

CABINET

DATE	16 th July 2025
REPORT OF	Councillor Stephen Harness – Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Joanne Robinson – Assistant Director Policy, Strategy and Resources
SUBJECT	Procurement of Laptops, Monitors and Desktops
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 07/25/07

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The report contributes to both the Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities outcomes by ensuring that the Council can continue to operate as a modern and fully functional Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council's current contracts for purchasing ICT hardware (desktops, monitors, and laptops) are due to expire November 2025 and there are no further options to extend. In order to ensure that the Council's infrastructure is maintained and refreshed appropriately ensuring reliability and accessibility it is essential that replacement contracts are procured.

The Council is able to participate in an aggregated procurement run by the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) under the Technology Products and Associated Services 2 (RM6098) Framework. The aggregation allows contracting authorities to procure the same core requirements (IT Hardware) through a single procurement process leveraging economies of scale enabling savings and value for money to the Council.

The estimated whole life value for a replacement 4-year contract is £1,300,000. The costs are to be funded through the approved Capital Investment Programme, the ICT Refresh and Refurbishment scheme budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the commencement of a procurement exercise for IT Hardware, being Laptops, Monitors and Desktops.
2. Delegates authority to the Assistant Director Policy Strategy and Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets and Section 151 Officer to award the contract for the Procurement of IT Hardware and thereafter to deal with all ancillary matters reasonable arising.

3. Authorises the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) to complete and execute all legal documentation in connection with the exercise.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To decision allows the Council to commence the procurement exercise for the replacement of IT Hardware and allows the Council to award the contract.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Council's current contract for desktops and monitors ends on the 26th November 2025 and the laptops contract ends on the 21st November 2025. There are no further extension periods available. To ensure continuity of service, a replacement contract needs to be procured.
- 1.2 The Council intends to procure the replacement contract via the CCS aggregated further competition (NFC126) under the Technology Products and Associated Services 2 (RM6098) Framework.
- 1.3 The advantages of taking part in the CCS aggregated further competition are that they will run the procurement process for the Council, all providers on the framework have already agreed to a set of terms and conditions, and the Council will achieve better prices by combining its volume with the other public bodies also taking part.
- 1.4 The CCS Framework is fully compliant with the procurement process being followed and is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 1.5 A project team has been established in readiness to undertake the procurement which consists of officers from NELC ICT and Digital and the Procurement Team. Advice will be sought from Legal Services in relation to the formation of the contract.
- 1.6 ICT Hardware has a relatively short production / supported life term, innovation in new technology means the Council has to be progressive when technology becomes un-supported and "end of life". To ensure we remain within current / support and maintained hardware and software we need to re-new dated hardware on a regular basis (approximately every 3 –5 years). The risk of non-renewal of our aging assets will result in non-compliance within security standards, the inability to patch to latest levels, non-compliance with third party vendor applications and leaves the Council vulnerable to both internal and external cyber-attacks.
- 1.7 The primary objective of this is to provide assurances that the hardware element of the Councils Refresh and Refurbishment programme is implemented to continue to support the requirements placed upon it and ensures the assurance of the Council's information / data assets remain secure, robust and accessible.
- 1.8 There is a requirement to ensure we comply with the yearly submitted and reviewed Central Governments Code of Connection (CoCo). Without the CoCo the Council will not be able to deliver some key council applications hosted on the GCSX (Central Government Network) including any interfaces

with other public sector bodies. We retain our CoCo by ensuring that we are at a minimum, supported, maintained and patched to the latest security standards. The audit of the CoCo is carried out by Central Government following an independent penetration test (which details vulnerabilities). The outcomes from the audit is risk assessed and remedied where required to ensure we comply. The risk of not complying would result in the disconnection from the GCSX network and loss of the ability to deliver one of the Council's key services.

- 1.9 The procurement is required to ensure that the ICT hardware environment is robust and continues to be fit for purpose, is scalable and efficient. This enables the Council to continue to provide a functional service, with consideration of the Council's policies and strategies.
- 1.10 All Council staff, Elected Members, customers, service users, external partners including government departments (including inspectors) will benefit from the programme of replacement and refurbishment of the Council's ICT hardware estate the Council will be able to provide and functional ICT service.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1 Risks of not procuring a suitable contract would result in being unable to provide suitable devices and equipment, therefore being unable to successfully deliver the ICT Refresh and Refurbishment programme.
- 2.2 A successful outcome would lead to an economically advantageous contract that delivers value for money to the Council.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Do nothing – The current contracts have ended, so there is a need to procure a replacement contract in order that the Council are compliant with its Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023 / Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 3.2 The Council considered conducting its own further competition through the CCS Technology Products & Associated Services 2 (RM6098) Framework, however, this would not enable the Council to take advantage of combining its volumes with other public bodies to achieve a better price.
- 3.3 The Council considered running its own tender without accessing a framework, however, in addition to not achieving increased savings through larger volumes, this would put additional pressure on Council resources because of the additional time and resource required to undertake the procurement itself, and develop specific terms and conditions, which have already been pre agreed by suppliers on the CCS Framework.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

In the event of non-approval of the recommendation, the Council's reputation may be negatively impacted as a result of a non-supported or non-compliant

hardware environment rendering public facing services unavailable. Examples would be the Council's safeguarding services, corporate web presence, telephony system, refuse collection etc.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. The programme contributes to the Council's Financial Strategy through;

- 5.1.1. Aligning financial resources to ensure robust and supportable ICT infrastructure is in place to support council services in delivery of the Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities priorities.
- 5.1.2. The economic and efficient delivery of services will be enabled through robust and supportable ICT infrastructure and hardware.
- 5.1.3. Undertaking relevant procurement exercises in relation to the project will ensure the delivery of improved value for money.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

Being able to provide suitable and functional hardware to users' will enable them to perform their duties sufficiently, impact the lives of children and young people who access the Councils services.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The procurement of laptops, monitors and desktops will explore opportunities to contribute towards the Council's Net Zero Carbon Roadmap and Environmental Vision.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

There is no consultation planned.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The contract costs will be managed as part of the ICT Refresh project, which forms part of the currently approved capital programme.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Legal Services will support the completion of this procurement exercise and review the contractual documentation to ensure that the Council's interests are protected to the greatest extent reasonably and commercially possible.
- 10.2 The approach recommended is a framework contract which, as articulated above, has the benefits of approved suppliers already meeting certain benchmarks and flagging agreement in advance to appropriate terms and conditions. Further, the Council may achieve better terms by combining its volume with the other public bodies also taking part. There are further advantages of assurance in that any such framework by necessity must be compliant with the Procurement Act 2023. A framework approach is considered good practice and comes with its own efficiencies.
- 10.3 The procurement exercise will be conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations, specifically in compliance with the Council's

Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023, and supported by relevant officers. Legal Services will support the completion of the contractual documentation on award.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

There are no wards specifically affected.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background documents.

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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COUNCILLOR STEPHEN HARNESS
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND ASSETS