

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Contract Award to Thomson Reuters for Online Legal Research Platform
Decision Maker:	Gavin Milnthorpe Deputy Director of Legal and Governance
Cabinet Member:	Chris Wilkins. Cabinet Member for Finance
SLT Lead:	Gavin Milnthorpe Deputy Director of Legal and Governance
Report Author and contact details:	Jo Swinton- Bland, Head of Business Operations, Legal and Governance Email: jo.swintonbland@onesource.co.uk
Policy context:	Enabling a resident focused and resilient council. Manage resources well.
Financial summary:	The spend for the London Borough of Havering over three years will be £91,016 (net), based on up to 30 users.
Relevant OSC:	
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	It is a non-key decision by a member of staff

Non-key Executive Decision

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

Support residents to stay well and safe	<input type="checkbox"/>
A great place to live ,work and enjoy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enabling a resident focused and resilient council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

For the reasons set out in the report, the Deputy Director of Legal and Governance is recommended to agree to:

- The award of a contract for an online legal research platform to Thomson Reuters Solutions on behalf of the London Borough of Havering for a period of three years at a cost of £91,016 commencing on 01 December 2025.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3.3.3 Responsibility for Functions Delegated to Officers

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. This delegation shall include the ability to extend or vary a contract up to and including a value of £1,000,000 (provided that the extension is in line with the existing contractual provisions.)

Para 4.2 shall be delegated subject to a financial limit of £100,000 as agreed by the Strategic Director for Resources on 1 August 2024

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The legal service requires access to an online legal platform for research purposes to assist it in effectively and accurately advising and drafting documents for departments within the Council. The legal teams advise on all areas of law including property, planning, enforcement, contracts, procurements, company law, children social care, adult social care and litigation. All the teams utilise the online legal research platform.

The London Borough of Havering has a current contract with Thomson Reuters which expires on 30 November 2025.

The London Borough of Havering is a member of the London Boroughs Legal Alliance (LBLA). The procurement was carried out by the LBLA inviting Thomson Reuters and Lexis Nexis, the only two viable providers in the market that the LBLA are aware of having carried out market research, to provide competitive pricing based on members' stated user numbers, and on the historic discounts provided to LBLA members under two previous procurement processes 3 years, and 6 years ago.

A summary of the process followed by the LBLA is attached in Appendix 1.

The LBLA core packages were designed to include those products required by the majority of LBLA members, as agreed with the members.

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Due to the proprietary nature of the service being procured, the market is very limited. The publishing houses own the products and the rights to use them, so the councils have to buy the products directly from them. The councils are purchasing off the shelf products which include packages that the councils require to effectively deliver legal advice in services within both boroughs.

Officers within the legal service have undertaken a demo of the Lexis Nexis product. However, feedback from officers is that the product does not have the same precedents or the full range of legal research books that is contained in the current Thomson Reuters package, and that it would be extremely difficult to change from these precedents used by the property team at this time; any such change being resource intensive and costly in terms of delays caused to the property teams processes by more queries from outside parties etc.

The London Borough of Havering currently has up to 30 users a year subscribing to the service and the total spend over the next 3 years under Thomson Reuters will be £91,016 (£109,219 including VAT).

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

1. Not to purchase an online legal platform – officers in the legal teams need access to this to provide up to date advice and draft documents. No access could present financial and reputational risks to the council if legal advice given was not up to date or relevant case law was not considered.
2. Undertake an in-house procurement – as members of the LBLA, the boroughs benefit from economies of scale when the LBLA conducts a procurement on behalf of its members. If the Councils carried out their own procurement it is likely that the charges would be higher. Before the LBLA conducted this procurement on behalf of its member boroughs, costs for one source in the provision of hard copy and electronic publications was £20k a year higher than at present.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

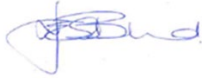
None

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

Name: Jo Swinton-Bland

Non-key Executive Decision

Designation: Head of Business Operations, Legal and Governance

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. B. D.', is centered within the box.

Signature:

Date: 28/11/25

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has the power to procure and award this contract under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which allows the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

The Council also 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 s.1 power are engaged by this decision.

The Council is a Contracting Authority for the purposes of the Procurement Act 2023 (PA 2023). The value of the contract is below the PA 2023 threshold for services therefore this Contract is not caught by the full PCR regime. The procurement must comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR). A waiver to the CPR requirement to compete a contract of this value on a minimum 3 quotes basis has been granted.

The Council is a best value authority. As set out in this report, the rates offered are preferential due to the Council's membership of the LBLA. For this reason, officers consider the direct award to represent best value for the Council.

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This report is seeking approval from the Deputy Director of Legal Services to award a contract for an online legal research platform to Thomson Reuters Solutions on behalf of the London Borough of Havering for a period of three years, commencing on 1st December 2025 at a cost of £91,016.

