

Cabinet

8 September 2020

Digital Platform

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr P Wharf, Corporate Development and Change

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: Aidan Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Lisa Trickey

Title: Service Manager – Digital Strategy and Design

Tel: 01305 228598

Email: lisa.trickey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That Cabinet is asked to consider the content of this report in respect of establishing a contract for the provision of a digital platform and that Cabinet agree:

1. To complete a procurement process.
2. A further step of making any contract award should be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change in consultation with the Executive Director for Corporate Development.

Reason for Recommendation:

Implementation of a digital platform is a key enabler for the customer workstream in the transformation programme and will support contract convergence and application rationalisation work releasing savings.

1. Executive Summary

In order to deliver transformation a digital platform is a core component to enable our evolving customer access strategy. It will help Dorset council to join up its

understanding of customers, consistently measure service performance, and provide a customer account for people to request and receive updates on council services.

In addition, the platform will play a key role in streamlining legacy software contracts providing an opportunity to explore further savings, reduce vendor lock in and provide better value for money.

Initial procurement work has established that a suitable supplier can be sought via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) G-Cloud 11 framework which will allow the Council to enter into a contract for an initial 1 year period, with provision to extend up to 2 years; subject to satisfactory performance and it meeting the Council's future needs.

This decision is being brought to Cabinet as a key decision as the total contract value is a maximum of £540,000 over a potential 3 year term.

2. Financial Implications

The licensing cost of the platform will be funded from existing ICT budgets as acquisition of the new platform will enable existing legacy products to be switched off.

Transformation funds of £450k have been identified to fund the implementation of the platform on an 'invest to save' basis. Cautious estimates indicate the potential of a minimum saving of £310k per annum, equating to £930k over 3 years.

3. Climate implications

A digital platform can have a positive impact on the climate where people are using online services rather than traveling to an office for a face to face service and it removes the need for paper. The solution is software as service preventing any additional impact on the council data centre carbon footprint.

4. Other Implications

None.

5. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the Council's approved risk management methodology, it is the officer's opinion that there are no High risks that need to be reported.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

An equalities impact assessment is not required as the council are not directly changing any service offering or interface with the public or employees.

As services are moved onto the platform consideration will be made in each case for the development of an individual equalities impact assessment.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Digital Platform Requirements

Appendix B – Platform candidate processes/systems

8. Background Papers

MHCLG Local Digital Declaration: <https://localdigital.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Local-Digital-Declaration-July-2018.pdf>

9. Background

- 9.1 Digital platforms are particularly important in the modern world as they allow organisations to change and adapt and enable the Council to deliver on the commitments made in the digital declaration.
- 9.2 A digital platform could fundamentally change the way Dorset Council captures, stores and uses customer data across its services, supporting delivery of our evolving customer access strategy and underpinning our transformation. To align with this, it will be known as ‘our customer platform’ rather than ‘digital platform’.
- 9.3 Implementing a platform is not a project; it is a commitment to work in a different way on an ongoing basis. Transformational organisations commit to working in this way to drive out benefit, cost and improve customer experience.
- 9.4 Instead of business areas continuing to purchase line of business applications, portals, and apps, the platform will be adopted first, and alternatives only procured if it is not deemed suitable, this will enable us to rationalise our application portfolio and join up our understanding of our customers across the council to provide a better customer experience.
- 9.5 The implementation of a digital platform has been identified as fundamental to the Council’s digital transformation, and has the support of the Senior Leadership Team and the Transformation Board.

10. Sourcing approach

- 10.1 This is not about looking for a product, but instead a toolset to improve our integration approach and enable development of capabilities that can be re-used across the Council to provide a consistent, personalised, and good customer experience. Looking for an open system that will future proof the Council, be scalable and flexible to support its smart place vision.
- 10.2 Selection of a platform has been based on the requirements in Appendix A, developed through early work on the customer workstream, talking to other organisations and understanding the marketplace over the last couple of years.
- 10.3 The Government Crown Commercial Services digital marketplace, G-Cloud Framework 11 has been used to search for suppliers, evaluate cost and functionality available. This initial search has established a preferred supplier that is able to meet the technical requirements of the platform.
- 10.4 The preferred supplier works with an established marketplace leader 'Liferay' which is based on 'open standards' to provide the benefit of low code capability through the development of 'cubes'. Cubes are specific bits of functionality or a service that another customer has developed, for example:
 - Case management
 - Website search
 - Active directory integrator
 - Order new bins and boxes
 - View my council tax account
 - Book a site inspection
- 10.6 The concept is any customer can create a cube which other customers can then access and use. This keeps cost down, provides pace, and removes duplication. Anything developed on the Liferay platform whilst under contract would be joint intellectual property to enable sharing with others in the spirit of the digital declaration.
- 10.7 All development is published on Github (a publically accessible software development platform) as part of commitment to open source. If the Council later chose to end the contract, it can still licence to use Liferay and continue to use everything that had been created and re-used. The Council would own its own development.

