

## Notice of Non-Key Executive Decision

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Award of contract for consultation platform contract to Delib Limited
<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Marcus Chrysostomou Head of Communications and Engagement
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Ray Morgan Leader of the Council
<b>ELT Lead:</b>	Marcus Chrysostomou Head of Communications and Engagement
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Sue Verner Customer Insight Officer <a href="mailto:sue.verner@haverling.gov.uk">sue.verner@haverling.gov.uk</a> 01708 434420
<b>Policy context:</b>	This report seeks permission to award a contract to Delib Limited to provide Citizen Space as the Council's consultation platform. This ensures a continuous programme of engagement to better understand and seek the views of Havering's residents; that a consistent approach is provided for consultation and minimises the risk of legal challenges.
<b>Financial summary:</b>	<p>The value of the contract is £13,575.15 (ex. VAT) per annum, which is a total contract value of £40,725.45 (ex. VAT) over the full three-year term.</p> <p>When procuring a three-year contract, LBH take advantage of a multi-year 3% discount. The Local Standard package without the discount is £13,995.00 (ex VAT) per annum.</p>
<b>Relevant Overview &amp; Scrutiny Sub Committee:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Board.
<b>Is this decision exempt from being called-in?</b>	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***

This Executive Decision to procure Citizen Space as our consultation platform supports all three strategic pillars of the Council.

For **People**, it enables inclusive and accessible engagement, ensuring residents can share views that help shape services to keep them safe and well.

For **Place**, it fosters collaborative decision-making that enhances the quality of life in Havering, making it a great place to live, work and enjoy.

For **Resources**, it delivers a modern, efficient, and resilient consultation process, ensuring the Council remains resident-focused while optimising resources and strengthening organisational capability.

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**Part A – Report seeking decision**

**DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The report seeks approval from the Chief Executive to:

To award a service contract to Delib Limited, for providing the Council's consultation platform for a period of three years from February 2026 to January 2029 at a cost of £13,575.15 (ex. VAT) per annum, via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) G-Cloud 14 Lot 2 framework. Total contract amounts to £40,725.45 (ex. VAT) over three years.

**AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE**

Part 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. 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.)

**STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

This report seeks approval to award Delib Limited the contract for providing the Council's consultation platform for a period of three years, which includes relevant additional engagement tools as standard in order to continue to meet the Council's priorities.

The contract is due to commence on 13 February 2026. The platform is called Citizen Space and has been successfully used by the Council since 2019 (six years). During this time, the Council has run 735 engagement activities and reached 99,247 respondents providing valuable customer insight to aid decision-making, develop best practice, shape systems and improve service activities.

The procurement of Citizen Space as the Council's consultation platform will allow the continuity of service in engaging and consulting with the public and stakeholders. The consultation platform minimises the risk of legal challenge, which was stressed in debate led by Legal Services in 2018, stating that a consistent approach is needed for consultation, particularly where no audit trail could be provided. One of the benefits of having a centralised consultation platform is that responses are stored in one place and in accordance with the latest data protection legislation.

The provider has been chosen for several reasons, including:

- (1) Ensuring continuity of service as the system is already in place and utilised by 267 trained users across all teams and departments.
- (2) Ensuring overview of all consultations within the Council by using a centralised platform.
- (3) Providing the functionalities currently needed by the organisation in conducting formal and informal consultation.

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- (4) Providing unlimited users, teams and departments access and use at no extra cost so that any individual within the Council has the right tool available to conduct consultations.
- (5) Their experience and ability to provide customers with the tools needed to conduct consultations within the public sector and their 24/5 availability for help and training, advice and good practice examples.
- (6) The cost per annum of £13,575.15 (ex. VAT), which represents an increase of £3,580.15 (ex VAT) per annum from the last time LBH procured a new contract in February 2023, but now includes additional tools such as Geospatial and Dialogue as standard. These additional tools were added in February 2025 at additional cost met by external funding provided by the Insight, Policy and Strategy team for place-based engagement, by enabling maps and geospatial data capture to be added to an activity, as well as Dialogue for structured, constructive online conversations. They have proven to be effective and worthwhile. Furthermore, the cost per year is reduced by a multi-year 3% discount over three years.

Moreover, the decision to continue to use Citizen Space is also based on the strong performance of the software in providing a platform that users find intuitive and easy to understand, additional free resources such as support articles, an 'Aggregator' which is available for users to find inspiration from other public activities that are happening within Citizen Space around the world, Webinar sessions for training and best practice, a 'Knowledge Base' for technical queries and access to full telephone and email support every working day.

The consultation platform is tailored to Local Authority engagement best practice.

A number of options were reviewed in finding a suitable alternative to the current platform including market research and use of the CCS G-Cloud framework 14.

Following the steps set out in the CCS G-Cloud framework 14 guidance and a desktop evaluation, Delib Limited is the only supplier which has met the service requirements and offered the lowest cost, therefore demonstrating best value for money. It is therefore recommended to award the contract to Delib Limited, who are the current software solution.

The CCS G-Cloud 14 framework offers the option to directly award the contract. On this basis, Delib Limited was elected as the preferred supplier.

This approach avoids lengthy tender processes, accelerates delivery, and aligns with best practice. It also supports organisational objectives for cost efficiency, scalability, and compliance whilst maintaining continuity with a trusted supplier.

Switching to another platform would involve a full rebuild to incorporate brand integration resulting in the loss of consolidated insight data currently available in one place. It would also lead to higher software costs and the significant cost of change associated with retraining users, which would be resource-heavy and disruptive. This is not practical while staff are already adapting to organisational IT changes, making such a transition neither cost-effective nor operationally advisable at this time.

#### **Reasons for this request to be approved**

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It is in the Council's best interest to maintain continuity of this service by securing a new contract by 13 February 2026. Failure to agree the contract within this timeframe would require the Council to cease service provision, resulting in significant operational disruption. This would necessitate retraining staff on a new system, once procured, with the possibility of service areas using a non-compliant system in the interim, incurring substantial cost of change, additional financial outlay, and increased time and resource pressures. Such risks are unnecessary and would negatively impact service delivery and compliance.

### **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

#### **Stop providing the service**

The Council has a legal obligation to consult when taking action or making decisions which may affect interested parties such as their residents and to ensure that all personal data collected when consulting with stakeholders is in line with the controls of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). By ensuring that the Council has tailored consultation and engagement software in place safeguards compliance with GDPR and ensures that consultations are undertaken which follow best practice guidelines. This includes compliance with the four Gunning Principles, which act as a strong legal foundation from which the legitimacy of public consultations is assessed and are frequently referred to as a legal basis for judiciary review decisions.

#### **Provide the Service In-house**

By not supporting services to undertake consultations, surveys and offline activities using a central platform, this will mean that users will need to find alternative means of engaging online, such as free software like *Survey Monkey*. However, there are risks and limitations to this option as free software is not GDPR compliant, it does not act as a repository for data intelligence purposes, engagement practices will not be centrally checked and will therefore be inconsistent, it does not follow best practice guidelines and could leave the Council open to the risk of judicial review.

#### **To run a full procurement process for this contract**

The service decided against this option as it will take considerable time and additional funding via this route. It was also felt that the service should reduce costs, administrative processes and avoid the cost of change to maximise efficiencies. Calling off from an existing CCS Digital framework which allows for direct awards offered the most pragmatic, time efficient and economical solution for the service needs.

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**PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION**

There has been no formal consultation with stakeholders or the public. Discussions have taken place with a number of relevant key stakeholders in the process of reviewing a provider. The Insight Manager, the Head of Communications and Engagement, the Head of Communities and the Customer Insight Officer have been instrumental in the decision for the service's preferred outcome.

A DPIA and risk assessment has been completed and checked by Information Governance and approval has been granted by the Architecture Board.

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

Name: Sue Verner

Designation: Customer Insight Officer

Signature: Sue Verner

Date: 26 January 2026

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The Council has the power to award the contract under s111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits 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 may generally do subject to any statutory limitations. The recommendation sought within this report is in accordance with this power.

The estimated contract value is below the threshold for services under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR). The contract is therefore not subject to the full PCR regime. The PCR is relevant in this circumstance, as the framework was procured under these regulations and remains live.