The cost will be funded from the oneSource legal services budget. The current cost of this service is £27,356. The annual cost of the new contract is £28,725 in year 1 and will be subject to a 5% annual inflationary uplift each year, as summarised in the table below:

Year	£
1	28,725
2	30,621
3	31,670
Total	91,016

The contract was procured via LBLA. Value for money was delivered by aggregating the contract across a number of London Boroughs. The only alternative supplier did not provide the same breadth of service officer as Thomson Reuters.

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Were the cost not to be incurred, the service would be severely impeded in delivering high quality, consistent and timely legal advice and guidance. The service would be unable to access up to date case law and precedents as well as industry standard contract templates.

The service requires up to 30 accounts as all members of staff regularly access and make use of this service offering in their day-to-day work.

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

None

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising its functions. This includes the provisions sought in this report, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not. This is the public sector equality duty. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

“Due regard” is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances. The weight to be attached to each need is a matter for the Council. As long as the Council is properly aware of the effects and has taken them into account, the duty is discharged.

There are no equalities implications or risks arising in the use of external legal services.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Use of online resources supports reduction of paper

HEALTH AND WELLBEING CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

LBLA paper on the procurement process
Waiver 20.11.25

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 LBLA paper on the procurement process

Non-key Executive Decision

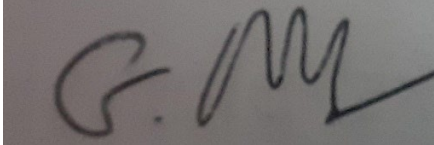
Part C – Record of decision

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: Gavin Milnthorpe

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title: Deputy Director of Legal and Governance

Date:02.12.25

Lodging this notice

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

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____

Appendix 1

Summary of LBLA Legal Libraries Procurement Process, 2025

Lexis Nexis and Thomson Reuters are the only two viable suppliers of Legal Libraries for LBLA members. LBLA members have existing contracts with one or both of Lexis Nexis and Thomson Reuters for the provision of Legal Libraries. Some of these contracts have been previously agreed via an LBLA joint procurement in 2022, while other contracts have been agreed separately by members outside of the terms negotiated by the LBLA. Kennedy Cater was engaged to lead the re-procurement of the Legal Libraries contracts for LBLA members.

Between February 2025 and April 2025, Kennedy Cater;

- surveyed members, both Practice Managers and Legal Libraries users, on their experience of their Legal Libraries providers, Lexis Nexis and Thomson Reuters, and their requirements for the re-procured provision.
- compiled details of members' usage data for Lexis Nexis and Thomson Reuters, provided by the suppliers.
- held a workshop with Practice Managers to discuss participation and the required specification.

Between May and July 2025, members provided further feedback regarding the required specification of the contract and the specific titles sought. By July 2025, 21 LBLA members confirmed participation in the project.

On 8th August 2025, Kennedy Cater provided Lexis Nexis and Thomson Reuters with details of each member's required user numbers, as a basis for the pricing, and requested proposed pricing for suppliers' respective LBLA 'core package', based on members' requested specification, plus suppliers' proposed pricing for certain listed upgrades and add-ons. Kennedy Cater requested details of suppliers' list price and any volume discounts, both per member (if, for example, a number of add-ons are purchased) and as a consortium (if, for example, multiple members purchase a particular title).

In September 2025, both Lexis Nexis and Thomson Reuters provided their pricing proposals to Kennedy Cater for review.

- On 17th September 2025, and subsequently on 25th September 2025, Lexis Nexis provided details of its' provisional pricing to Kennedy Cater, based on a price per user and a collective price dependent on all 21 members contracting with Lexis Nexis. Pricing included a price per user for the proposed LBLA package, plus a price per user for an upgrade to Lexis's AI provision.
- On 29th September 2025, Thomson Reuters provided details of its' proposed pricing to Kennedy Cater, based on the bands of users provided by Kennedy Cater and on the members' current contract, including existing subscriptions for additional titles.

On 15th October 2025, Kennedy Cater provided members with details of Lexis Nexis's and Thomson Reuters' proposed pricing, including a price comparison between suppliers, for both the core packages and upgrade options.

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On 9th October and 24th October 2025, Lexis Nexis provided demos of their AI function and proposed LBLA package to members. Some LBLA members subsequently began free 7-day trials with Lexis Nexis. On 27th October 2025, Kennedy Cater held a further meeting with Practice Managers to discuss the suppliers' proposals.

On 28th October 2025, Lexis Nexis provided revised pricing to Kennedy Cater, stating that the previous pricing was provisional and should not have been shared with members. The revised pricing was significantly more expensive. Kennedy Cater held a number of conferences with Lexis Nexis with a view to reinstating the previous pricing, however Lexis confirmed that this pricing was no longer available. On 29th October 2025, Kennedy Cater shared the revised pricing with members and held a meeting with Practice Managers on 30th October 2025 to discuss next steps.

Both Lexis Nexis and Thomson Reuters set a deadline of 14th November 2025 for members to accept their proposals.

Procurement approach:

Below-threshold:

- Where the contract value is above £30,000 and below £214,904 (including VAT)
- Members will need to publish a '**Contract Details Notice (UK7)**', "as soon as reasonably practicable after entering into a notifiable below-threshold contract"