

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET5 November 2020Report by Deputy Chief ExecutiveDEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEMS INTERFACE FOR HOUSING SERVICES**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek exemption from tendering in accordance with Contract Standing Order 15 (iii) in relation to interface development work required to the Councils job costing system Servitor which is a proprietary system owned by Civica UK Ltd allowing information to pass to the Councils new core housing management system NPS Housing owned by Northgate.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that, in accordance with Contract Standing Order 15 (iii) the Cabinet approve an exemption from tendering to allow interface development work to Servitor in order for information on repair works, work variances, appointments etc. to pass to the Councils new system NPS Housing. Approval of this exemption will ensure the in-house systems support the delivery of a modern and digital service. Total contract expenditure for the full period of this exemption will be £170,000 covering a six year term.

**BACKGROUND**

3. Servitor owned by Civica UK Ltd was inherited by the Council in 1997 shortly after reorganisation and operates as a job costing system used to price and monitor repair works including labour and material costs. NPS Housing owned by Northgate is the Councils new housing management system awarded in 2019 replacing the legacy system OHMS (Open Housing Management System) which is currently being phased out. NPS Housing is an improved system that will support all key service areas such as allocations, homelessness, estate management and repair requests.

**REPORT**

4. In order to deliver a modern and digital service it is imperative that an interface is developed to Servitor to allow information to pass to NPS Housing allowing system updates in both directions which will provide enhanced performance management reporting such as information on appointments and repair status which in turn supports the aspiration of Housing Services to have officers accessing systems 'in the field' or from remote working locations. Furthermore, the progression of the interface provides opportunity to create efficiencies in our current processes and working practices.

5. To support the recommendation being made in this report a detailed options appraisal was undertaken by Housing Services with each of the following options scored against functionality, implementation and cost. The options considered were:

- Option 1 –Interface provided by Northgate – this option allows for a two-way simultaneous interface between NPS Housing and Servitor, providing additional interface functionality to what exists currently;
- Option 2 - XML file transfer – this interface approach aligns closer to the current interface in place between OHMS and Servitor (i.e. Option 4). This permits an interface. The only difference with this option is a slightly newer way of data transfer between the systems;
- Option 3 - Procurement of a third party ‘middleware’ solution to undertake the interface work between NPS Housing and Servitor;
- Option 4 - Flat-file transfer i.e. replication of current interface arrangements. This option would simply provide for a replacement of the current interface that exists between OHMS and Servitor with no enhanced functionality
- Option 5 – The Council’s ICT explore utilising existing SQL Server Integration Services (SSIS) technology as a solution to adjoin NPS Housing and Servitor

6. The options appraisal proved that Option 1 – Northgate interface not only delivers the greatest benefits by allowing officers to access real-time and up-to-date information to tenants, staff and contractors but also by assessing costs is deemed to offer best value for money to the service and the Council.

7. The options appraisal is not attached as an appendix to this report, however, was undertaken in order to satisfy appraisal requirements and due diligence in respect of audit and Best Value. The detail of the appraisal can be made available at any time.

## **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

8. The total cost of the exemption required is £170,000, comprising an initial capital outlay of £80,000 and £15,000 annual support charge for a six-year term.

9. The costs highlighted in this reports are costs associated solely with the development of the required interface. No additional costs will be incurred with Northgate.

10. Cabinet are asked to note that the capital costs associated with this development work will be met by Housing Service’s HRA capital funding. Thereafter ongoing revenue costs are to be provided by Housing Services and managed at part of ICT’s contract management arrangements.

## **CONSULTATION**

11. Legal Services and Procurement were consulted on the use of Contract Standing Order 15 (iii) and confirmed the exemption request is justified and legally competent.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

12. This project is governed by the Housing Redesign Project Board, which includes representatives from ICT, Housing, Procurement and Northgate.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

13. There are no staffing, property, legal, State Aid, equalities or sustainability implications of this proposal.

14. There are ICT implications which ICT colleagues are aware of.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

15. The interface development work to Servitor has been identified as part of an exciting programme of change within Housing Services that aims to improve and increase our digital capabilities with our tenants to enhance the customer journey for those accessing our services.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

16. It is recommended that, in accordance with Contract Standing Order 15 (iii) Proprietary Services the Cabinet approve an exemption from tendering procedures to allow interface development work required to the Councils job costing system Servitor ensuring information can be passed to the Councils new core housing management system NPS Housing.

Head of Digital and Community Safety Corporate & Community Services

Further information can be obtained from Murray Husband Head of Digital and Community Safety Corporate & Community Services 0141 577 3452

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