

## Commissioning and Procurement Executive Committee – 09 January 2024

<b>Subject:</b>	Employee and citizen travel and accommodation online booking system		
<b>Corporate Director:</b>	Sajeeda Rose - Growth and City Development		
<b>Director:</b>	Kevin Lowry - Housing		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Jay Hayes - Housing		
<b>Report author and contact details:</b>	Joseph Muir, Senior Homelessness Project Officer Email: <a href="mailto:joseph.muir@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">joseph.muir@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a> , Tel: 0115 876 3499		
<b>Other colleagues who have provided input:</b>	Michelle Pullen, Senior Commercial Business Partner Sarah O’Bradaigh, Senior Solicitor Jo Pettifor, Category Manager (People) Elaine Harris, HR Consultant Rachael Harding, Homelessness Strategy Manager Lorraine Hodgson, Procurement Officer		
<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Subject to call-in</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Reasons:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £750,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital	
Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Type of expenditure:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital		
<b>Total value of the decision:</b> £12,788,900.78			
<b>Wards affected:</b> All			
<b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder:</b> In Progress			
<b>Relevant Council Plan Key Outcome:</b>			
Green, Clean and Connected Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Keeping Nottingham Working	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Carbon Neutral by 2028	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Safer Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Child-Friendly Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Living Well in our Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Keeping Nottingham Moving	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Improve the City Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Better Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Serving People Well	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>			
This report was submitted to the Spend Control Board (Ref: 1618) on 12/12/2023 and approval was received on 18/12/2023 from the s.151 Officer for the procurement.			
Nottingham City Council has a responsibility for:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employee welfare and contractual obligations for travelling and accommodation whilst Nottingham City Council employees complete essential tasks detailed within job descriptions</li> <li>• satisfying all statutory duties placed upon the Council to provide emergency accommodation to support and safeguard vulnerable households, assess homeless applications and for the protection of children and young people</li> </ul>			

The Council currently uses an online booking system, Click Travel, to book 100% of its travel and accommodation requirements for employees, and over 90% for citizen travel and accommodation

Nottingham City Council endeavours to commission a sufficient supply of temporary and supported accommodation to meet its statutory duties to all citizens. However, a continued higher than expected demand for these services means that, in emergency situations or when our temporary and supported accommodation provision is full, the use of the online booking system is required to secure emergency nightly paid accommodation in hotels.

The current Click Travel contract expired on 30 November 2023 and a decision was taken at Nottingham City Council Executive Board on 19 December 2023 to extend the current contract for an interim period of two months to 31 January 2024.

During 2023, a review was completed to assess the future requirements and needs of the Council for corporate travel and short-term accommodation bookings for citizens and to determine whether it is appropriate to call off a new contract for a further longer term fixed period. The review concluded that there is a need for a booking system and that a Direct Call-Off, call off to Click Travel via Lot 1 of the YPO Travel Management Solutions 2 framework was the only feasible option to maintain the possibility of both citizen and corporate bookings.

Consultation with internal users found the existing system to be effective overall. However, the council seek a further development of the service provided by Click Travel to enable the separation of Corporate and Citizen travel and accommodation bookings and expenditure on usage. With a further breakdown within the citizen booking functionality to distinguish between single person and family households. The reason this is required is to maximise the availability of suppliers within each type of booking arrangement and minimise one negatively impacting on another.

Click Travel is the preferred option to continue to deliver the service which would ensure that no disruptions are experienced to:

- a) employee travel and accommodation
- b) in securing emergency placements to meet statutory duties to citizens

The council has determined a need to review and develop an additional process/system to procure other nightly paid and short-term block booking arrangements from accommodation providers who are not registered on Click Travel.

When established, this system could eventually become the primary route of securing emergency accommodation for citizens, particularly those the council is required to accommodate under homelessness duties. This will be dependent upon market participation and as the process to develop the supplementary system is yet to be developed, this decision is for the maximum potential spend anticipated through the Click Travel booking system for the contract duration.

**Exempt information:**

An appendix to the report is exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the Council's anticipated expenditure on acquiring accommodation and travel across all departments and, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

It is not in the public interest to disclose this information because it may impact on value for money to be achieved.

**Recommendation:**

1. To approve a new direct call-off contract, via Lot 1 of the YPO Travel Management Solutions 2 framework, to Click Travel for a period of three years and ten months from 01 February 2024 to 30 November 2027 at an estimated cost of £12,788,900.78.

**1. Reasons for recommendations**

- 1.1 The Council has an obligation to ensure travel and accommodation arrangements for officers which is necessary in fulfilment of their roles.
- 1.2 The council has a statutory duty to provide emergency accommodation for vulnerable citizens under an assessment criteria.
- 1.3 The council is required to source the accommodation in a way that is compliant with procurement regulations, and which offers best value, quality assurance and auditable use.

**2. Background (including outcomes of consultation)**

- 2.1 Through a key decision at the Commissioning and Procurement Executive Committee (CPEC) on 10 September 2019, the Council agreed to procure this service and contracted Click Travel to deliver the booking system for employee travel and accommodation from 1 December 2019 to 30 November 2023.
- 2.2 The original focus of the contract was to enable a compliant, consistent, and transparent process for staff to book travel and accommodation arrangements, as required by their employment responsibilities. However, it did also provide the ability to be used for citizen travel and to secure emergency short-term accommodation arrangements for vulnerable citizens where statutory duty required it and when there were no other commissioned options available.
- 2.3 In recent years, homelessness pressures have increased significantly, and the council has reached a point of sustained insufficiency in temporary accommodation to meet current demand. This has resulted in frequent and enduring use of the Click Travel system to secure emergency nightly placements of accommodation (to fulfil the council's statutory duty under s188 of the Housing Act 1996, Part VII for homeless households), to the extent that it has become the primary use of the booking system in recent years.
- 2.4 Use of the booking system for employee travel and accommodation has decreased since the Covid-19 pandemic due to the council implementing flexible working and hybrid working practices, improvements to technologies and ICT infrastructure that allows communication, training, meetings etc. to be held digitally, reducing the need for employees to travel and stay in locations away from the city or their home office.
- 2.5 A review has been conducted of the use of the Click Travel system with the service areas who use it. The feedback established that the current online based system is effective, easy to use, enabled assessment of value for money and safeguards the council when booking travel, including by being able to reclaim costs thus minimising a waste of resources.

- 2.6 However, the review also highlighted issues experienced when using the system for bookings for members of the public, in specific vulnerable families and single people whom the Council owes a duty to secure emergency accommodation, either through Social Care or Housing and Homelessness legislation. Due to the complexity of these service users and currently the frequency in which the provision is needed, experienced teams using the current model for booking travel and accommodation found that the choice of accommodation available from the systems was not always appropriate, difficult to source and not offering the Council the best value for money. This required service areas within the council to seek best value by directly contacting a hotel or B&B provider or by block booking accommodation units with providers using alternative invoicing arrangements or purchase cards. The review confirmed that some providers had removed themselves from the Click Travel system to prevent the Council from using it to book placements for citizens.
- 2.7 This report recommends a new contract award to Click Travel but with a requirement for it to deliver separate functionality for staff and citizen travel. Utilising a minimum of two separate booking platforms will allow for each to be individually monitored to ensure appropriate use. It will also mean that providers who wish to be selected for staff travel only are able to do so. There will also need to be a further breakdown within the citizen booking category to separate bookings of families and singles. This is important because some providers will accept families but not singles who are higher risk and the council needs to maximise provision for families as this is where the majority of spend is incurred.
- 2.8 To ensure that the council has access to all forms of emergency accommodation for citizens on a short term nightly paid or block booking arrangement, the council will conduct a review, produce a specification, and develop a procurement process to involve verification / accreditation of approved providers and a calling off provision to meet required need at best value.
- 2.9 The council will promote the opportunity across the region to ensure widespread participation, varied options, and continued broad market access. The specification will include expectations around pricing, standards/suitability, staffing/security, processes, and partnership working. Providers will be able to tender against different Lots, primarily split between provision for singles and families, each will be supported by collaboration principles outlining the responsibilities of the Council Services, the accommodation provider and approved community-based support providers. Regular contractual reviews will be implemented to identify performance issues and ensure service standards and value for money is being delivered.
- 2.10 In line with the Council's plan to reduce the use of hotels for homeless households, it is anticipated that during the course of the Click Travel contract that the supplementary process for booking emergency accommodation for homeless households will supersede use of the Click Travel booking system, to the point that the Click Travel booking system is only occasionally required for citizen accommodation. However, there is no negative financial impact to the council if these circumstances materialised.
3. **Other options considered in making recommendations**

- 3.1 To use the current requirements and specification to go out retender. This was rejected because the current provider was assessed as being adequate for the Council's usage and that the provider was already part of the YPO Travel Management Solutions 2, Lot 1 framework allowing for Direct Call-Off.
- 3.2 To renew the contract under the current specification. This was rejected because of the need to separate citizen and employee travel and further breakdown bookings for single citizens and family households.
- 3.3 Not to review the contract or procure an alternative system. This was rejected because of the council's need to secure accommodation when needed in a way that is compliant and offer efficiency to service delivery.

