

Report Title:	Customer Relationship Management procurement
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I with Part II Appendix ' Not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. '
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Rayner, Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 30 March 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Nikki Craig, Head of HR, Corporate Projects and IT
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

This report is to request that Cabinet delegates authority to the Chief Executive or appropriate Executive Director in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor to award the new Customer Relationship Management system to the successful tenderer following the conclusion of the procurement process.

The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Content Management System (CMS) software contracts end in February 2024 and therefore the digital development team are initiating procurement processes to introduce solutions that best use available technology to meet the wider corporate goal of a council trusted to deliver its promises and ensure seamless service delivery.

The CRM and CMS are critical to the Royal Borough in continuing to deliver an excellent set of services for residents. These systems underpin and facilitate hundreds of thousands of customer interactions for services across the council. Investing in the CRM and CMS creates direct improvements to the digital face of the Royal Borough and the experience of residents.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive or relevant Executive Director in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor to award the new Customer Relationship Management system to the successful tenderer following the conclusion of the procurement process.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Royal Borough currently uses a CRM and CMS built using an open-source software solution called Drupal. Both platforms have been developed by an external supplier, with the internal support, maintenance and management of content co-ordinated by the digital development team, part of corporate transformation. The platforms are critical to council operations and manage 52,000 customer accounts, are used by over 340 staff in assisting members of the public, and process over 115,000 form submissions every year. The use of a Drupal CMS allows the Royal Borough to align with the Local Gov Drupal project, which sees 34 councils share code, modules and future development concepts. The Local Gov Drupal project continues to grow as a co-operative and is a well-established and reliable option for the Royal Borough.
- 2.2 When the Royal Borough made the decision to move the CRM and CMS to open-source software in 2020, it was understood that the versions of Drupal that were first used would need to be upgraded. Provision was made in the capital budget to support this work. Given the Royal Borough does not have its own internal Drupal development capacity and is reliant on an external supplier, the Head of Service agreed that an external 3rd party review of the platforms would help inform future upgrade and development work. A private contractor was selected, and the review completed in Autumn 2022.
- 2.3 For the CMS a simple and anticipated upgrade process is needed. For the CRM, a more complex redevelopment or replacement project is now required.
- 2.4 The digital development team investigated the review results and discussed with the current development supplier, and the review partner, what work would be needed. The team also started soft market testing of available CRM options. From this exercise, a procurement process that included looking at other available options as well as remaining in Drupal would ensure the cost-effectiveness of any decisions made.
- 2.5 The team are now working with procurement colleagues regarding this direction of travel and to conclude soft-market testing of alternative CRM options, including proprietary software as well as open-source.
- 2.6 The continuation of a Drupal CMS will ensure the Royal Borough remains working alongside the Local Gov Drupal co-operative, making best use of the combined knowledge of 34 other local authorities. Local Gov Drupal has quickly become the industry standard solution for Local Gov CMS and there are further developments coming to the network that will help the Royal Borough with future improvements to the website. The Drupal CMS has been successfully adopted and is well liked and supported by the staff that use it.
- 2.7 Conversely for all the 34 councils using a Drupal CMS, only three or four are using a CRM built using Drupal. Speaking to staff at Local Gov Drupal and other councils involved in the co-operative, officers have learned that most councils are using a 'tried and tested' proprietary software provider for their CRM, whilst using Drupal for their CMS. Whilst there is appetite amongst the co-operative to develop a Drupal-based CRM for use alongside the CMS, this is broadly viewed as pioneering, risky and not guaranteed to be as cost-effective as the current CRMs in use.

- 2.8 The Royal Borough should not operate an outgoing solution for any protracted length of time, owing to the associated data security risks that that may produce.
- 2.9 On analysis of the options reviewed so far, it is evident that a Drupal CMS will continue to give the Royal Borough the tools it needs to publish a high-quality website and best support customer interactions. Aligning with other authorities using a Drupal CMS, the Royal Borough will look to procure a safe and reliable CRM, minimising the length of time that there is reliance on an end-of-life platform, and best supporting future digitalisation aspirations.
- 2.10 The procurement exercise will include a specification developed by the Digital Development team to ensure the Borough's needs are met by any new products. Furthermore, as part of the specification writing process, the Digital Development team will be assessing the team's ability and capacity to administer, maintain and improve any digital solutions that are implemented. An initial project to set up and implement the systems will occupy the first part of this work, with longer term resource planning to take place in parallel. This will ensure that the team has the correct expertise and enough of it to make best use of any selected technology over time.
- 2.11 Depending on the type of solution selected will alter the outcome of the long-term planning exercise. For example, a low-code/ build-your-own style of system will require less initial project resource, but a greater need for more development specialists within the team in the mid to long-term. A proprietary CRM system requires less in-house development expertise but may require expensive additional requests for the supplier to install bespoke features. The ramifications of such decisions are being considering as part of procurement and change management processes.

