

OFFICER DECISION RECORD SHEET

Name of decision maker: Strategic Director – Place

Service Area: Strategic Planning, acting also on behalf of Development Management, HGC and Housing teams also (within the Place Directorate)

Title of Decision: Approval to award contract for Digital Engagement and Community Consultation software via the G-Cloud framework

Decision made and reasons:

Decision: The approval to award a contract to Commonplace Digital Limited for: Initially for a one year departmental contract, with the option to extend this up to 3 years total for a Departmental or Corporate licence (by a certificate signed by the Strategic Director- Place) as per G-Cloud pricing.

Reason:

Strategic Planning has been successful in its bid for the Proptech Engagement Fund (PEF), which requires the Council to trial new ways of engagement that integrate other emerging technologies (such as 3D Modelling and other Cloud based technologies). Following discussions with a number of possible providers, officers in the Strategic Planning team are confident that Commonplace is the only platform capable of meeting the majority of our requirements set out in the successful PEF bid.

In addition to this, following a recent trial of Commonplace as an engagement platform for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre a number of teams within the Council are interested in undertaking their own engagement exercises. These include:

Housing Development: The team wish to use the service to assist with local consultations on specific new build housing projects prior to submitting for planning approval.

Hemel Garden Communities: The team is planning a number of engagement and consultation surveys/heat map activities to engage with the community on the Vision, the Transport Plan and the Framework Plan.

Further discussions are due to take place with respect to extending timeframes and / or upgrading to a Corporate Licence. Such decisions are unlikely to be made in the short term and any further delay increases the risk of Strategic Planning failing to deliver on its PEF brief. For this reason the Departmental licences is being progressed in the short term, and to enable other teams to progress with their engagement exercises.

The G-Cloud framework (tendered by Crown Commercial Services) has already been through a competitive tendering process compliant with the Public Contract Regulations. The Council will comply with the G-Cloud procurement process and issue an award notice once the contract is signed.

Reports considered:

Part II confidential information (not to published on website)
G-Cloud pricing.

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Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:

Alex Robinson; Ronan Leydon; Rebecca Williams; Nathalie Bateman; Naomi Woodstock; Sara Whelan; David Barrett; Oliver Donohoe; Andrew Linden; Sue Foster; Kelvin Soley; James Doe

Financial Comments:

DLUHC funding received in 21/22 as follows:

£80k Local Pathfinder

£100k Proptech Engagement Fund (PEF)

The £25k mooted for departmental licence will be funded £8,525 from PEF and £16,475 from Local Pathfinder.

The funding from DLUHC is now located in a new dedicated cost centre – DD406 and there is a requirement to deliver this and other projects mostly by the end of this financial year.

A tracker will be set up to ensure funds are utilised in a correct a timely fashion.

Darren Flanagan, Accountant for CEO & Regeneration

Deputy Monitoring Officer Comments:

The proposed award of contract follows a procurement process which is compliant with the Council's procurement standing orders.

Officers should ensure that an appropriate call off contract is completed prior to commencement of services.

Deputy S151 Officers Comments:

The contract award has been made via the G- Cloud framework and will be funded in the first year from DLUHC funding. Should this contract be extended beyond the first year, this would either be met from existing service budgets or be subject to a growth request.

Implications:**Value for Money:**

The G-Cloud framework (tendered by Crown Commercial Services) has already been through a competitive tendering process compliant with the Public Contract Regulations and offers a pre-agreed pricing structure and terms and conditions.

Financial:

Proposed approach in the short term:

- Strategic Planning will fund a departmental licence for one year (£25,000) as a starting point.
- Part funded by the proptech engagement fund (£8,525) and the remainder by the

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Local Plan pathfinder fund (£16,475). The funding from DLUHC is now located in a new dedicated cost centre – DD406 and there is a requirement to deliver this and other projects mostly by the end of this financial year.

- If other teams, such as HGC, Housing, or anyone else within the 'department' wish to use Commonplace ahead of a wider decision at SLT (or otherwise) on a corporate licence and timescales, then we would expect a commensurate amount to be transferred into the LDF fund to enable this.

Risk: If this contract is not awarded

There is a risk that the Strategic Planning team will be unable to fulfil the majority of the requirements of its successful bid for the PEF in the timeframes set out by DLUHC (by March/April 2022). Failure to award the contract and undertake the engagement exercises for Strategic Planning could result in the return, in part or in full, of the PEF funding (£100,000).

Officer Signature:

Date: