

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:	3689
Author:	Sarah Wilson
Department:	Strategy and Resources
Contact:	Sarah Wilson (Job Title: Electoral Services Manager, Email: sarah.wilson@nottinghamcity.gov.uk, Phone: 64308)
Subject:	Award Contract to Electoral Reform Services (ERS) for the receipt of annual canvass responses
Total Value:	Up to £87,000 (£29k per annum for 1 year with the option to extend for a further 2 years) (Type: Revenue)
Decision Being Taken:	<p>To approve a 1 year contract with Electoral Reform Services (ERS) (with the option to extend for a further two years) to provide Electoral Services with two bespoke annual canvass response services. These services incorporate a variety of easy to use channels, for citizens to respond to the Household Enquiry Forms (HEF), in a secure and convenient way.</p> <p>To approve dispensation from contract procedure rules, in accordance with paragraph 3.29 of Financial Regulations and award the contract directly to ERS as a sole supplier.</p>
Reasons for the Decision(s)	<p>ERS provide two services which support the annual electoral registration canvass, providing citizens with multiple channels through which they can provide responses and scanning returned hard copy forms. They are the parent company of Xpress Software Solutions, who are the current contracted software provider for Electoral Services, for the next five years. ERS are therefore the only supplier of the services which is compatible with our current software provider.</p> <p>The two services are:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Household Enquiry Form (HEF) Scanning Solution - ERS to receive all HEF's returned by post and then open, sort and scan these items directly into the Xpress software through a secure connection.2. AHR (Automated Household Response) - ERS to provide an automated electronic response service, including - online, telephone and SMS messaging through a secure interface with Xpress software. <p>Electoral Services have an annual contract with ERS to provide these services, which has now expired, and a new contract is required for the continuation of these services.</p>

Other Options Considered: Do nothing - not to renew the contract would limit the channels available to citizens for responding to the HEFs and is likely to have a negative impact on response rates, increasing the number of households requiring a personal visit and reducing the number of eligible citizens on the electoral register. It would also result in all returned hard copy HEFs being scanned and entered by the Electoral Services Team. This would require bringing in additional temporary capacity at a higher cost than entering into a new contract.

Seek an alternative supplier - As previously mentioned ERS are the parent company of Xpress Software Solutions, who are the current contracted software provider for Electoral Services, for the next five years and therefore are the only company to have systems that are able to transfer data directly into Xpress. ERS are therefore the only supplier of this service which is compatible with our current software provider.

Background Papers: None

Published Works: Section 9a and 10 Representation of the People act 1983 (as amended)
Electoral Commission Guidance - Annual Canvass - Section 4 Responses to Canvass

Affected Wards: Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests: None

Dispensation from Financial Regulations: Yes

Consultations: Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications: None

Equality: EIA not required. Reasons: This decision does not relate to a new or change in policy or service, as this service is already being delivered by the provider. The service improves access for citizens by providing different options for responding to the form.

Social Value Considerations: Not applicable (below threshold)

Decision Type: Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In: Yes

Call In Expiry date: 05/11/2019

Advice Sought: Legal, Finance, Procurement

Legal Advice: There are no significant legal reasons arising from this decision. The Council may grant a dispensation from its Contract Procedure Rules for operational reasons. These have been set out by the report author and on the basis of the technical reasons described, can be supported by Legal Services.

Advice provided by Naomi Vass (Senior Solicitor) on 09/08/2019.

Finance Advice: The value of this decision is £0.029m for the one year contract or £0.087m in total over the three years should the option to extend for a further 2 years be taken. There is existing budget for this annual amount within Electoral Registration therefore there will be no additional financial impact to the service. The service should monitor spend and ensure costs are contained within this budget.

This decision requests dispensation from contract procedure rule 5.1.2 as the ERS is the only supplier compatible with the current system.

Advice provided by Philip Gretton (Finance Analyst) on 01/08/2019.

Procurement Advice: The proposal is a request for a dispensation from contract procedure rule 5.1.2. Given the reasons for this dispensation and the associated value which falls below OJEU thresholds, there are no significant procurement concerns with this proposal. Any future procurement requirements will need to be tendered and the Procurement Team will support this process.

Advice provided by Lauren Wheatcroft (Procurement Officer) on 08/07/2019.

Signatures

Sally Longford (PH for Energy, Environment and Democratic Services)
SIGNED and Dated: 29/10/2019
Candida Brudenell (Corporate Director for Strategy and Resources)
SIGNED and Dated: 29/10/2019
Laura Pattman (Strategic Director of Finance) - Dispensation from Financial Regulations
SIGNED and Dated: 22/10/2019
Chief Finance Officer's Comments: