 2026