

**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET – TUESDAY, 18 JUNE 2019**

Title of Report	<b>UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM FOR TELEPHONY AND CONTACT CENTRE</b>
Key Decision	Financial – Yes Community - No
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Purpose of Report	Provide members with details of the procurement of the replacement telephony system and the contact centre platform, as the budget exceeds £250,000 over the life of the contract.
Reason for Decision	To approve the procurement of a replacement Telephony and Contact Centre platform which is anticipated to be above £250,000 over the 5 year contract term.
Council Priorities	Value for Money Spend Our Money Wisely
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	As detailed in the report. ICT Capital budget for 2019/2020 already includes the indicative cost for proposed replacement platform.
Link to relevant CAT	No direct link
Risk Management	Risk will be managed in line with NWLDC standards and good project management principles.

Equalities Impact Screening	N/A
Human Rights	N/A
Transformational Government	The introduction of new technology and smarter ways of working aligns closely with the principles of transformational government.
Comments of Head of Paid Service	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	Report is satisfactory
Comments of the Deputy Monitoring Officer	Report is satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background Papers	None
Recommendations	<b>THAT CABINET:DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CORPORATE PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO PROCURE AND AWARD A REPLACEMENT TELEPHONY AND CONTACT CENTRE PLATFORM OVER 5 YEARS.</b>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 North West Leicestershire District Council has a Customer Experience Strategy, which puts the customer at the heart of everything we do.
- 1.2 The current telephony platform including the customer services software ('Contact Centre'), used in the customer call centre for managing customer calls, has been in place for over 10 years and technology has moved on significantly since then. We are currently restricted in the use of modern telephony practices and customer contact technology.
- 1.3 The current telephony solution was first implemented for Customer Services in 2007, whilst the remainder of the Council were still operating on traditional analogue handsets. In June 2016, new VOIP (voice over internet protocol) handsets were rolled out to the rest of the Council, replacing the traditional handsets. In 2018 we migrated from legacy telephone lines to SIP (session-initiated protocol), which has saved £2,000 per month in call charges and line rentals.

1.4 The current telephony platform has not been reviewed for a significant amount of time, which means there are now new opportunities and alternative operating models, that should be reviewed to spend our money wisely, provide value to the organisation and our customers and embrace new ways of working.

1.5 The work, which has been done to date, has moved the Council forward in terms of its telephony and customer services contact. However, the current platform does not provide or deliver, modern contact centre features such as: -

- Presenting a customer service agents with details of the caller and associated record on the screen as soon as they are on the phone. The agent currently needs to look this information up on various different systems.
- Blended media opportunities, which gives a single view of all incoming contact, calls, email, social media and web chat, enabling improved resource planning and efficiency. This gives the capability for templates, automatic email prioritisation and suggested responses.
- Ability to look up a contact from the central address book, view the officer's presence (whether they are at their desk or not) and make a call or instant message, thus removing the need to look around for numbers. We currently do not have a central address book, where staff can click to dial, they currently have to find the number and dial the extension, and have no insight as to whether the officer is available or not.
- Easy to initiate, video and audio conference calling, internally, externally, to partners and customers, without the expensive cost of travel. This will also provide screen sharing, file sharing and instant messaging.
- Customers can select options and call extensions by voice recognition as opposed to pressing numbers.
- Real time advanced reporting, dashboards and multi-channel blending from twitter and Facebook.
- The use of softphones (virtual phones on the desktop) and smartphones, replacing traditional bulky handsets.

1.6 To improve our customer experience offering and meet our procurement obligations, we need to implement a replacement corporate telephony system and contact centre software.

1.7 Replacing the telephony system and Contact Centre platform will transform the way in which we will work, providing an agile workforce, enabling more flexible working, and increasing staff contact with the following benefits: -

- Call centre staff will all have a soft phone on their computer, replacing the desk phone. This will allow agents to make and receive calls directly from the computer and manage emails and social media communications from a single view. Agents will be able to see presence information, and communicate with each other over instant messaging and video, thus helping to speed up customer responses.
- Blended and Multimedia queuing, allows all customer communications from emails, Twitter, Facebook, voice calls, and chat to all be handled from a single source. This improves efficiency, by having agents who can handle all forms of customer contact,

from a single view, as opposed to specific agents for specific tasks. This enables resources to be used more flexibly and increases customer response times.

- Officers will be able to make and receive calls using the soft phone on their work smart phone or tablet, free of charge, therefore there will be no need for traditional desk phones. Their extension number will follow them around where ever they are and so officers will be contactable at all times.
- Ability to hold and host audio/video conference calls and presentations with partners, customers and colleagues, without incurring the time and cost of travel.
- Rich management information and analytics will provide call reporting capabilities to monitor both outgoing calls and call performance dashboards.
- Flexibility and business agility, offers the very latest communication and collaboration tools, enabling staff to work from different locations and join and set up conference calls at the click of a button.
- An engaged workforce and improved productivity where staff can collaborate more closely with each other via the various communications channels.

## 2 CONTRACTING AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The revenue cost of the current telephony platform to support and maintain is £13,350 and £2,306 for call recording. If we carried on in this manner, over 5 years, the total cost would be £78,280, without gaining any further benefit.
- 2.2 The indicative cost of the replacement telephony platform and contact centre over 5 years is as follows :

Cost breakdown:

Year	Capital Cost (£)	Revenue Cost (£)	Combined (£)
1	128,850	29,073	157,923
2	0	29,073	29,073
3	0	29,073	29,073
4	0	29,073	29,073
5	0	29,073	29,073
Total	128,850	145,365	274,212

The capital cost of £128,850 has been budgeted in the ICT capital budget for 2019/20.

The revenue (support and maintenance) cost over 5 years is £145,365 of which £78,280 is already in the ICT revenue budget. Therefore, an additional £67,085, is required over 5 years and additional funding will be sought as part of 2020 budget setting.

This provides a new and modern approach to telephony, a new modern contact centre and agile working, aligned to the customer experience strategy, improving overall customer contact, and customer satisfaction.

### 3 PROCUREMENT ROUTE

- 3.1 The contract will be awarded using a framework contract, which will be the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework RM1045 Technology Products 2. This procurement route adheres to the requirements of the Constitution (paragraph 2.6 of the Contract Procedures Rules). The Council will be undertaking a further competition between all suppliers on the framework, so it can demonstrate achieving value for money, and the best possible result for the Council.
- 3.2 Value for money will be secured through the framework route. Officers have tested the market through Soft Market Testing, obtaining information on what the market can provide and the associated indicative price points. The market is reasonably saturated with potential suppliers, therefore generating effective competition and comparison.
- 3.3 The project delivery will follow the PRINCE2 project management methodology and the project team will consist of; Procurement Officer, Legal Officer, key IT and Customer services members, with an IT project officer leading on the implementation. The IT Manager will oversee the delivery and IT operations.
- 3.4 The timescales for delivery are set out as below :-

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
1	Cabinet report for approval	June 2019	June 2019
2	Procurement of Unified Communications solution	July 2019	August 2019
3	Contract award	August 2019	August 2019
4	Roll out of new telephony system to Council except Contact Centre	September 2019	December 2019
5	Implement new Contact Centre with a Unified Communications solution	February 2020	June 2020

#### **4 CONTRACT AWARD**

- 4.1 In order to procure the contract in relation to the Telephony and Contact Centre platform Cabinet is requested to delegate authority to procure a replacement telephony and contact centre platform over 5 years to the Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services in consultation with the Corporate Portfolio Holder.