FAREHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision
09 October 2023

Portfolio:	Housing
Subject:	**Renewal of the contract for the Housing Department Software**
Report of:	Director of Housing
Corporate Priorities:	Providing Housing Choices

Purpose:
To seek Executive approval for the renewal of the Housing Department's software system contract.

Executive summary:
This report provides the Executive with information on the renewal of the software contract for the Housing Department.

There are currently three contracts covering the system used for Housing. However, these are all with the same supplier and cover different housing function modules.

It is proposed to bring all three contracts into one. The Executive is invited to comment on the details given in this report and requested to approve the principle of renewing the contract.

Recommendations:
It is recommended that the Executive agrees that:

(a) the contract for providing the software for the Housing Department is renewed; and

(b) delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing, following consultation with the Executive Member for Housing, to enter into the contract.

Reason:
To ensure continued efficient, holistic and customer centric software is used, and in order to continue to provide an ongoing service to Fareham Housing residents.

Cost of proposals:
The costs of the contract renewal are detailed in confidential Appendix A. The Council's Finance Business Partner for Housing is satisfied that these costs can continue to be met through the HRA Revenue Budget.

Appendices: **A:** Confidential Appendix A – Contract Costs*

* By virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person and category 7A (information which is subject to an obligation of confidentiality) of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

* It is not in the public interest to publish this information as it would harm the Council's ability to conduct future procurement activity in accordance with national procurement legislation and to achieve best value in the consideration of tenders. If cost indicators were disclosed any future tender exercises could be adversely affected, potentially resulting in the submission of unaffordable or undeliverable bids and remove the necessary element of market competition that drives best value principles. To ensure cybersecurity principles are followed, the supplier has not been disclosed in the main report.

Background papers: None.

Reference papers: Report to the Executive Member for Housing for Decision – 02 December 2019

FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	09 October 2023
Subject:	Renewal of the Contract for the Housing Department Software
Briefing by:	Director of Housing
Portfolio:	Housing

INTRODUCTION

1. In June 2019, following a comprehensive tender, a new asset management system was procured to manage the Council's housing stock.

2. At the 2 December 2019, by individual Executive Member for Housing decision, the procurement of new software for the Housing Department was approved. This system replaced the previous outdated and disconnected processes.

3. As part of this, a separate contract was signed for an enhanced Responsive Repairs module. This module was not available on the G-Cloud, the route used to purchase the main system, hence a separate contract at that time.

4. All three contracts are with the same supplier and are coming to an end. It is intended that these are rolled into a single contract. This report details the use of the software and the steps made to ensure it remains the most appropriate system for the department.

PRODUCT & IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

5. This software has provided the Housing Department with a holistic approach to the customer's journey. The different teams within the Department will see a resident at various stages of their housing journey; from making a housing application to being found a home and on to requesting a repair within it. This journey may involve the Housing Options, Temporary Accommodation, Neighbourhood and Sheltered Housing Officers, Planned Maintenance and Responsive Repairs teams. Therefore, it is essential that officers are able to work together, both in and out of the system.

6. The application has enabled the different teams to be able to view information in a joined-up approach. Officers only have authorisation to view or change data that is relevant to their role; the highly configurable permissions setting was a key factor in choosing this product.

7.   The implementation journey has presented us with valuable opportunities for growth and learning as we addressed various challenges along the way. We found that this new way of working was daunting for some; however, through support and training we overcame this. Success has only been achieved through understanding our processes and the ability to reflect this in the system. There have been some changes to ways of working, but this has been in tangent with the team reflecting on current procedures.

8.   The new system has allowed processes to be clearly configured and relevant information accessible to wider staff (rather than the previous approach with various individual systems that don't align or were not accessible to wider teams). In many areas it has saved staff time, such as having quick easy access to information the customer requires or allowing officers to record safety/welfare checks straight into the system.

THE CONTRACTS

9.   The software has various modules to capture the data and processes for each team. These consist of contacts (tenants, applicants, and contractors), assets, rents and arrears, ASBs, the housing register, allocations, repairs and asset management. Each of these elements overlap for the teams, for example, all officers can see information on assets applicable to their permissions.

10. There are currently three contracts for the software, all with the same supplier. This is because various elements were procured separately. Initially, the asset management software was purchased in June 2019 by the Planned Maintenance Team to facilitate asset surveys and ongoing maintenance.

11. Following this, in December 2019 the Executive Member for Housing approved the purchase of the main software for the department. The Government's online marketplace, the G-Cloud, was used in tandem with a detailed specification to identify the best software solution. The supplier selected provided both a competitive rate and was the best fit for the needs of the department.

12. It was identified that there was an enhanced Responsive Repairs module that would further optimise the software. However, this module was not available on the G-Cloud. Purchase was made through the standard procurement route and the contract also signed in December 2019. This was included in the report for the December 2019 individual Executive Member for Housing decision.

13. As the contracts are coming to an end, it is the perfect opportunity to combine into one. This will support simpler contract management and merge the licence fees into one payment. The costs of the contract are outlined in the confidential Appendix A and the principles are understood by both parties. The Council's Legal team are currently refining the details of the document.

BENCHMARKING

14. The Council has a responsibility to ensure best value when purchasing a product. To ensure that renewing this contract meets this duty, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken with the Financial Services Procurement Manager.

15. It was found that changing the supplier to another system would have significant adverse operational effects. Migration, implementation, and training would have to start afresh. This would directly impact ICT, Procurement, Legal and the Housing

teams, as well as potentially impacting service delivery to customers

16. There were no additional savings when comparing annual fees against other competitors. Additionally, a move to another supplier would incur up front mobilisation costs. Most importantly, the other suppliers do not provide the whole package of services that are part of the existing contracts. Additional work would be required to replace these areas.

17. The benchmarking exercise clearly found that remaining with the current supplier was the most cost-effective solution. There would not need to be any further implementation that would result in officer time lost, and the software would continue to offer the most comprehensive solution.

RISKS

18. Many of the usual and identifiable risks presented in this type of project have been negated through detailed project management and the Council's procurement process.

CONCLUSION

19. The new contract for the Housing Department's software will continue to provide best value. Officers will not be disrupted by changes to a new system, the contract will be easier to manage, and the benchmarking exercise has proved that it is the best value solution. Members are invited to agree the renewal of the contract and delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing after consultation with the Executive Member for Housing to enter into the contract.

Enquiries:

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