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Do nothing. This is not the recommended option	Both the current software version and contract expire in the next 12 months
Automatically rebuild the CRM in Drupal 9 (and subsequently 10) This is not the recommended option	All options need to be considered therefore a procurement exercise will ensure both open source and proprietary solutions are evaluated.
Carry out appropriate procurement process with delegated authority give to appropriate officer in consultation with appropriate Cabinet Member to award the new Customer Relationship Management system to the successful tenderer following the conclusion of the procurement process.	A new CRM will offer the Royal Borough both the future security reassurances that it needs to safely assist customers in accessing relevant services, whilst also making better use of available technologies to improve customer experience. Moving to a Drupal 9 (and then 10) CMS will put the Royal

Option	Comments
Upgrade current Drupal 8 CMS to a Drupal 9/10 CMS, in line with industry best practice. This is the recommended option.	Borough in line with the 34 other Local Authority partners making use of the Local Gov Drupal co-operative.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Full implications are detailed in table 2.

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Procure new CRM solution	1 July 2023	30 June 2023	31 May 2023	15 May 2023	30 June 2023
Full implementation of CRM solution completed	1 July 2024	1 April 2024	1 January 2024	1 November 2023	1 April 2024

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 Until the procurement exercise is concluded it is not possible to give full and detailed costs, however a capital bid has been approved in the 2023/24 budget of £500,000 to support the replacement CRM project.

4.2 Borrowing is only undertaken when necessary and not on the date of approval of a scheme by the Council or Cabinet, but as the funding is required. Borrowing is generally taken over the economic useful life of the asset. The council will use available balances and capital receipts before undertaking borrowing to reduce any unnecessary revenue costs. If it is necessary to borrow to support the achievement of this proposal, then the estimated revenue implication of this would be approximately £33,350 annually over the life of the loan. The cost of any potential borrowing has already been assessed as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24 as part of the overall capital programme.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Given the estimated contract value, the contract is being tendered via a framework that will be agreed following the market testing phase. This ensures that the Council is acting in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract and Tendering Procedure Rules. Advice has been provided by the Council's corporate Procurement Team.

5.2 The Council will let a contract directly with the successful tenderer following the conclusion of the chosen framework process and subject to approval to award being given by the Chief Executive or relevant Executive Director in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Table 3 gives full details of the identified risks and mitigations.

(Please note this does not include a significant amount of information that cannot be shared under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and therefore is placed in the Part II Appendix A).

Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation

Threat or risk	Impact with no mitigations in place or if all mitigations fail	Likelihood of risk occurring with no mitigations in place.	Mitigations currently in place	Mitigations proposed	Impact of risk once all mitigations in place and working	Likelihood of risk occurring with all mitigations in place.
Inadequate resource is allocated to implementing any new CRM solution, which will delay the date by which the future CRM becomes fully operational	Extreme 4	High	Additional external development capacity is currently being provided by an external supplier under the present contract	Additional project management support, developer support (amount dependent on solution chosen) and supplier professional service to ensure rapid CRM deployment	Moderate 2	Low

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 Equalities:
An equalities impact assessment is available in Appendix B.

7.2 Climate change:
No impact

7.3 Data protection/GDPR:
A data protection impact assessment is being completed as part of the procurement process and will be continually reviewed through implementation.
no impact

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation has been held with providers as part of the soft market testing exercise. Additionally, services that use the CRM and CMS have been informed and are involved in the review of current workflows and what is and isn't working for them.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 Implementation date if not called in: 16 March 2023 The full implementation stages are set out in table 4.

Table 4: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
March and April 2023	Procurement process is undertaken with procurement and legal colleagues as appropriate
By 30 June 2023	Award of contract
15 July 2023 and onwards	Implementation of CRM and update of CMS.
By April 2024	Implementation to be concluded.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 This report is supported by two appendices:

- Appendix A –Part II – Financial and business information
- Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 This report isn't supported by doesn't have any background documents:

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>	
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	02/03/23	02/03/23
Emma Duncan	Director of Law, Strategy & Public Health/ Monitoring Officer	02/03/23	03/03/23
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	02/03/23	06/03/23
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	02/03/23	06/03/23
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>	
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager	02/03/23	

Mandatory:	<i>Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>		
Sam Wooten	Data Protection Officer	02/03/23	06/03/23
Mandatory:	<i>Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>		
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	02/03/23	
Other consultees:			
Directors (where relevant)			
Tony Reeves	Interim Chief Executive	02/03/23	06/03/23
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	02/03/23	
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services	02/03/23	03/03/23

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision: First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan: 1 February 2023	No	No

Report Author: Dave MacFarlane, Transformation and Digital Service Lead