

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Exemption In accordance with Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules

Procurement of Streaming Provider for Council Meetings

1. Summary Statement

1.1. Exemption being sought

- 1.2. Approval is sought to make an exemption to 8.7 of the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to award a contract for a 12-month period to Public-I for the provision of webcasting and streaming of Council Committee meetings from 21 April 2019 to 20 April 2020.

1.3. Summary

The Resources Directorate within Sandwell MBC is on a continuous journey of excellence, working to achieve the working principles of Law and Governance and 2018-2021 Resources Directorate Business Plan, to ensure that the Directorate is at the heart of innovation and change in Sandwell.

- 1.4 Priority six aims to ensure that the governance structure and arrangements of the Council supports and underpins delivery of the Vision 2030. In order to achieve this, a full review of the council's governance arrangements, including the governance structure is currently taking place. As part of the review, the engagement of the public with the democratic process and the Council's decision-making process is a vital element.

- 1.5 Since 2015, Sandwell has webcasted full Council and Cabinet meetings from the Council's main chamber. At the time, this was very innovative move as many councils did not live webcast their meetings. However, some of the webcasting infrastructure is now in need of upgrading, especially in terms of

display and its user interface. Furthermore, there is a desire to expand webcasting to other rooms beyond the main Council Chamber and to webcast other meetings in addition to full Council and Cabinet.


- 1.6 Following a competitive tendering exercise, in 2014, Sandwell replaced its Audio-Visual (AV) equipment which is provided by Pro-AV. In 2015, the Council entered into a three-year contract with Public I. As part of the contract, the Council was provided with hardware, maintenance, 40 hours of recorded footage time and archiving of footage for a 6-month period. Currently the AV and webcast systems are provided by two different organisations thus the integration between the webcasting and AV is not as seamless as Sandwell would like.
- 1.7 The contract with Public-I was subsequently extended in 2018 for a one year period pending exploration of options for: -
- enhanced webcasting and AV systems that were compatible and seamless;
 - webcasting further committee meetings as part of the Council's drive to be open and transparent and looking at portable equipment to enable streaming to be undertaken in any part of the Council building/external venues;
 - Digital Display screens
 - Improved chamber design to allow for better Webcasting and AV.
- 1.4. Whilst soft market testing has been undertaken, the Council is not yet in a position to agree future integrated systems and further work is required with ICT, Facilities Management and Democratic Services. In order to continue to provide a streaming service, it is proposed to award a 12-month contract to Public -I at a cost of £12,070. This includes 57 hours of footage (officers negotiated the carry forward of 17 hours from the current contract). An additional £1,170.00 is also sought to extend the archive period from 6 months to 12 months. All footage will then be transferred to the Council's website to make it available to view indefinitely.
- 1.5. Procurement Services Manager has been consulted and their advice is that due to current review of AV systems and hardware, an exemption to maintain service continuity is an acceptable course of action.

1.7 In accordance with the Council's Procurement & Contract Procedure Rules (Rule 15) an Exemption from any rule for a contract of less than £50,000 in value must be approved by the relevant Chief Officer following endorsement by the Procurement Services Manager.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That a contract be awarded to Public-I for a period of 12 months at a value of £13,250 to deliver web streaming of Council committee meetings.
- 2.2 That any necessary exemptions be made under the Council's Procurement & Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in 2.1 above to proceed.

I confirm that the action(s) recommended above comply with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules (Rule 15):


Andy Jukes
Procurement Business Partner
Date: 19th March 2019

In accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules (Rule 15), I approve the action(s) recommended above:

I ~~do~~/do not have an interest to declare in this matter


Surjit Tour
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Date:

20/3/2019

Contact Officers
Suky Suthi-Nagra
Democratic Services Manager
0121 569 3479

3 Procurement Implications

- 3.1 This service was originally procured through a framework agreement established by Braintree District Council. This framework agreement was renewed in 2017 and runs until 30th June 2021. This agreement was subject to OJUE advertisement in accordance with Public Contract Regulations 2015. Public-I are still the official contractor, so their continued use is still via a compliant framework agreement.
- 3.2 There are still 17 unused broadcast hours and following negotiation Public-I have agreed to carry this forward in to the extension period. Procurement Services believe that the negotiated rates still offer best value whilst maintaining continuity of service.
- 3.3 Due to the review of new hardware and system requirements it is not possible to provide a re-procurement timeline at this stage. However, when requirements have been established a procurement exercise will be undertaken for the options outlined in Section 1.7 of this report.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 In the event that the exemption is not approved, there will be a period where Council meetings will not be webcast and accessible to view by members of the public and will prevent openness and transparency of decision-making.

