

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

The decision to enter into a contract with Zencity to provide a 'social listening' platform for a four year period, was entered into in September 2021 (with a break clause at 31 March 2023). Note as this was below Contract Delegated Decision notification none was required to be issued. The addition of an integrated digital engagement platform 'Civil Space' from 1 April 2022 for two years brings this over the £50K level and the overall contract is therefore confirmed in this Delegated Decision .

2. DECISION TAKER

Sarah Kingsley, Service Director -Place

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

20 September 2021 - decision to award the contract to Zencity
11 March 2022 – decision to award the further contract / variation regarding Civil Space.

4. REASON FOR DECISION

4.1 To enable the Council to benefit from opportunities to further develop our two-way community engagement using digital technology.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 To procure the Civil Space element of the product separately, however Zencity offered a substantial discount on their base price for 2 years, meaning it was extremely competitive and offers integration benefits with their core product.

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

6.1 Consultation was undertaken with the Council's Political Liaison Board regarding the original contract with Zencity and with the Executive Member for Finance and IT. For the Civil Space product, consultation was undertaken with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, the Community Engagement and Deputy Community Engagement Executive Members and the Executive Member for Finance and IT. The relevant Executive Member has authorised the variation of the contract for over 20% as per the legal implications.

7. FORWARD PLAN

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

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Better community engagement and the ability to better understand the needs of the community is a priority for the Council. Our consultation and communications activity can often be one-way and often we do not hear from the “silent majority.”
- 8.2 The Council, as part of its transformation programme is also looking to better use available data and analysis tools to inform its policies and meet customer expectations.
- 8.3 Zencity provides a unique software solution that uses artificial intelligence and sophisticated algorithms to gather and analyse data generated by social media and other internal data that relates to the Council’s activities. This enables us to monitor both official and unofficial conversations on social media so that we can better understand issues of importance of our communities and react accordingly.
- 8.4 Zencity is very keen to break into the UK market and want to work with the Council to develop their product to meet that market. This is reflected in the advantageous terms for this contract.
- 8.4 Since the original contract award for Zencity’s core product in September 2021, Zencity have acquired Civil Space. This provides a further benefit in that it allows us to set up consultation and project activities online and generate two-way conversations with residents and other stakeholders, as well as providing the original ‘listening’ offer.
- 8.5 This delegated decision report is only being written now (March 2022) as the initial overall contract value of £43,040 will be exceeded, due to a variation to the contract to include the Civil Space product.
- 8.6 While there are integration benefits to the two products, they can work independently from one another. For example, in the scenario where we chose to exercise the Break Clause for the core product, we would still be able to continue with Civil Space for the duration of the two year term.

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, subject to agreement with the Service Director: Customers for software or hardware contracts – which has been confirmed
- 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. The funding from the Strategic Priorities fund shall be vired across to the Place Budget and therefore this will then fall under both 14.6.4(a) and 14.6.9.
- 9.3 As this Civil Space contractual variation to the original contract is above 20%, then as per 28.8 of the Contract Procurement Rules, the relevant Executive Member should authorise this (subject to the availability of budget funding), such authorisation has been obtained).
- 9.4 This contract was awarded and completed in accordance with the Council’s Contract and Procurement Rules.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The total contract value for four years of the core Zencity product plus two years of the Civil Space product will be £59,040.
- 10.2. The core Zencity product is being funded using Strategic Priorities Funding for two years. This will give the Council time to evaluate the product and prepare a growth bid to take effect from 1 April 2023 for the core product if it intends to see the contract through for the full four year term and not exercise the Break Clause on 31 March 2023.
- 10.3. The Civil Space platform will also be funded for two years using Strategic Priorities Funding. This will give sufficient time to evaluate the product before potentially preparing a growth bid from 1 April 2024.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 As with any innovative product, it is possible that it may not deliver the benefits expected. Zencity's case studies would suggest that this is unlikely and to mitigate against this, a contract Break Clause has been inserted for the core product.
- 11.3 Being the first UK Council with whom Zencity will be working puts the Council in a unique position to positively influence the development of the product in the UK.

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 As the recommendations in the report relate to a contract below £100,000 the "go local" policy has not been applied, due to it being specialist software and there being no known local suppliers who could provide the service.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no human resource implications for this report.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 None.

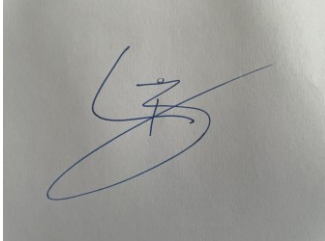
17. APPENDICES

- 17.1 None.

NOTIFICATION DATE

11 March 2022

Signature of Executive Member Consulted: Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'E. Dennis-Harburg', written on a light-colored background.

Date

Signature of decision taker

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. King', written in a cursive style.

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