

Report to Cabinet

17 March 2021

Subject:	Contract Award for Mobile Working Platform
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Resources and Core Services - Councillor Wasim Ali
Director:	Housing and Communities – Alan Caddick
Key Decision:	Yes an executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure, the making of savings or the generation of income amounting to: -£250,000 or more where the service area budget exceeds £10m;
Contact Officer:	Steve Greenhouse – Service Manager – Asset Management and Maintenance steve_greenhouse@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to the award of a contract under the Crown Commercial Services Framework RM 3821, Lot 1a to Advanced Business Software and Solutions Limited (formerly Kirona Solutions Limited) to maintain and further develop the mobile working platform.



- 1.2 That in connection with 1.1 above, the Director – Housing and Communities be authorised to award the contract for the licensing and ongoing development of a mobile working platform to Advanced Business Software and Solutions Limited (formerly Kirona Solutions Limited) for the period 30 June 2021 to 29 June 2028 for a total cost of £1,926,650 over the seven-year period and will be based on five years at a cost of £1,464,993 with an option to extend for a further two years at a cost of £461,657.
- 1.3 That the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to execute any documents necessary to give effect to the recommendation set out in 1.2 above and to sign any contract changes in relation to the purchase of additional licences or development days during the period of the contract.
- 1.4 That an exemption be made to the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules clause 10.5a to allow a contract period of a maximum of 7 years for the maintenance and ongoing development of the Mobile Working Platform.



2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 This report seeks approval to award a contract to Advanced Business Software and Solutions Limited (formerly Kirona Solutions Limited) to maintain and further develop the mobile working platform.
- 2.2 Since the inception of the initial contract to create the mobile working platform, a hosted mobile working platform has been implemented together with a back-office system. Essentially this allows jobs to be raised and allocated to either the council's workforce or external contractors. It enables council officers to notify service users that they are on route and to close jobs on completion or raise additional jobs accordingly. The approach gives a current real time view of progress being made with jobs throughout the working day. This assists those planning works, managers and facilitates improved communications with our customers.



- 2.3 The move to a new mobile working platform has successfully delivered the transition of service areas previously not utilising ICT, for their field work, as well as updating and increasing reliability for other service areas that have previously used an ICT solution.
- 2.4 The development and ongoing use of a mobile working platform will enable service areas to carry out their functions in relation to maintaining the Council's Housing Stock as well as service areas that deliver services to property and or land managed by the Council.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Strong resilient communities
	<p>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods</p> <p>The award of this contract will enable our workforce to be skilled and talented and will be geared up to respond to changing business needs.</p> <p>The use of the mobile working platform supports the ongoing modernisation of Council services and delivering better outcomes for tenants and residents.</p> <p>Underpinning both the ICT Strategy and the Digital Strategy, the mobile working platform is delivering a digital by default workforce in key frontline services, which are used by residents daily. Delivery of these services more effectively will have a positive impact on improving the quality and condition of the environment in Sandwell.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 On 18th May 2016 Cabinet awarded a contract for the provision and development of a mobile working platform to Kirona Solutions Limited for a two-year period from June 2016 (Minute 71/16).



- 4.2 On 27 June 2018 Cabinet subsequently awarded a new contract to Kirona Solutions Limited for the maintenance and further development of the mobile working platform covering the period of 30th June 2018 to 29th June 2020 (Minute 93/18).
- 4.3 On 7 April 2020 a Decision Notice was approved to extend the contract for the mobile working platform to 29 June 2021. This was done in accordance with update 2.5 of Covid 19 updates to Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules for contracts over EU Procurement Threshold (£189,330) and Public Contract Regulations 2015, regulation 72(1)(c).
- 4.4 Whilst the contracts have previously been awarded to Kirona Solutions Limited, in April 2019 Kirona Solutions Limited were acquired by Advanced Business and Software Solutions Limited, a market leading business software provider. We have maintained strong working relationships through this period.
- 4.5 The development of the mobile working platform over the last 4 years has provided a stable and improved product, for the management and delivery of the Asset Management and Maintenance Service. Since the implementation of the system, key front-line services to benefit, from the use of the software for workforce and the management and delivery of services are, Housing Repairs, Pest Control, Voids Maintenance and Gas Services. This has not only benefitted council officers delivering these services but also the integration of Contractors working directly on behalf of the Council.
- 4.6 The contract award will cover 4 key areas:
- 4.6.1 JM Mobile which enables employees to receive and complete work out on a mobile device.
- 4.6.2 JM Work Hub which is a back-office system managing details of repair work undertaken including gas servicing, with work underway to develop further the Asset Management and Maintenance System.



4.6.3 DRS (Dynamic Resource Scheduling) which enables work to be allocated to an employee based on their skills and geographical work areas.

4.6.4 Text Messaging within Asset Management and Maintenance, keeps customers informed on the appointment scheduled. This helps to support avoidable contact, reduces the level of no access as well as capturing the customer's satisfaction on the same day as the services being delivered.

4.7 To expand the coverage of services benefitting from the platform, discussions are being planned for Housing Management, Income Management, Anti-Social Behaviour and Estate Services. The ongoing development and use of the system supports the Council's digital vision by enabling the eradication of paper-based systems and will enable and support employees to deliver front line services and work more effectively.

4.8 The ongoing use of the platform has demonstrated significant benefits by managing employee workflow allocation, more effectively leading to improvements in productivity and satisfaction. For example, customer satisfaction with the Asset Management and Maintenance Service in 2016/17 was 84.9%, rising to 94.5% in 2019/20, and increasing further to 94.9% in the third quarter of 2020/21. Similarly, the No Access rate has improved, reducing from 10.88% in 2016/17 to 9.56% in 2019/20 and reducing further still to 9.32% in the third quarter of 2020/21.

4.9 The procurement of the 2 two-year contracts to date, have been through framework arrangements managed by the Crown Commercial Service. The proposed contract will be procured using the Direct Award procedure under the Crown Commercial Services Framework RM 3821 - Data and Application Solutions under (Lot 1a), Resource Planning & Management Solutions including Financial & Commercial.



- 4.10 The principle behind a 5-year contract with an option to extend for a further 2 years is to ensure continuity and ongoing maintenance and support for the mobile working platform for longer than the previous 2-year periods given the extended use now benefitting Council Services. Through this period the contract will also allow other Service areas to be integrated into the use of the system.
- 4.11 Development work to date has been undertaken with a view to supporting the Council's channel shift agenda. Customers are already able to use the Firmstep customer portal for both logging a service request and scheduling these through DRS for example a Pest Control appointment visit.
- 4.12 Work has recently been completed to enable the Keyfax scripting tool to be used through the Firmstep customer portal system by both the Contact and Local Centre employees. The Keyfax scripting tool is used to correctly diagnose a repair, ensuring trade employees with the appropriate skills attend the repair appointment. This approach is helping to reduce the number of systems that employees have to use, whilst also laying some of the foundations needed as part of future goals to implement channel shift for the Repairs Service.

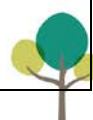
5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Reverting to paper-based processes is not an option as it goes against Sandwell's 2030 Vision and ambitions and would have a detrimental effect on customer satisfaction.
- 5.2 Going out to the market was not considered as the cost of change would be greater than the cost of this direct award and having developed the mobile working platform over the last 4 years this now provides a stable and improved product, for the continued management and delivery of the Asset Management and Maintenance Service.



6 Implications

<p>Resources:</p>	<p>The services covered by this contract are split into the following areas: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software Licenses for Job Manager Users • Dynamic Resource Scheduling Licences • Hosting and software support services (extending over bank holidays and weekends) • Text Messaging • 400 development/consultancy days <p>From the items listed above the set up and ongoing annual costs covering licences, support services and text messaging are £1,506,650. The additional development/consultancy days are £420,000 these would be called off under the contract as required.</p> <p>These costs will be met from existing Housing Revenue Account budgets. This investment and ongoing support of the existing systems will support the implementation of mobile working in other Council Service Areas, supporting the delivery of efficiency savings, customer satisfaction and improvements in service delivery.</p>
<p>Legal and Governance:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contract will be awarded in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015. • The contract will be awarded using the direct award process via the Crown Commercial Service Framework Data and Application Solutions RM 3821 (Lot 1a – Resource Planning and management Solutions including Financial and Commercial). • The Crown Commercial Service Framework Contract expires on 22nd February 2022 and call off contracts can be awarded for periods up to 7 years.



Risk:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No data protection issues have been identified. • There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this proposal.
Equality:	An equality impact assessment was not undertaken as this is a renewal of an existing contract arrangement.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this proposal.
Social Value	<p>The mobile working solution has demonstrated significant benefits to the repairs and pest control services since implementation. These benefits include; reductions in employee travel time and fuel costs, the ability to manage employee workflow allocation more effectively leading to improvements in productivity and creating capacity, higher number of resolutions at first point of contact and improvements in key performance indicators.</p> <p>The future use of the mobile working platform will support employees to deliver services 'out in the field' and work more effectively across divisional boundaries, which will result in savings to the council. There will be clear opportunities to co-ordinate visits across multiple disciplines leading to a more streamlined approach for customers and reductions in duplicated work.</p>

7. Appendices

None

8. Background Papers

Cabinet Report 18th May 2016 (Min 71/16)

Cabinet Report 27th June 2018 (Min 93/18)

Decision Notice 7th April 2020