#### 4. **Consideration of Risk**

- 4.1 The risk of not utilising a system to book corporate travel and emergency citizen accommodation are as follows:

- a) possibility of being unable to fulfil statutory duties
- b) reduced ability to secure best value and auditable corporate travel
- c) resource demands upon busy statutory services

- 4.2 The council will put in place appropriate contract oversight for each of the platforms within the booking system to review delivery in line with expected outcomes and to ensure that the Click Travel booking system remains the most effective way of minimising the risks identified above.

#### 5. **Best Value Considerations**

- 5.1 Best value is achieved as the booking system enables the Council to:

- Locate and source appropriate accommodation, quickly without the need for admin heavy processes
- Locate and source travel arrangements, quickly and without the need for admin heavy processes
- The booking system enables the Council compare values of travel and accommodation to make appropriate decisions based on expenditure and values
- The council is able to reclaim unused travel booking and the costs associated to these

#### 6. **Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)**

- 6.1 This decision is to cover a 4-year period. It has been split into the corporate element and a citizen element.
- 6.2 The value of the decision is understood to be the true anticipated cost of the services over the proposed contract period. It is understood that the value is based on current market information and includes reasonable calculations to reflect inflation or other potential impacts on costs during this time. The actual

final contract value will not be known at the point of award, but any savings should be captured and recovered as agreed with finance colleagues as part of any budget monitoring/budget process during the life of the contract.

- 6.3 It is anticipated that adequate budgets are available in any service that requires spend for corporate travel/accommodation and any spend against budget will be monitored as part of the budget monitoring process. Any costs that go above the specific budget must come from the service's own budgets.
- 6.4 The citizen element is of a much higher value and mainly relates to emergency accommodation which currently remains high due to the current climate of the cost-of-living crisis.
- 6.5 Due to the authority having a lawful statutory duty, emergency accommodation has to be provided. Although it must be noted that officers are working towards a plan to reduce the need for emergency accommodation which includes finding alternative cheaper arrangements, creating further temporary accommodation and prevention.  
The value of the decision as mentioned at 6.2 has factored in assumptions such as this.

Michelle Pullen, Senior Commercial Business Partner – 1 December 2023

## 7. **Legal colleague comments**

This report raises no significant legal issues. The direct award of a call-off contract through an established framework agreement (in accordance with the procedure set out for call-offs from the framework) is in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Sarah O'Bradaigh, Senior Solicitor – 30 November 2023

## 8. **Other relevant comments**

### 8.1 **Procurement**

This report recommends the procurement of an online booking system for Employee & Citizen travel and accommodation through the award of a contract to Click Travel to November 2027. The contract will be awarded through a compliant call off from the YPO Travel Management Solutions 2 framework and will provide a dual-function system required by the council which allows for the separation of the different types of booking. The call off will be supported by the Procurement Team. The proposed award is considered to offer best value as it enables the quick and efficient sourcing of accommodation and travel and allows for comparisons of costs when each booking is made. It will also provide continuity of provision to avoid disruption of emergency accommodation provision to vulnerable citizens.

Further work is to be undertaken to review the need for other nightly paid and short-term block booking from accommodation providers that are not registered on Click Travel. The Procurement Team will support the establishment of a mechanism to procure this provision, ensuring best value and compliance with the NCC Contract Procedure Rules and UK Public Contracts Regulations.

The value of this decision is understood to be the true anticipated cost of the services over the proposed contract period. It is understood that the value is based

on current market information and makes reasonable calculations to reflect inflation or other foreseeable impacts on cost during this time. As the final contract value will not be known at the point of award, any savings should be calculated and recovered as agreed with Finance during the life of the contract.

Jo Pettifor, Category Manager (People) - 23 November 2023

## 8.2 **HR**

Accommodation costs for staff and members of the public/citizens (e.g., homelessness provision and accommodation for CLA and families need to be separated in Click. This is because there is a cap on accommodation costs for colleagues who undertake business travel and as a result it is also difficult to identify non-compliant transactions.

Following the work with PwC (HR Procurements Savings Phase II) HR's recommends separation of contracts related to business travel and citizen accommodation to monitor compliance and to enable transparency and assessment of best value.

Elaine Harris, HR Consultant – 27 November 2023

## 9. **Crime and Disorder Implications (If Applicable)**

9.1 N/A

## 10. **Social value considerations (If Applicable)**

10.1 Aim of citizen accommodation to prevent vulnerable household becoming homelessness and preventing rough sleeping within the city.

10.2 Use of local hotels, businesses, and landlords etc. for citizens will promote local facilities and benefit to the local economy

## 11. **Regard to the NHS Constitution (If Applicable)**

11.1 N/A

## 12. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

12.1 Attached as Appendix 4, and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

## 13. **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)**

13.1 Attached as Appendix 2, and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

## 14. **Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)**

14.1 Attached as Appendix 3, and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

## 15. **List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)**

15.1 None.

**16. Published documents referred to in this report**

16.1 None.