

CABINET MEMBER DECISION

30 November 2022

KEY DECISION: YES

IT strategy – scaffolding and interim support

1. Decision:

- 1.1 To award a contract to Razorblue Ltd to provide 12 months (with an option to extend to 15 months) support to the council to both scaffold and provide additional resilience into the existing IT team, as well as deliver a range of baseline transformation projects. The contact award will be subject to a positive reference check.
- 1.2 To allow repurposing of the existing ICT (vacant roles) salary budget to fund the support scaffolding contract across the 12 – 15 month period.
- 1.3 To utilise the £175k ICT transformation reserve to fund the baseline transformation project work and other works within the scope of the contract to achieve the ICT vision for Being A Better Council.

2. Statement of Reasons:

- 2.1 Following the departure of several key staff members within the IT service it was identified that additional support to manage the day-to-day IT help desk operations of the council is required, together with support to deliver a series of baseline transformation projects to bring the council's IT infrastructure up to a more robust and stable state.
- 2.2 It has also been acknowledged that simply recruiting in such support on a like-for-like basis may not provide the necessary skills and experience to drive the council's IT estate forward and address the risks currently facing the council.

- 2.3 As such, it is proposed that a different approach is adopted which is to appoint external support through Razorblue Ltd to:
- Scaffold the existing IT helpdesk and engineering service for a period of 12 months.
 - Deliver a series of baseline transformation projects in partnership with the internal IT team,
- 2.4 It is recognised that the scaffold and baseline transformation approach will:
- Deliver skilled and knowledge resilience into the existing IT help-desk and engineering service.
 - Achieve compliance across a range of issues including PCI and PSN, which the existing team have struggled to achieve.
 - Deliver a series of key baseline transformation projects that maximise the council's existing spend on IT and place the council in a strong position to transform services into the future.
 - Allow the council time to scope and determine the exact size and shape of IT support it requires into the future, so that any future longer-term solution will be appropriately sized and costed to the council's requirements.
- 2.5 The selection of Razorblue was made following a competitive procurement process through the Governments' Digital Marketplace that focused both on cost and quality.
- 2.6 Founded in 2006, Razorblue Ltd is a provider of end-to-end IT solutions for business. Headquartered in North Yorkshire, with a further five offices throughout the UK (including Manchester), Razorblue provides a wide portfolio of services to business and government bodies across the UK, including managed IT, connectivity, cloud services, telecoms, business software, cyber security and professional services. Razorblue is a Microsoft Gold partner with extensive skills in the Microsoft Modern Workplace and Azure stacks. The company employs over 160 members of staff across six regional offices and has and we have a wide range of field engineers available to service the wider UK. Razorblue offers a 24/7 operation, with a fully-staffed Network Operations Centre (NOC) based in Stockton-on-Tees. Razorblue has significant experience of supporting councils across the country, including Craven and Selby District Council, Ryedale District Council and Richmondshire District Council, as well as wider commercial experience.

3. Any Alternative Options:

- 3.1 To appoint new staff to fill vacant posts. This has been discounted due to risks of attracting and maintaining the required skill levels within the team and achieving the pace of transformation work, which requires a range of key skills unlikely to be found in a small cohort of staff.
- 3.2 Outsourcing the service. This has been discounted at the moment due to the time to market and need to ensure support is in place quickly for ongoing resilience/security. This option will however be reviewed in more detail prior to the end of the proposed contract period, along with other delivery model options for future cabinet decision.
- 3.3 Use of alternate procurement frameworks via Direct Award. Aspects of the support contract and transformation projects could have been granted to suppliers via existing frameworks. Whilst these may have saved time to appoint suitable support, there was no way of confirming that best value had been achieved in meeting the Council's requirements or that such arrangements would work alongside the existing team, fit

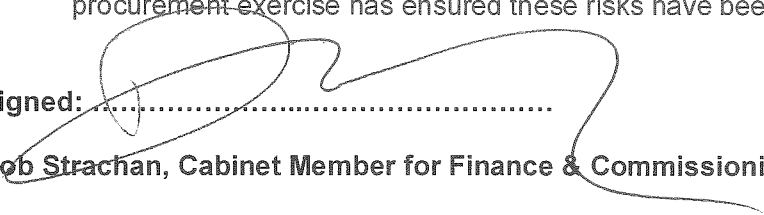
culturally with the ambitions of Being a Better Council and be sustainable. The procurement exercise has ensured these risks have been managed effectively.

Signed: 

Rob Strachan, Cabinet Member for Finance & Commissioning

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