11. Implementation approach

- 11.1 The proposal is to award a one-year contract with the ability to extend the contract for up to an additional two years in line with the G-Cloud framework terms and conditions.
- 11.2 In the first 6-9 months the Council would start to build knowledge and understanding of the platform to develop plans to migrate and divest from existing products such as the website content management system, customer relationship management application, and deliver the customer account.
- 11.3 Existing cubes would be deployed, and new cubes created with the migration of our e-forms tested. Exploration would take place of the potential applications that could be accommodated in the platform as part of the contract convergence work led by the Service Manager Commercial and Procurement and technical convergence work led by the Head of ICT, building on the items listed in Appendix B.
- 11.4 Work would take place with the customer transformation workstream as it develops, to shift those services that are not yet online automating them as much as possible and improving those that are already online to make them as easy as possible to maximise use and reduce cost of service provision.
- 11.5 There is the need to prioritise and resource the work effectively establishing a team to work on the platform using a mix of existing and fixed term resource to provide the capacity and give some momentum and pace to the work.
- 11.6 Government Service Standards will be fully embraced and embedded doing the user research, thinking end to end services, and adopting agile development approaches.

12. Cost Benefit

- 12.1 The licensing cost of the platform will be funded from existing ICT budgets as acquisition of the new platform will enable existing legacy products to be switched off. The total contract value would be up to £540k over a 3 year term.
- 12.2 There will be a need for additional capacity whilst we develop our skills and knowledge to use the platform effectively and enable product transition. Transformation funds of £450k have been set aside to enable the recruitment of a small team on a fixed term basis.

- 12.3 In order to deliver digital transformation a platform is a core component. In addition, it will play a key role in streamlining legacy software contracts providing an opportunity to explore further savings, reduce vendor lock in and provide better value for money.
- 12.4 The savings to be delivered by the platform are more difficult to determine, the platform is a piece of technology architecture that is largely enabling rather than delivering benefit. The types of benefit that can be anticipated are:
- Efficiency savings through reduction in failure demand, removal of manual tasks and rekeying data, reduction in paper
 - Helps to drive take up of online services reducing the cost of delivery
 - Increased customer satisfaction through personalisation and well designed, accessible services
 - Ability to generate greater income
 - Enables targeting of messages to cohorts of customers, data targeted campaigns
 - Enables reporting across all customers, improving understanding, prediction – managing resource etc.
 - Allows iterative incremental changes and improvements to be implemented quickly and cheaply.
- 12.5 Cautious estimates indicate the potential of a minimum saving of £310k per annum, equating to £930k over 3 years. This has been validated against other local authorities who have published savings from similar projects, confidence of this figure and the cashable element will increase once an enabling customer delivery model has been approved.
- 12.6 Over time this may be supplemented by savings in service budgets from migrating and switching off some of the legacy systems as contracts expire.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Appendix A – Platform requirements

1. Can easily and quickly build automated end to end services providing an integrated experience regardless of channel used (online, face to face, telephony, social media, web chat)
2. Enable a single view of the transactions and interactions a customer has with the Council
3. The platform must enable personalisation of web content and services to be provided to customers
4. Customers must be able to access the platform using a single account (businesses, people, visitors) with the ability to transact without a customer record or account for certain items, or use their own online accounts e.g. facebook login, google
5. Capabilities to manage customer contact, case management, website content, workflow and electronic forms
6. Work with the Councils chosen components which deliver common cross organisation capability: including but not limited to e-Payments, Booking Engines, Notification Tools and GIS maps
7. Have an open architecture, enabling the council to send messages to and receive messages from line of business applications and Internet of Things devices
8. Adhere to GDS design standards, ensuring look and feel is consistent and flexible enough to support services that are commercial in nature or use different URLs & microsites
9. Provide reporting and analytics capabilities
10. Enable re-use and sharing with other Councils
11. Must be accessible - minimum of AA WCAG guidelines and compliant with the technology code of practice
12. Enable partners, providers, and voluntary/third sector users external to the Council working with us to deliver the services we are responsible for to the community at no extra cost
13. Conform to required GDPR legislation and facilitate FOI requests
14. Be device agnostic, mobile responsive, and the most commonly supported browsers.
15. Suppliers must be actively investing / upgrading in the platform roadmap and able to provide a history of this
16. The data stored within the system must remain the Council's property and be removable / transferrable by the Council without having to pay for the privilege
17. The platform must be supplier agnostic to enable support to be provided by different providers
18. The supplier should provide evidence of market leading characteristics and capabilities demonstrating innovation

Appendix B – Platform candidate processes/systems

New requests

Parish Councillor register of interest
Permit requests – country parks, water sports etc.
Avon Heath, appointment booking, online payments
Vexatious customers
Planning transformation
Electoral roll annual canvas
EHCP case management
S2P hub processes
Car Parking convergence
Highways and property claim process
Licensing convergence
Pool car booking
Social work academy
Waste permit application

Contract expiry opportunities

The Council's contracts database has been reviewed and identified the potential opportunities for the digital platform rather than re-procure.