

Notice of KEY Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Wifinity – Wi-Fi as a Service
Decision Maker:	Kathy Freeman Strategic Director of Resources
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Paul Middleton – Cabinet Member for Digital, Transformation and Customer Services
ELT Lead:	Kathy Freeman Strategic Director of Resources
Report Author and contact details:	Gayle Kipling ICT Programme Manager gayle.kipling@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	<p>This project directly contributes to the “Enabling a resident-focussed and resilient Council” and supports the objectives to:</p> <p>Manage our systems and data well and be a data driven organisation.</p> <p>Manage the council’s response to climate change and the challenges it presents, taking action to become carbon neutral by 2040</p>
Financial summary:	The contract for a Wi-Fi as a service solution with Wifinity will be £835,000 for a 5-year contract, with a break clause at the end of year 3

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Reason decision is Key	Expenditure or saving (including anticipated income) of £500,000 or more
Date notice given of intended decision:	19/03/2025
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Board
Is it an urgent decision?	No
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	No

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

☐ People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well

☐ Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy.

☒ Resources -Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council Place.

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Director of IT, Digital and Customer Service/The Strategic Director of Resources is recommended to approve:

A contract award with a value of £835,000 to Wifinity Ltd via Crown Commercial Services Framework RM 6116 (Network Services 3) to supply, support and maintain Wi-Fi as a Service for a term of 5 years from the 08/05/2025 to 07/05/2030.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

3.3 Scheme of Delegation – functions delegated to officers

Scheme 3.3.3

Powers common to all Strategic Directors:

4. Contracts

4.2 To award all contracts with a total contract value of below £1,000,000 other than contracts covered by Contract Procedure Rule 16.3

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. Our current on-premises private internet network uses a traditional perimeter-based security model, routing all network traffic through a central data centre. This assumes that all internal users and devices are safe, which no longer applies in a modern hybrid work environment, and increases our risk exposure to cyber threats.
2. This model was designed before the cloud-first, mobile workforce era, and often struggles to meet the organisation's needs to support the adoption of modern cloud-based applications and workflows. With cloud applications becoming increasingly common, the centralised approach impedes innovation with the IT team potentially becoming a bottleneck as network changes are often needed to enable the exploration of new technologies.
3. Monitoring and managing the private network has become increasingly complex over time, particularly as we've adapted it on an ad-hoc basis to keep pace with the changing organisational demands and technology landscape. This is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain and support, as it requires a high level of expertise combined with knowledge about the nuanced configuration of the local environment.
4. The Council must also redesign its network to achieve technical separation from the London Borough of Newham following the decision to cease operating the shared One Source ICT

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Service. Investment is required to ensure staff can continue accessing IT services once the shared arrangements with Newham have ended.

5. The Council has decided to adopt a modern zero-trust network model, where security is continuously enforced. Every site will connect users directly to the internet using commodity broadband lines or the Council's investment in fibre connectivity.

6. A Wi-Fi as a Service (WaaS) solution provided by Wifinity Ltd with centralised control will provide seamless, secure access. The new service will be available for use by staff, members, partners, and the public. This will improve user experience and simplify network management by offering consistent connectivity standards and security policies across locations.

7. The approach is complementary to the work underway to move the Council's locally hosted systems and data to the public cloud from where these too can be securely presented and accessed using the internet.

8. An analysis of the estimated cost of delivering the new centrally managed Wi-Fi solution at 40 larger sites over a five-year period has been completed.

9. The total cost includes both one-off implementation costs and ongoing operational costs. The analysis carried out as part of the formation of the business case shows that the WaaS model is more cost-effective compared to an in-house approach.

10. In order to determine the best solution for the council, a mini competition was held to identify suppliers willing to be part of a proof of concept with a view to undertaking the implementation across the network, should they be chosen to do so. Wifinity was one of those suppliers and following the evaluation of the proof of concept, from a user, technical and value for money perspective, were identified as the right partner for this piece of work.

11. Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework agreements have been structured to ensure regulatory procurement compliance for public sector organisations. Frameworks help public and third sector buyers to procure goods and services from a list of pre-approved suppliers, with agreed terms and conditions and legal protection. As Wifinity Ltd are on the CCS RM6116 (Network 3) framework, the contract would be awarded through this process.

12. The cost model proposed smooths out the initial cost of implementation over the 5 year contract term and represents the best value option for the Council. If this term was reduced then the year on year costs would need to increase to cover the supplier's initial implementation costs.

13. The implementation is expected to take approximately six months following the contract award.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The Council considered the following options:

Do nothing:

By doing nothing, the Councils would be unable to split from one source & each other, which is necessary to achieve complete sovereignty over the council's Information Technology estate.

