

Allerdale Borough Council

Executive Committee – 11 January 2023

Procurement of Elections Management and Electoral Registration System for Cumberland Council

Portfolio holder	Councillor M.Fitzgerald PH: Policy, Governance and People Resources
Report from	Sharon Sewell, Chief Officer (Place and Governance)
Wards affected	All Wards
Is this a key decision	Yes

1.0 The reason for the decision

From 01 April 2023, the Electoral Services functions of Copeland Borough Council, Allerdale Borough Council and Carlisle City Council will transfer to Cumberland Council. To provide Electoral Management and Electoral Registration functions the new Cumberland Council will require one dedicated Electoral Management System (EMS).

2.0 Recommendations

2.1.1 It is recommended that members,

- Approve the contract for the Electoral Management and Electoral Registration system being awarded to the supplier identified in Appendix A
- Note that the contract will transfer to Cumberland Council from Vesting Day (01 April 2023).

3.0 Background and Introduction

3.1 The Structural Changes Order (Cumbria) 2022, established that Cumbria will be administered by a single tier of Local Government. The area comprising Cumbria will be split into Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. The changes will come into force from 01 April 2023.

- 3.2 Currently the three district Councils that cover the area of Cumberland (Allerdale, Copeland, Carlisle City) operate with three separate Elections Management Systems, provided by three different suppliers.
- 3.3 In Westmorland and Furness, the district Councils (South Lakes, Barrow and Eden) operate with three separate Elections Management Systems, provided by two separate suppliers.
- 3.3 Each EMS system is also linked to Government IERDS (Individual Electoral Registration Digital Services) which allows Electors to manage their Electoral Registration online.
- 3.4 The new Cumberland Council will have an estimated electorate of 211200, and of these electors an estimated 40500 will be registered as postal voters, and a further 600 as proxy voters or special category electors

4.0 Content

- 4.1 The Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Elections workstream comprises of Elections Managers and colleagues from all six Cumbrian District Councils.
- 4.2 As Westmorland and Furness Council also require one consolidated EMS, the decision was made to work collaboratively on aspects of the procurement exercise, but that each new authority would undertake their own individual evaluation exercises.
- 4.3 Allerdale Borough Council are leading the procurement exercise for Cumberland Council and South Lakes District Council are leading the procurement exercise for Westmorland and Furness. The Elections LGR workstream also commissioned the services of a procurement consultancy to support the preparation of a detailed specification of requirements.
- 4.4 The invitation to tender was issued in August 2022 and the procurement was undertaken using Crown Commercial Services Framework RM3821 – Lot 2C – citizens services.
- 4.5 Working in collaboration with colleagues from ICT, Legal, Programme and Projects the invitation to tender (ITT) was issued in August 2022. The term of the contract is for an initial 3 years with the option of a 1-year extension.
- 4.6 Bidders were required to submit a response which included a response to Parts one and two of the ITT and to schedule 3 – pricing schedule. The criteria also noted the functionality required to manage upcoming legislative requirements as set out in the Elections Act 2022.
- 4.7 The evaluation included an assessment of functionality against a detailed statement of requirements, scored system demonstrations, an evaluation of tender price, and an assessment of the suppliers' responses to four method statements. The method statements included a proposed implementation plan, previous experience of migrating systems and teams and an understanding of the risks involved with the process.

4.8 The evaluation and scoring panel was comprised of the Elections Managers from each of the District Councils. Technical support was provided by the ICT workstream and the scoring was moderated by the LGR project team.

4.9 The preferred supplier is identified in Appendix A.

5.0 Alternative options

5.1 As the new Cumberland Council is required to have a combined register of electors, there is not a viable option to continue with three separate and individual EMS systems.

5.2 The decision to award the contract to an alternative bid is not recommended as outlined in Appendix A.

5.0 Delivery arrangements

5.1 After the award of the contract, the supplier will begin implementation as set out in the agreed project plan. The agreed date for implementation is June 2023 following local Parish Elections which are scheduled for May 2023.

5.2 The implementation project will require support from both the IT and Procurement workstreams but also from elections administrators from each District Council, with oversight from the LGR Programme Board, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

6.0 Implications and Impact

6.1 Finance/Resource implications

The cost of the proposals are split between one off implementation costs and annual software licences and fees. These are detailed in Appendix A; the estimated costs of the new EMS will be less than the costs currently being paid by each District Council combined.

6.2 Legal and governance implications

The procurement was undertaken using Crown Commercial Services Framework RM3821 – Lot 2C – citizens services. There is a provision for a direct award but this exercise has been run between all suppliers on the framework.

6.3 Risk analysis

A scored and mitigated risk log

Risk	Consequence	Controls required	Mitigated score
The new EMS is delayed/not implemented.	The new Cumberland Authority will not have a suitable EMS to support the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer in	The award of a contract to the successful tender as set out in Appendix A and EMS implemented as set	Low

	carrying out statutory duties.	out in defined project plan with adequate resourcing requirements	
The procurement is not conducted in compliance with legislation	Legal Challenges	Adequate support and expertise, provided from Legal, Procurement and IT workstreams	Low

6.4 Increasing satisfaction and service

The new EMS will provide one solution for the Cumberland Council in comparison with the existing situation of three separate EMS managing each district area. For electors and commercial customers, this reduces the need to liaise with each separate authority.

Appendices attached to this report

Appendix number	Title of appendix
A	Evaluation of Tenders

Background documents available

Name of background document	Where it is available

Report author(s) and contact officer(s):

Officer name Lee Jardine
Job title Senior Specialist - Elections
Email address lee.jardine@allerdale.gov.uk
Tel no. 01900 516845