

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: Appendix 1 of this report contains information considered to be exempt under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended

Agenda Item No.

REPORT TO: Leader Portfolio Meeting

DATE: 3 March 2021

SERVICE AREA: Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC)

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Harrogate Convention Centre
(*Paula Lorimer*)

SUBJECT: **HCC Event Booking Management System**

WARD/S AFFECTED: ALL DISTRICT

FORWARD PLAN REF: Key Decision No. 20HCC20

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval to award a five-year contract for a licence, support and maintenance agreement with Softcat Plc (Softcat) in relation to the Event Booking Management System (EBMS) via the Kent County Supplies (KCS) framework agreement for Software and associated services 2 (Y20011) to run from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2026.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To award a five-year contract for a licence, support and maintenance agreement for an Event Booking Management System (EBMS) to Softcat via the KCS framework.

3.0 RECOMMENDED REASONS

3.1 HCC has been using a fully automated EBMS since April 2015. The one in use is the industry standard EBMS, used in 50 countries worldwide and, since its installation, it has been successfully integrated across all HCC's current Venue Management processes.

3.2 The EBMS is a business critical system, HCC need continuity of service and it is key that this service is not disrupted at this time by moving to a new EBMS. By accessing the KCS framework agreement and appointing Softcat this will allow the continuation of service. The decision to agree this

has been made in full consultation with the Council's Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU).

- 3.3 The KCS framework provides a fully OJEU compliant route to market in order for HCC to sign a contract via Softcat as the reseller, to continue to use the current EBMS.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED FOR REJECTION

- 4.1 To do nothing. This option is recommended for rejection as HCC need this critical software in order to continue to deliver services to all clients, find new clients and develop new areas of efficiency thus continuing to drive economic growth within the District.
- 4.2 To undertake a full procurement process and invite bids for a replacement system. This option is recommended for rejection, it is vital that as a critical system the Convention Centre has continuity of service. HCC have carried out soft market testing which has confirmed the current EBMS in use meets all of HCC current requirements and can be developed over the term to identify new areas of event operation in the future.

5.0 THE REPORT

- 5.1 HCC installed the current EBMS in April 2015. Since implementation, HCC have invested significantly, in terms of staff training and resource and process development, to work with the current EBMS and as a result, it is integral to the Venue Management processes at HCC.
- 5.2 A recent review carried out by the Council's CPU identified the need to re-procure the software due to the end of the license agreement for the EBMS (August 2021). The CPU advised two possible courses of action;
- A full procurement comprising an open tender to find a replacement EBMS,
 - The potential to utilise a framework that would give HCC access to a third party supplier arrangement. The KCS framework allows HCC to enter into a five-year contract in order to retain the existing EBMS.
- 5.3 HCC undertook a soft market testing exercise, prior to deciding on the best way forward, given that it was over five years since the installation of the current EBMS and there was the need to reassess other systems now in the market place and determine what other options were available, as time had moved on.
- 5.4 Discussions and demos were held with three alternative providers but it was clear that none of these systems were real contenders to replace the current EBMS. Suppliers 1 and 2 were not suitable replacements as they were unable to deliver the needs of a venue like HCC at a very basic level such as industry sector coding or calendar views. Supplier 3 was a stronger contender though its scheduling function, which supports the delivery of an event, was also far too basic to fulfil HCC's current requirements let alone

support future development. As a result, the decision was made to remain with the current EBMS.

6.0 REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The following were considered: Financial Implications; Human Resources Implications; Legal Implications; ICT Implications; Strategic Property/Asset Management Considerations; Risk Assessment; Equality and Diversity (the Public Sector Equality Duty and impact upon people with protected characteristics). If applicable, the outcomes of any consultations, assessments, considerations and implications considered necessary during preparation of this report are detailed below.

6.2 Financial Implications

The financial implications can be found in exempt Appendix 1.

6.3 ICT Implications

ICT have been involved with this procurement and are supportive of the recommendation.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 HCC are confident that the current EBMS is the right product not only to fulfil current business requirements but that it also offers the platform to revolutionise the Venue Management processes and opportunities within HCC moving forward.

7.2 Using the KCS Framework to sign up for a longer contract term provides the opportunity to secure this system for Venue development over the next five years via a fully OJEU compliant procurement route.

Background Papers – None

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