1. In House solution:

Deliver the service using an in house team and physical hardware. WaaS providers benefit from economies of scale, allowing them to offer services at a lower cost than an in-house team could achieve. This makes the in-house approach less economically viable as it is

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circa 35% more costly. The existing network team has decreased in size, and attracting skilled engineers has been challenging. Outsourcing these services reduces the workload on the internal IT team, allowing them to focus on strategic initiatives rather than routine network operations.

2. Alternative supplier:

A proof of concept was carried out which compared the offerings of Wifinity and a reseller of Wi-Fi Services. Though the pilot identified that Wifinity offered the better overall experience, both providers were asked to quote to provide the service. The alternative supplier, who themselves would have needed to rely on a 3rd party to provide the service, were a more expensive solution when compared to either the In House model or the Wifinity model.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

None

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Gayle Kipling

Designation: ICT Programme Manager

Signature: *Gayle Kipling*

Date: 03/04/2025

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Legal Implications Crown Commercial Services Framework RM 6116 (Network Services 3)

- 1.1.1 This report seeks approval to award a contract via the RM6116 (Network Services 3) CCS framework to Wifinity Ltd for the Council's internet services.
- 1.1.2 The Council has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual can do, subject to any statutory constraints on the Council's powers.
- 1.1.3 The value of the contract is £835,000. This is above the services threshold for the purpose of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015). The contract is therefore subject to the full rigours of the PCR.
- 1.1.4 The RM6116 CCS Framework is a PCR 2015 compliant framework, which as a local authority the Council is permitted to call off from. The proposed award is therefore PCR compliant.
- 1.1.5 The body of this report confirms that officers have undertaken a route to procure via the Framework, and in accordance with the rules of that agreement, the procurement process is compliant and the Council may award the contract to Wifinity Ltd.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This report is seeking approval from the Strategic Director of Resources for a contract award with a value of up to £0.835m to Wifinity Ltd via Crown Commercial Services to supply, support and maintain Wi-Fi as a service for a term of 5 years from 8th of May 2025 to 7th of May 2030.

In order to implement the new solution there will be internal resourcing costs of £0.198m

Total costs are summarised below:

Item	Amount £m
One-off Implementation cost	0.198
On-going cost (£167k x 5 years)	0.835
Total	1.033

The current on-premises private network is end of life and unsupported, which means that there is no proactive patching from the vendors anymore switches and firewalls are no longer receiving feature and security patches, which elevates the cyber risk to the Council. It also means that the hardware is more likely to fail over time, leading to elongated service outage, while replacement parts are sought. As such the capital programme contains within it network refresh funding of £2.16m. By opting for the Wi-Fi as a service model a minimum of £1.7m of network refresh funding will no longer be required. The interest and MRP costs associated with this £1.7m of planned spend would each be 5% per year equating to £0.17m. The cost of

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this capital spend would have been met by a centrally held revenue budget which can now be used to fund the proposed revenue based model.

The remaining £0.46m of network refresh budget will be used to fund the £0.198m implementation costs above with the £0.262m balance being kept aside for any emergency remedial and decommissioning activities.

It is acknowledged that the revenue budget held by the Council to fund the cost of capital is a central budget, whilst the cost of the Wifinity contract will fall to the ICT service's budget. If necessary, this could be remedied by way of a virement.

In order to minimise the disruption to the Council, there is likely to be a period of dual running of approx. 6 months where the current arrangements continue to be in place whilst the new Wi-Fi as a service solution is implemented. Owing to the aforementioned fact that the existing solution has little in the way of revenue costs, this period of dual running is not expected to present an additional burden to revenue budgets.

The new Wi-Fi as a Service contract will bring with it other benefits such as improved security and efficiency as well as being contiguous with the Council's migration to the cloud and technological disaggregation from oneSource.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The recommendations made do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is usually carried out and on this occasion this isn't required

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The Council seeks to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all in all situations.

There are no equalities and social inclusion implications and risks associated with this decision

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The recommendation made does not give rise to any identifiable implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce in terms of health and wellbeing.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no environment or climate change implications regarding this procurement

Wifinity as an organisation have committed to being carbon neutral by 2030.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

OneSource ICT Decoupling and creation of a Sovereign IT Service for Havering Report



OneSource ICT
Decoupling and crei

Delegated authority has been granted under section 2.1.4 of the OneSource ICT Decoupling and creation of a Sovereign IT Service for Havering report approved at Cabinet on 13/03/2024.

[Decision - OneSource ICT Decoupling and creation of a Sovereign IT Service for Havering](#)

APPENDICES

None

Key Executive Decision

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Kathy Freeman

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title: Strategic Director of Resources

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date: 09/05/2025

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____