Hull City Council

DECISION RECORD

Service Reference Number	MR/013/2025
Decision Maker The Leader of the Council	
Delegated Authority Leader exercising powers in accordance with article 3.1 of the constitution.	
Decision: 1) To procure and award two contracts, through the CCS Technology Products and Associated Services Framework (RM6098), for: i) Access switches: a one-year contract for the purchase of goods using request for quotation of those suppliers on the Framework. Contract value estimated at £250,000. ii) Core/Distribution Switches: a five-year contract procured through a further competition exercise for replacement of several key pieces of ICT network hardware and associated services (including maintenance) which are nearing end of life. Contract value estimated £300,000. The estimated spend is valued at £60,000 per annum.	
Reasons for the Decision: 1. The Council's current existing hardware for access and core distribution switches are over 10 years old and are considered end of life, there is no option for additional support. 2. The dangers of not updating hardware (and associated software) are considered far reaching and would potentially have significant consequences for the Council in the form of greater risks of cyber-attacks/data breach from the lack of updated security from non-supported hardware. 3. The Council seeks to procure modern network hardware which is aligned with current in-scope applications and general levels of network traffic. It is envisaged that an enhanced and modern network will deliver an improvement to overall performance and provide for a more efficient and reliable service as a result. 4. The updated infrastructure should demonstrate a level of cost savings achieved through lower power usages and the overall efficiencies of utilising modern equipment.	

Upgraded hardware is designed to be flexible allowing for easier upgrades in the future which is far more cost effective as opposed to attempting to adapt outdated systems. Keeping the old hardware would almost certainly result in the opposite being realised with the risk of downtime costs.

Nature of Decision:

Key - Forward Plan number 0006/25

Exemptions

Is the accompanying formal report (or other documentation where applicable) exempt? ***No***

Background and Supporting Information:

The Council's ICT computer network consists of two main types of network hardware: 'Core/Distribution Router/Switches' and 'Access' Switches.

Access Switches are used in buildings to deliver local connectivity and are connected into Core/Distribution Router/Switches which aggregate connections and provide 'fast switching' of traffic between destinations.

Core switches are generally located at the backbone (core layer) of a network. Their main purpose is to transfer large volumes of data at speed across the infrastructure of the network. In the Council as an example the core switches will connect all the distribution switches across buildings, managing data throughout the different areas.

Distribution switches sit on the layer between the core and access layers. Data is aggregated from multiple access switches and forwarded to the core layer, they often handle network routing and policy enforcement.

Router switches combine routing and switching functionalities and serve as a hybrid device that can route data across different networks and can switch data within the same network.

There are currently 6 Core/Distribution switches in use, 3 large ones at the Primary and Secondary data centres and 3 small ones at key sites on the network. There are approximately 300 Access switches delivering connectivity to all users across the ICT network.

ICT staff refresh network hardware every 5-10 year as equipment comes to its end of life at which point support ceases, being that it is no longer supported at an industry level. It is considered prudent therefore for IT to replace to ensure that the integrity of the Council's network is compliant with industry improvements/enhancements.

Under normal circumstances replacing core switches requires significant downtime as the old switches are required to be powered down and removed and then the replacement switches built and physically installed to replace them. However, due to the pending relocation of the primary Data centre there is a requirement that further parallel work will be required to reduce downtime.

The CCS Technology Products and Associated Services Framework (RM6098) has been identified as a compliant route for procurement of the above switches, although the process to procure varies. It is intended to procure the Access switches on the basis of pricing, where the Council will identify the specification for product and seek supplier who offers best value. With respect to the Core Distribution switches a full competitive tendering process is sought, seeking to obtain both best price and quality and quality.

Options considered

1- **Undertake a competitive procurement exercise via CCS Framework RM6098 (Preferred option)**

   This option will safeguard the Councils network infrastructure for the next 8-10 years allowing for modern, reliable, and efficient infrastructure to be in situ. The decision to undertake a procurement activity will enable competitive tender exercise which will enable the council to consider a tender/quotation which will deliver the best overall quality and price.

2- **Direct award to a specific supplier:**

   This is not the preferred option; in the event a specific supplier was nominated to provide the services the Council would not be able to ensure best value for the provision of the goods.

3- **Do nothing:**

   This option is not recommended– The Council's hardware equipment will ultimately become unsupported by the manufacturer in due course placing the Council at risk for the basic operations of PCs, Multi-Functional devices etc.

   Older network hardware will not be optimised for the demands of today. Older hardware is more inefficient in regard to overall energy usage therefore exposing the council to a higher cost base. Older hardware is also prone to failing which in turn may increase outages and risk for HCC staff and customers alike.

Equalities Impact Information: Does the decision have relevance to equality or affect any group with protected characteristics?	**NO**

Contact Officer: Gareth Baker – Team Manager (Unified Comms)

Chief Officer Comments

Comments of the Director of Legal Services and Partnerships (Monitoring Officer)

The Proposal to undertake a competitive procedure using the CCS Framework RM6098 for the Council's requirement for Access and Core/Distribution switches is noted. The use of the CCS framework is compliant as a route to procurement under the Council's constitution and the Public Procurement Act 2023 and Public Procurement Regulations (2015) [GL]

Comments of the Director of Finance and Transformation (Section 151 Officer)

The decision to commence procurement of the Access Switches and Core/Distribution switches, required to replace outdated network equipment, can be supported on the basis that the works are planned, and the cost will be met from the ICT capital budget on a spend to save basis. The planned expenditure is not expected to exceed the threshold of £250k in any one financial year, however, if during the procurement process this changes, then the governance route of a key decision will be followed prior to awarding any contracts. (TW)

Comments of the Assistant Director of Organisation Development & Human Resources and compliance with the equality act

There are no staffing or equality issues arising from this decision.KH

Comments of the Deputy Leader of the Council

I support the decision to commence procurement Access Switches and Core/Distribution switches as detailed. Should the cost exceed the threshold for governance of key decisions in any one year then the key decision route will need to be followed prior to any award of contracts.

Scrutiny Comments

Due to this being a standard Procurement exercise with a relatively low cost implication, and it is presumed that Corporate Procurement Rules will be followed, this decision has not been subject to pre-decision scrutiny. (Ref. Sc8521 (FH))

Exceptional Circumstances:	
Is the decision record currently exempt from publication at the point of decision?	***No***

Signature of Decision Maker:

Signed: **Signature confirmed**

Date signed: **7.3.25**

FOR COMPLETION BY THE SCRUTINY OFFICE:	
Date published on CMIS:	**10/03/2025**
Can the decision be called in?	***Yes***
Date decision comes into force	**18/03/2025**