

Portfolio Holder for Customers

Item

21 December 2020

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| Report of | Assistant Director of Corporate and Improvement | Author | Kieran Johnston |
| Title | Award of contract for mobile, voice and data services | | ☎ 507880 |
| Wards affected | Not applicable | | |

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council has a contract in place for mobile and voice data service that is due to expire on the 31st March 2021. However, for the reasons set out in the Background Information to this Report the Council is likely to exceed its data usage from January onwards which would cause the Council to incur significant additional charges
- 1.2 Accordingly, the Council held a mini competition under the NHS LLP Framework (Information, Technology & Management – Lot 2.4 Mobile Voice & Data Services) to obtain costs for a new contract that would commence in January 2021 and for an initial period of five years.
- 1.3 The Council received one compliant bid from BT Plc and one other bidder notified the Council via the on-line portal of its intention to withdraw from the process.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To award the contract for the supply of mobile voice and data services to BT Plc for a period of 5 years (from January 2021 to January 2026) for the sum of £248,750. This cost will be profiled over 5 years at an annualised cost of c.£50k per annum and is within existing ICT budgetary provision.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Council will incur significant additional charges where our data usage exceeds our contractual allowance, and the existing contract is due to expire on the 31st March 2021
- 3.2 The Council is required to carry out a formal procurement process and a compliant call off under the NHS LLP Framework (Information, Technology & Management – Lot 2.4 Mobile Voice & Data Services) satisfies this requirement.
- 3.3 BT Plc will migrate the Council directly onto the new contract and not charge an early contract termination fee.
- 3.4 The new contract would commence from January 2021 and our data usage would be increased to 50TB of shared data allowance from this date. This also means that the Council would no longer be at risk of incurring additional charges for exceeding its data allowance from January 2021.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Whilst the Council could continue with the existing contract until the 31st March 2021 this would incur the Council significant additional charges and the Council would still have award a new contract from the 1st April 2021 via a compliant procurement process.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Council has a contract with BT Plc for the provision of mobile voice and data service through the EE service. The rate at which data has been 'consumed' has been monitored throughout the contract and up until the middle of this year, projections indicated that the EE Super Bundle mobile data allowance would last just past the end of the current contract in April 2021.
- 5.2 COVID-19 has led to a dramatic spike in the amount of data being consumed across the organisation, due to the changes in working locations and the heavy reliance which some staff members have on their corporate mobile data connections. BT Plc has confirmed that they have seen the same pattern of usage across a large number of their other Corporate and Local Government accounts, a number of which had already consumed their Super Bundle data and were being hit with excessive penalty charges.
- 5.3 Current projections show that the 'Super Bundle' will only last to the middle of January 2021. Once we use all of the data in the Super Bundle the Council will become contractually liable for an "out of bundle data charge" that, at our current level of usage would be in the region of ~£25k per month.
- 5.4 A new mobile and voice data contract is also required ahead of the existing contract end date to secure a new data bundle and continue to provide mobile telephony services to employees at a cost-effective rate.
- 5.5 The Council has conducted a mini competition under NHS LLP Framework (Information, Technology & Management – Lot 2.4 Mobile Voice & Data Services) which included an option for bidders to use the EE network or to provide costed options for an alternative network provider.
- 5.6 There were five companies under Lot 2.4 that could have submitted tenders; but BT Plc was the only company to submit a compliant bid.
- 5.7 It might have been possible to have made a direct award (without a mini competition) under the terms of the framework agreement, but the Council wanted to explore all options. Via a direct award option BT Plc would have been the second choice on a standard call off requirement.
- 5.8 The Council chose to hold a mini competition for the reasons referred to above and the main supplier under Lot 2.4 notified the Council via the portal that they were not going submit a tender .

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 Through the Procurement Strategy, staff ensure that all procurement and purchasing documentation recognises, understands and supports the Council's policies with regard to equal opportunities, diversity and human rights.

7. Strategic Plan Implications

- 7.1 The Strategic Plan sets out clearly the Council's priorities. All the services and projects delivered by staff are supported and enabled by the ICT equipment and services they use. The continued provision of mobile voice and data services therefore contributes directly to supporting delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Staff feedback in surveys has highlighted that access to suitable ICT equipment (both within office buildings and when working remotely) is seen as a priority requirement; increasingly so as a result of more homeworking following the pandemic.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 No external publicity considerations.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 As the cost of the new contract proposal can be met within existing ICT budgets there are no additional financial considerations.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Through this contract the Council will ensure that staff retain access to a market leading network providing mobile voice and data services improving their working experience and enabling them to work flexibly.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications arising from this decision.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 None identified.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The usage of mobile data services is enabled by the operation of data centres that use large amounts of electricity, and usage of electricity has associated greenhouse gas emissions.
- 14.2 This contract provides a cost-effective way to provide enough data to meet our required level of use which has increased through the term of the current contract but does not in itself, increase our carbon impact.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None