

## Officer Decision Record – Executive Decision

If Key Decision: Decision Ref. No.

B083/21

### OFFICER DECISION RECORD <sup>i</sup>

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Annex 9 of the Council's Constitution <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are-and-what-we-do.aspx>)

**Subject: Award of Council Tax Review Framework Contract**

**Type of Decision:** Non-Executive

**Key Decision (Executive Functions only):** Yes

**Executive Member/Committee Chairman:** N/A

**Portfolio (Executive Functions only):** Bob Deering- Resources

**Officer Contact:** Nick Jennings

**Tel:** 07938 125297

#### 1. **Decision**

To award contracts to three separate companies/providers as part of a framework agreement to undertake reviews of council tax data held by district councils across Hertfordshire to detect/prevent fraud and error.

#### 2. **Reasons for the decision**

The framework has been designed in partnership with all the district councils across Hertfordshire. It allows each one of those councils to 'call-off' services from the framework, when they require, using the providers that are able to

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interface with their in-house systems and provide the best quality service as well as the best return on investment.

The providers have applied for various Lots within the framework with each Lot 'populated with a hierarchy of providers based on the scoring against pre-determined specifications.

There are therefore a number of providers who have been successful and will be included in the framework.

The County Council has arranged the framework, associate contracts with providers and MOU's with each district council to ensure use of the framework. The County Council will meet the full costs of the contract as it the largest beneficiary of council tax collected (approx 80% of council tax in Hertfordshire). The district councils will undertake the actual work with the provider and report to the County Council on the outcomes of this.

The framework developed allows for fully and part managed services as desired by district councils. Giving freedom and flexibility of how any review is undertaken.

It is anticipated that the framework will deliver between £500k and £1m in new council tax revenue in each year of the four year contract at a cost of between 4.4% and 5.5% to the County Council.

### **3. Alternative options considered and rejected**

Other options included allowing each district councils enter into separate agreements with provider, but the County Council would have been unable to control any costs.

If the County Council did not meet the full costs of the contract it is possible that some district councils would not undertake reviews themselves as they retain a smaller percentage of council tax collected and they would have to provided internal resources as well.

Other options considered and rejected were use of the National Fraud Initiative exercise and reliance of the Hertfordshire FraudHub. These were rejected as NFI only happens two yearly, relies on old data, the use of data is also very restricted and would require greater resources by the district council to resolve. The Herts-FraudHub was rejected as not all district councils in the County subscribe to this.

### **4. Consultation** *(see Summary of Requirements below)*

**Was any Councillor consulted?            Yes**

**If yes:**

No comments or concerns were raised by the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

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The Director Resources and AD Finance were both consulted and content for the contract to proceed to tender without wider consultation.

5. **Any conflict of interest declared by a councillor who has been consulted in relation to the decision**

No conflicts of interest have been declared.

Signed: Nick Jennings

Title: Head of Shared Anti-Fraud Service

Date: 18.8.2021

Copies of record to:

- All consultees
- hard & electronic copy (if required to be made available for public inspection) to Democratic Services Manager - Room 213 County Hall.<sup>ii</sup>

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**Summary of Requirements to Inform/Consult Councillors**

<b>Significance of Proposed Action</b>	<b>Controversial</b>	<b>Relevant Councillor(s) to be Consulted</b>
Technical/Professional/ Routine	No	No need to inform or consult councillors
Technical/Professional/ Routine	Yes	<b>Executive Functions:</b> Consult relevant Lead Executive Member and, where appropriate, Local Councillor <b>Non-Executive Functions:</b> Relevant Committee Chairman and, where appropriate, Local Councillor
Local	No	<b>Executive Functions:</b> Inform Lead Executive Member and Local Councillor <b>Non-Executive Functions:</b> Inform Local Councillor
Local	Yes	<b>Executive Functions:</b>

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		Consult Lead Executive Member and Local Councillor <b>Non-Executive Functions:</b> Consult Local Councillor
General or County-wide	No	<b>Executive Functions:</b> Consult relevant Lead Executive Member (s) <b>Non-Executive Functions:</b> Consult relevant Committee Chairman
General or County-wide	Yes	<b>Executive Functions:</b> Consult relevant Lead Executive Member (s) and the Leader of the Council <b>Non-Executive Functions:</b> Consult relevant Committee Chairman/Leaders all Political Groups