

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted – N/A

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: *Place directorate*

1. DECISION TAKEN

To enter into a contract with Zodiac Media Ltd to redevelop the North Herts Council website and provide ongoing support and hosting for a period of five years.

2. DECISION TAKER

Sarah Kingsley, Service Director -Place

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

25 March 2021

4. REASON FOR DECISION

4.1 To ensure that the Council can receive maximum value for money on the delivery of a new website build.

4.2 To allow the Council to benefit from a ready built website option, minimising the development time and resource needed.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 To carry out a procurement exercise. Soft market testing of alternative providers was undertaken, however the cost savings associated with the time limited offer from Zodiac meant that other providers were significantly more expensive over the contract length.

5.2 To continue with our existing website, however this would only be feasible until November 2022 when the Drupal 7 content management system will no longer be supported.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

6.1 The leader of the council with responsibility for communications was consulted on and agreed with the single tender approach for the contract award.

7. FORWARD PLAN

7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The Council's website was coming to the end of its life, due to a major upgrade needed to the Drupal content management system (CMS). The website is also over

five years old and hasn't received any substantial updates during that time, so it was due a refresh / feature update.

- 7.2 As part of investigations into options for a new website, the Council was given an offer of a substantial discount on the usual price of a website by our existing supplier for support and hosting, Zodiac Media. Zodiac offered to waive their usual licence fee for the lifetime of the contract if we signed up by 1 March 2021.
- 7.3 The product Zodiac offer is called 'Council Platform.' It is a ready built website using the Drupal Content Management System, based on GOV.UK, fully customisable to our requirements. It also meets all accessibility requirements that are legally required for public sector websites.
- 7.4 A single tender procurement process was approved in February 2021 to ensure the council could receive best value for money when procuring a new website.
- 7.5 This delegated decision report is only being written now as the initial overall contract value of £45,000 will be exceeded, due to significant additional work being required at the build stage. Despite the overspend, Zodiac Media would still be substantially cheaper than other options.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Under section 14.6.4 (a) (ii) of the Council's Constitution, Service Directors have the authority to enter into contracts to carry out works and/or for the supply of goods and services in respect of their service areas and within approved budgets.
- 9.2. Section 14.6.9 (a) (i) of the Constitution also specifically gives the Service Director: Place, the authority to manage, direct and control all resources allocated to the Directorate in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures
- 9.3. This contract was awarded and completed in accordance with the Council's Contract and Procurement Rules.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. It is estimated that that total contract value over five years will be approximately £55,000.
- 10.2. The original contract value was £45,000, but significant additional support time was required in the build stages of the website. It is not anticipated that moving forward we will regularly exceed our allocated monthly support allowance. There is provision in the budget for the higher contract value of £55,000.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 If we fail to procure new arrangements for the website, we risk operating a website using technology which will no longer be supported.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 There are no additional equality implications associated with this proposal.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 In line with our Go Local policy, potential local suppliers have been approached but we have been unable to source any suitable companies which would meet the high technical specifications for a council website. None could offer a ready built solution either.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to *this report*.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The Council Platform solution offered by Zodiac media, gives us a ready built, customisable website, meaning the development time is significantly reduced compared to a normal rebuild project.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 *None*

17. APPENDICES

17.1 *None*

NOTIFICATION DATE

11 February 2022

Signature of Executive Member Consulted: Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg

Date 10 February 2022



Signature of decision taker



Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.

Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS