



CABINET: 10 January 2017

Report of: Borough Transformation Manager & Deputy Director of Housing and Inclusion

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Moran and Councillor J Patterson

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SUBJECT: EXEMPTION TO CONTRACTS PROCEDURE RULES – DIGITAL INCLUSION TRAINING & SUPPORT

Wards affected: Borough wide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To request exemption from Contracts Procedure Rules.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the exemption request be approved for the reasons set out at paragraph 5.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council has in place robust rules and procedures, reflecting national and European regulations in relation to the procurement of goods and services.

3.2 However, there are certain occasions where, with appropriate reasons, officers can be approved to procure goods or services in a different way. This report requests exemption from the Contracts Procedure Rules in relation to a contract with West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Services (WLCVS) to deliver digital inclusion training and support for the Council's digital inclusion strategy.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The exemption relates to Contracts Procedures Rules No.6 which requires that all contracts between £10K and £50K in value are only entered into after receipt of three written quotations.
- 4.2 Obtaining three written quotations was not considered appropriate since only one organisation is in a position to provide the required service and meet the objectives of the contract.

5.0 RATIONALE

- 5.1 Cabinet adopted the Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2015-18, at its meeting on 15 September 2015. The strategy and action plan includes a number of objectives, such as training and community liaison, which require the services of an external partner to support their delivery.
- 5.2 This particular project provides the opportunity to pilot and evaluate a range of digital inclusion initiatives with a trusted council partner, West Lancs CVS. Their local expertise, resources and deep links to local community groups, means that they are an ideal partner to deliver this initiative. The value of the contract is £14,800. Project outputs will be monitored and evaluated. A key part of the project, Rally Round, a digital support service for elderly and vulnerable people, has the opportunity to attract additional further funding from West Lancs Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 5.3 This is a niche project and the Council requires a specialist supplier with community reach, local knowledge and proven experience in delivering training and community engagement. Officers have previously attempted to identify a suitable supplier fulfilling the requirements (aside from the WLCVS). Therefore the contract will be awarded on the basis of Rule 4, Note 15 of the contracts procedure rules, "*only one company makes the product which the Council wishes to purchase and no other product is a reasonable substitute*". It was not therefore considered appropriate to seek three quotations for this arrangement.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 6.1 The Digital Inclusion Strategy has significant links to the Sustainable Communities strategy through its aims to deliver training, job opportunities, improve health social wellbeing and providing opportunities for young and older people to thrive. ICT is a cross cutting theme of the strategy and the digital inclusion work now in progress forms a key project to deliver these priorities through its aims to promote social inclusion and reduce deprivation via access to ICT and skills.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are some financial / resource implications arising from this report in respect of £14,800, however these will be met using existing resources.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The appointment of a suitable contractor to support and deliver the outcomes of this project will help the Council deliver its commitment to the Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan. There is a risk that this may not be achieved if the contract is not awarded.
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Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessment