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| | <p>ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BY OFFICER</p> <p>6 November 2016</p> |
| <p>Title</p> | <p>Authorisation to seek quotations for provision of Electoral Registration and Elections Software Management System</p> |
| <p>Report of</p> | <p>Interim Director of Assurance</p> |
| <p>Wards</p> | <p>ALL</p> |
| <p>Status</p> | <p>Public</p> |
| <p>Enclosures</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
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| <p>Summary</p> |
| <p>This report authorises the Head of Electoral Services (working with the London Borough of Barnet’s Corporate Procurement) to seek quotations for the supply, maintenance and support of a software system to manage Electoral Registration and Elections within Electoral Services for a period of three years, with the option to extend for one additional year. This is required to enable continuity of service when the existing contract expires on 31 March 2017.</p> |
| <p>A modern, robust and fully supported Electoral Registration and Elections Management Software system is essential to Barnet’s Electoral Services in order to ensure that they can effectively deliver the essential functions of the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer of the Council in full compliance with all statutory requirements. This authorisation is sought in accordance with Barnet’s Contract Procedure Rules.</p> |

Decisions

- 1. That the Head of Electoral Services, working in conjunction with Procurement, is authorised to seek quotations for a software system to effectively manage the requirements of Electoral Registration and Elections (Electoral Services) for the next three years (starting 1 April 2017) with an option to extend the contract for one additional year. The procurement process will include a quotation process in line with Barnet's Contract Procedure Rules.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The London Borough of Barnet's Electoral Services team is responsible for ensuring that the statutory duties of the authority's Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer are fully delivered and are at all times compliant with relevant legislation. The complexity of managing registration and elections in the modern era make an effective and supported software management system essential.
- 1.2 The current contract for the supply, maintenance and support of an Elections Management System (EMS) was awarded to Xpress Software Solutions Ltd in 2013 following a full tender process and commenced on 1 April 2013. The contract was granted for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further year (which was utilised). That full four year period will end on 31 March 2017 so another contract is now required to come into effect as of 1 April 2017.
- 1.3 When the Electoral Registration and Administration (ERA) Act 2013 came into force, it introduced Individual Electoral Registration (IER) as way in which the registration of electors must be conducted in the United Kingdom. A key part of the IER process requires that local authorities have an EMS that can communicate with (to provide and receive data) the appropriate software systems at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). There are four suppliers of EMS systems currently in operation in local authorities throughout the country. Each of these suppliers will be contacted in order to invite the submission of a quotation to Barnet's EMS tender process.

2. REASONS FOR DECISIONS

- 2.1 It is critical that Electoral Services have an effective, modern software system that enables them to fulfil the responsibilities that they undertake on behalf of the Council's Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer. In line with corporate Contract Procedure Rules it is essential that the provision and ongoing maintenance and upgrades to the software system are effectively managed by an appropriate contract.
- 2.2 The cost of this procurement is anticipated to be in the region of £48,000 and the London Borough of Barnet's Contract Procedure Rules stipulate that this must be authorised by way of a full officer Delegated Powers Report from a Director or Assistant Director.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 3.1 Given the legislative obligations upon Barnet's Electoral Registration Officer and the requirement for the vast quantity of statutory processes to be carried out to ensure the accurate maintenance of Barnet's register of electors, there is no practical alternative that can be considered to the implementation and use of a modern and suitably effective EMS system.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Head of Electoral Services, in conjunction with Procurement, will invite quotations from all known suppliers that are currently operating a Cabinet Office and DWP approved EMS system. The quotations will be fully assessed on financial (20%) and qualitative (80%) criteria, including a series of visits to other local authorities operating the system of each supplier that bids, to ensure that the quotation offering best value for money, full and robust compliance with electoral legislation and effective delivery of Barnet's Electoral Services processes and other operational requirements is awarded the contract.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Electoral Services delivers statutory services of electoral registration to the residents of the London Borough of Barnet. By ensuring that the register of electors is as accurate and complete as possible, the service contributes to the following corporate priorities:
- To maintain a well-designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough
 - To create better life chances for children and young people across the borough
 - To promote family and community well-being and encourage engaged, cohesive and safe communities

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The cost of the three year contract award is estimated to be approximately £48,000 (£16,000 per annum). This represents no increase on the annual costs for the current EMS system and therefore no additional burden is anticipated on the core budget for Electoral Services. The funding for this is contained within the Electoral Services budget.
- 5.2.2 Procurement will work with the Head of Electoral Services to ensure that the process of tendering and awarding the contract fully comply with LBB's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 5.2.3 As part of the process of assessing the received quotations, Electoral Services will ask LBB's Information Services and CSG's Information Technology teams to assess the suitability of the offered software and disaster recovery arrangements. In addition Electoral Services will liaise with LBB's Information Management team to ensure that appropriate data security processes and standards are applied to the handling of residents and electors

personal details being stored by the systems database.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 Council Constitution, Contract Procedure Rules, Appendix 1 Table A – Authorisation and Acceptance Thresholds – provides that for procurements with an estimated value of between £25,001 and £164,176 authorisation is by Director/Assistant Director via Full Officer Delegated Powers Report (unless prior authorisation received via Procurement Forward Plan) and accepted via Summary DPR once procurement has been completed.

5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 The Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer for the London Borough of Barnet have numerous statutory obligations and duties due to extensive electoral legislation. It is therefore essential that the EMS system fully enables and supports Barnet's Electoral Services team to perform at a high standard in delivering its core services. In doing so the EMS system mitigates the risk of challenge to the ERO and/or RO for failing in their statutory duties.
- 5.4.2 The use of a modern and effective EMS system is proven as an essential mitigation to key risks that can arise in the delivery of Electoral Registration and Elections Management.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.5.1 Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, the Council and all other organisations exercising public functions on its behalf must have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and those without; promote good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without. The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnership with regard to eliminating discrimination.
- 5.5.2 The Council is responsible for ensuring that all contracts for supplies, works and services are consistent with its equality & diversity obligations. The Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity and the procurement process must ensure that this extends to parties carrying out work on behalf of the Council.
- 5.5.3 The bidding suppliers will be asked to demonstrate that they have and maintain an equal opportunities employment policy that ensures that no individual or group of individuals are discriminated against in the delivery of this contract.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.6.1 The Head of Electoral Services will engage with Barnet's IT Services partner to consult with them on the technical arrangements and IT infrastructure that the EMS must be compatible with.
- 5.6.2 The Head of Electoral Services will consult with the Information Management Team on the required policies and licences that the supplier must hold and on

the technical specifications that the EMS must meet in order to comply with Barnet's IT and Data Protection policies and all associated and relevant legislation.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Decision taken by Director of Corporate Governance in March 2013 to approve award of contract to Xpress Software Solutions Ltd for the supply of Electoral Registration and Elections Management software for a period of three years, with the option to extend for one additional year.

7. DECISION TAKER'S STATEMENT

- 7.1 *I have the required powers to make the decision documented in this report. I am responsible for the report's content and am satisfied that all relevant advice has been sought in the preparation of this report and that it is compliant with the decision making framework of the organisation which includes Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, Budget and Policy Framework and Legal issues including Equalities obligations.*

8. OFFICER'S DECISION

I authorise the following action

- 8.1 **That the Head of Electoral Services, working in conjunction with Procurement, is authorised to seek quotations for the supply, maintenance and support of an Electoral Registration and Elections Management Software System to enable effective delivery of the obligations and duties of the London Borough of Barnet's Electoral Services (on behalf of the Council's Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer).**

Signed 6 November 2016

Date Interim Director of Assurance