



ARTICLE NO: 3B

CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

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Article of: Director of Housing and Inclusion

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SUBJECT: Wi-Fi in Sheltered Schemes

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

- 1.1 To advise Members regarding a recent exemption from Contracts Procedure Rules.
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2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has in place robust rules and procedures, reflecting national and European regulations in relation to the procurement of goods and services.
- 2.2 There are certain occasions where, with appropriate reasons, officers can be approved to procure goods or services in a different way. This report is to inform Members of a Request for Exemption that was granted by the Chief Executive.
- 2.3 The contract was to install Wi-Fi equipment in all of the Council's Cat 2 sheltered housing schemes as part of digital inclusion and financial inclusion strategies. The contract includes the equipment, installation, and broadband with support for two years.
- 2.4 The contract was originally going to be awarded to Social Telecoms via the Procurement for Housing Framework. However, the framework expired meaning an award could not be made. A full tender exercise subsequently followed using the CCS (Crown Commercial Service) Framework. Only two responses were received and as both were significantly higher than the original supplier, a request for an exemption was required to ensure value for money and to stop further delays with the project.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The exemption relates to Contract Procedure rule 7 “.. Where the estimated value or amount of a proposed contract exceeds £50,000, and in any other case where an authorised body determine or where required by legislation tenders shall be invited...” and was granted in June 2017 by the Chief Executive.
- 3.2 The contract was awarded to Social Telecoms and the project to install the Wi-Fi has started.
- 3.3 A training package is being developed for residents in the schemes with Lancashire Adult Learning. The training is free and will be held in the communal areas of the schemes.

4.0 RATIONALE

- 4.1 Cabinet adopted the Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2018, at its meeting on 15th September 2015. The Strategy and action plan includes a number of objectives including training and community liaison. This project supports the Council’s strategy and ensures tenants within the Cat 2 schemes are not digitally excluded.
- 4.2 Two attempts were made at awarding the contact under the procurement rules. The first award failed due to the framework on Procurement for Housing expiring and the framework not having resources to reinstate the framework until the end of 2017. The project was due to be completed by December 2017. The second tender exercise was completed over a two month period but the solutions offered were significantly more expensive than the original contract value under the expired framework.
- 4.3 The tender exercise demonstrated that the appointment of Social Telecoms under the original framework would provide the best value for money for the Council and hence an exemption to Contract Procedures Rile 7 was sought to facilitate this.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 The Digital Inclusion Strategy has significant links to the Sustainable Communities strategy through its aims to deliver training, improve health and social wellbeing and providing opportunities for young and older people to thrive.
- 5.2 Information & Communications Technology (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 and through its aims to promote social inclusion and reduce deprivation via access to ICT and skills.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The cost to install Wi-Fi into all 12 Cat 2 Schemes was met using existing resources. The broadband service for Year 1 and Year 2 is also included. This

project was budgeted for in 2017 and included within the ICT strategy and development budget within Housing and Inclusion service.

- 6.2 Training provided by Lancashire Adult learning is free to the Council and to residents.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This Article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers.

Background Documents

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

Equality Impact Assessment

This article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/ or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

None.