

Notice of NON KEY Executive Decision containing exempt information

This Executive Decision Report is part exempt and Appendix A is not available for public inspection as it contain) or relates to exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. It is exempt because it refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Subject Heading:	Direct award of contract subscription with Forfront Limited (e-shot) through the G-Cloud framework
Decision Maker:	Andrew Blake-Herbert, Chief Executive
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Ray Morgon, Leader of the Council
ELT Lead:	Andrew Blake-Herbert, Chief Executive
Report Author and contact details:	<i>Benjamin Vaughan</i> : 01708 431 403 / benjamin.vaughan@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	This is to deliver savings and modernise the Council's email newsletter service while protecting business continuity of the Council's email newsletter service to enable the Council to communicate and engage effectively and consistently with residents, businesses and stakeholders as set out in the Communications Strategy.
Financial summary:	The total contract value for 36 months of £49,800 with an option to extend by a further 12 months at £14,250 to be funded from existing budget. This will

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	<p>deliver a saving against existing annual contract cost of £31,000 as well as providing additional functionality and benefits. The price breakdown is included in the G-Cloud Call off contract which is attached as an exempt appendix.</p> <p>This cost does not require any additional funding and will be covered from existing budget. In addition, this contract will provide a predicted saving from Granicus – the Council's current email newsletter contract platform – which for 2024/25 was £31,000 per annum.</p> <p>The e-shot platform will also provide new income generation opportunities with a built-in advertising function in newsletter templates (in partnership with CAN Digital).</p>
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny Board
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	The decision will be exempt from call in as it is a Non key Decision

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

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well
X

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy X

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council X

Place an X as appropriate

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This decision seeks approval to procure and award a new contract with Forfront Limited for the e-shot email newsletter platform – via direct award through the G-Cloud framework for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further 12 months, at a total cost over 4 years of £64,050, commencing on 19 May 2025.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Scheme 3.3.3

Powers common to all Strategic Directors

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

The Council currently has an existing contract with Granicus for the govdelivery platform - which ends on the 21st June 2025. For 2024/25 this contract cost the Council £31,000. The service is required therefore the Council needs to re-procure a platform.

This decision seeks approval to procure a new contract with Forfront Limited for the e-shot email newsletter platform – via direct award through the G-Cloud framework – Lot 2: Cloud software. Two other platforms Govdelivery and Campaign Master are also within Lot 2. Neither provide the same value for money and income opportunities with CAN Digital (as outlined below) and therefore are not considered suitable for the Council's needs.

Forfront offers a far more competitive contract and the rates will remain fixed for the duration of the contract. This means it will improve business continuity with the Council's critical email newsletter service.

E-shot is not only more competitive – it also provides enhanced functionality and benefits. This includes:

- A User-friendly dashboard
- Embed video options
- Edited sent bulletins
- Up to 100k subscribers
- Income generation opportunities through built-in advertising in partnership with CAN Digital. This is in addition to the £17k per year organic advertising income our email newsletters (including Living in Havering) currently generate.

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- UK based customer support (Granicus is US based). This will provide comms officers better real-time support and response rates, training and skills to improve the quality of our email newsletters and grow our audience and reach.

This decision should be taken to secure a more competitive and modern platform for the Council's email newsletter service – enhancing output and to ensure more consistent effective and critical communications with residents, businesses and stakeholders.

The Council's email newsletter service (including our flagship Living in Havering residents' e-bulletin) is our most popular and effective communications channel. This decision will enhance the Council's ability to effectively communicate and engage with its communities. The decision will also generate estimated savings over 3 years of £50k plus the opportunity to generate additional income beyond the organic annual advertising income – which for 2024/25 was £17k.

We researched other competitors and none of them meet our requirements. As mentioned above our current service with Granicus is overpriced and does not now offer the functionality we now need. We have also spoken to other local authorities and assessed the market and none include a built-in advertising function partnering with CAN Digital who the Council already have an arrangement with, for advertising for the Council's website. Procuring E-shot means we can build on this partnership with CAN and increase advertising revenue.). Therefore E-shot was considered to be the best option for both value and functionality and also the only service to offer additional income generation opportunities.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not buying in a service is not an option as it would mean we would not have the ability to send email newsletters to our residents to keep them updated on important service changes, news and information, plus also track open rates and engagement.

Outlook is not suitable for this purpose because it does not provide the option for newsletter templates, has no analytics (unable to track open rates or engagement) and is not GDPR compliant for mass communications.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Not applicable

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

Name: Benjamin Vaughan

Designation: Deputy Head of Communications (Media & Campaigns)

Signature:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large capital 'B' followed by a stylized, cursive flourish that ends in a dot.

Date: 8 April 2025

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

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. None of the constraints on the Council's Section 1 power are engaged by this decision

This report seeks authorisation to make a direct award to Forfront via the G Cloud 14 Framework, Lot 2. The proposed value of this Contract is £49,800 for a period of 3 years, with an option to extend for an additional 12 months. This is below the threshold for services in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR).

A call off from an active, fit for purpose framework under Regulation 33 PCR is a permissible route to procurement. The proposed award also complies with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules 20.4.

For the reasons set out above, the Council may award the contract.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This report is seeking approval for Chief Executive to approve a 3-year contract award from 19 May 2025 to 18 April 2028 with a value of £49,800 via G-Cloud framework to Forfront Limited for the e-shot email newsletter platform.

The price breakdown is included in the G-Cloud Call off contract which is attached as an exempt appendix.

This cost will be met from within existing revenue budget in Communication. The contract is expected to deliver savings and modernise the council's email newsletter service while protecting business continuity. Specifically, it will provide a predicted saving compared to Granicus, the council's current email newsletter contract platform, which cost £31,000 for the financial year 2024/25.

Additionally, the e-shot platform offers new income generation opportunities through a built-in advertising function in newsletter templates, in partnership with CAN Digital. Transitioning from the current provider, Granicus, to Forfront Limited offers enhanced functionality including a user-friendly dashboard, video embedding options, and UK-based customer support. These features will improve the quality of the council's email newsletters and ensure better real-time support and response rates. The projected income generation opportunities will be used to offset costs and potentially increase revenue.

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

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The recommendations made in this report 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

Note here the equalities and social implications of, and risks relating to, the proposed decision.

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, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council demonstrates its commitment to the Equality Act in its decision-making processes, the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and employment practices concerning its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of all Newham residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

This decision does not require an EHIA.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The decision would ensure a cheaper, improved and consistent email newsletter service. E-bulletins are a key communications channel to promote the council's Climate Change Action Plan; encourage behaviour change with residents, businesses and stakeholders.

» *Climate Change Committee Guidance (haverling.gov.uk)*

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Not applicable

APPENDICES

Cost Breakdown (Exempt)

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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

Delete as applicable

Proposal NOT agreed because

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Andrew Blake-Herbert

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title: Chief Executive

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date: 2nd May 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 _____

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