As set out in this report, the contract was procured via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) G-Cloud 14 framework. Officers must ensure that the express provisions of the framework for selecting a supplier have been followed.

This framework permits selecting a supplier via a further competition or a direct award.

As set out in this report, officers have followed the framework process for selecting a supplier via direct award, and now recommend awarding the contract to Delib Limited.

The Council is a Best Value authority and has a duty to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness” As set out in this report, officers consider the proposals achieve Best Value.

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

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The report is seeking approval from the Strategic Director of Resources to award a contract to Delib Ltd, for consultation software for a period of three years from February 2026 to January 2029 at a cost of £13,575.15 (ex. VAT) per annum, via Crown Commercial Services (CCS). Total contract amounts to £40,725.45 (ex. VAT) over three years.

The costs will be funded from the communications budget. The cost of the contract in 25/26 was £13,995 (£9,995 for the core contract plus £4,000 for the geospatial module). The geospatial module is now included in the main contract cost as standard. By entering into a three-year contract the Council benefits from a 3% multi-year discount saving making the total contract cost for 26/27 £13,575.15 (ex VAT).

The Council plans on extending the use of Citizen Space over the coming year as part of wider work to improve customer service and satisfaction. The cost of the software is not predicated on the number of users or consultations and therefore there is no risk of it increasing over the duration of the contract. The cost is not subject to annual inflationary uplift per year.

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Market research found that Delib Ltd were the only supplier to meet all the Council's requirements and were also the lowest cost supplier. Awarding via CCS G-Cloud 14 avoids the administrative cost associated with a procurement exercise. Furthermore, continuing to use the same supplier avoids service disruption and costs which would be associated with changing supplier (implementation, configuration, training and migration of data).

Although there are types of consultation software which exist at no extra cost (e.g. Survey Monkey and Microsoft Forms) these solutions are not designed specifically for public sector consultation. As a result, they do not have the same level of integrated functionality as standard (eg built in analysis and reporting, site-overview/management dashboard and geospatial features). The value of having these features as standard is deemed to outweigh the annual cost and is likely to be less expensive than developing alternative solutions in-house.

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

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**

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

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.

Furthermore, the proposed consultation platform is not expected to generate any negative equalities or social inclusion impacts. It supports the Council's legal duty to consult by enabling broad, privacy assured online participation for residents and other interested parties. To prevent digital exclusion, paper and assisted digital responses can be entered into the same system so that offline feedback is captured and included in the overall analysis.



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In addition, built in equality monitoring allows the Council to understand who is and is not being reached, helping to identify gaps in participation and target mitigation where needed. Overall, the software strengthens representative engagement and inclusive, evidence-based decision making.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

There are no anticipated or identified environmental or climate change risks associated with this proposal.

The use of consultation software supports the Council's commitment to the Havering Climate Change Action Plan (HCCAP) by providing an efficient and sustainable method of engaging with residents.

Digital consultation reduces reliance on printed materials and physical meetings, thereby lowering paper usage and associated carbon emissions. By enabling inclusive and accessible engagement online, the platform helps the Council work collaboratively with communities to achieve climate targets while minimising environmental impact.

#### **HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The proposed procurement of consultation software provided by Delib Limited is aligned with the Council's commitment to Health in All Policies (HIAP) and is expected to have no negative impact on health or well-being.

On the contrary, it will support inclusive and equitable engagement by enabling the Council to fulfil its legal obligation to consult on decisions that may affect residents and other stakeholders.

The platform ensures broad accessibility by allowing online participation with anonymity, while also accommodating offline responses through integrated capture of paper submissions. This approach maximises opportunities for all voices to be heard.

Additionally, the software's equality monitoring functionality provides valuable insight into the reach and representation of diverse groups, helping the Council identify and address any gaps in engagement. By promoting transparency and inclusivity, the software contributes positively to community well-being and informed decision-making.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NONE

#### **APPENDICES**

NONE

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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.

#### **Details of decision maker**

Signed 

Marcus Chrysostomou  
Head of Communications and Engagement

Name:

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title:

Other manager title:

Date:

#### **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 \_\_\_\_\_