

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-001-2022/23

Date of meeting: 18 July 2022



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Internal Resource – Cllr. S Kane

Subject: Direct Award of the Print to Post Contract

**Responsible Officer: Dawn Baird (dbaird@eppingforestdc.gov.uk).
Christine Ferrigi (cferrigi@eppingforestdc.gov.uk).**

Democratic Services: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That PSL Print Management Limited is directly awarded the Print to Post contact for a period of 3 years, with the option to extend for a further 2 years on an annual basis through the Crown Commercial Services Framework.

Executive Summary:

The Council's Procurement Rules require a Cabinet decision to award any contract with a total value of over £1m when totalled over the life of the contract. Agreement is sought from Cabinet to directly award PSL Print Management Limited a 3-year contract with the option to extend for a further 2 years on an annual basis. PSL Print Management Limited has proved to be flexible and keen to work in partnership with EFDC during their pilot period. Our Procurement Team have confirmed they are still the best value option on the Crown Commercial Services Framework. Furthermore, teams have made significant investments in terms of time and resources in the Pilot, therefore it is undesirable to have to repeat this work with a new provider.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

- PSL Print Management Limited still provide best value for money on the Crown Commercial Services Framework;
- PSL Print Management Limited has proved to be an excellent supplier during the pilot period by being helpful, flexible and working in partnership with EFDC;
- Some teams have already invested greatly in terms of time and resource in this solution, so to change would create unnecessary work and pressure;
- EFDC's Procurement Team have researched and confirmed it is acceptable to directly award this Contract via the Crown Commercial Services Framework.

Other Options for Action:

To commence a full tender process. This option has been discounted as PSL Print Management Limited offer the best value for money under the Crown Commercial Framework when considering price and quality of service. During the initial procurement process and again more recently EFDC have researched Essex based print to post suppliers outside of the Crown Commercial Framework and although we found plenty of printing suppliers, none offered a print to post solution. Another reason for discounting a full tender process is due to the internal resource implications that would have on services that are currently using the solution. Using

Revenues and Benefits as an example, the initial set up and programming took hundreds of resource hours whilst they worked through variations of templates to set up. This was a very complex piece of work and that particular service alone would not have the resource capacity to repeat that work with another supplier, due working on other projects such as moving their ICT application to the cloud.

Another option considered is partnering with another local Council for a shared Reprographics service. This option has been discounted as the Council are yet to hear back since reaching out to Councils across Essex to initially find out who's Reprographics service remains in house. When the Council reached out a few years ago with the same query for outsourcing Council Tax annual billing, Uttlesford District Council were one of the only Councils to respond and when we offered to increase the volume of their current contract recently, they declined. EFDC were approached by Harlow District Council a couple of months ago as they are working through their own Accommodation Programme and are intending to implement a print to post solution themselves.

Report:

1. The Council is currently running an 18 month pilot with PSL Print Management Limited to provide a Print to Post Solution. The pilot is due to end in September 2022. The Council has been extremely satisfied with the service provided by PSL Print Management Limited as they have proved to be helpful, flexible and keen to work in partnership with EFDC.

2. Numerous teams are using the solution and the five most common pieces of correspondence being issued via the solution are rent statements, benefit letters, council tax bills & non-domestic rates bills (outside of annual billing) and council meeting agendas. The Council are reviewing opportunities to channel shift this correspondence where possible.

3. Spend for 21/22 was £126,319.54. As more services move to the PSL solution annual spend may increase for a period of time, however, budget holders have been tasked with reviewing their print spend on a regular basis to consider what their services are printing and why, to look to reduce that spend by digitalising where possible. As an example, Revenues and Benefits will research into the debt recovery module of their ICT application. We are also looking at ways to reduce costs with PSL, such as reviewing what we print in colour and making a switch to monochrome and reviewing the quality of the paper used to see if that can be reduced too. We are also moving items that currently fall under the budget of 'other external printing' across to the solution when they are better value for money. There is also a project in flight to review and reduce the amount of MFDs we have across our footprint, which will reduce the annual spend with our MFD supplier.

Although we have not committed to an annual spend with PSL Print Management Limited, we are bringing this report to Cabinet to ensure that procurement rules are followed as although it is unlikely, there is a possibility that we may spend £200,000 per annum, which means we could reach a spend of £1,000,000 over 5 years.

4. Three online training courses on the PSL Print Management Limited solution were held for all colleagues in November 2021. Work is continuing to move whole teams onto the solution. Our Legal Team are gradually moving across to the solution and our Parking Team have recently met with the supplier to discuss their requirements.

5. Significant work has been undertaken by some teams such as Revenues and Benefits to configure documents and templates to enable them to use the print to post solution. It is suggested that it would not be desirable to change solution now as much of this work would need to be repeated.

Resource Implications:

Financial savings and other benefits have been captured below, including some background

information for context.

Up until Spring 2019 EFDC had an inhouse Reprographics service, which was made of up 3 FTE and some additional casual staff for busier periods, such as Council Tax annual billing. There was a combination of owned and leased equipment and the service ran out of the basement in the Conder building. In 2017/18 there was a Reprographics service review to explore whether the function was offering a value for money, high quality service and various options were explored for the future.

Following the service review, an options appraisal was presented to the SLT to make a decision on how the service should proceed. The options presented were to continue as is, introduce a hybrid approach of having a smaller Reprographics service in house and outsourcing some of our printing and then the final option of outsourcing the service entirely. The decision was taken to decommission the Reprographics function and outsource all of our printing requirements over a period of time. The influencing factors to this decision were the Capital budget required to upgrade our existing equipment, the lack of resilience within a small team and little to no options of an appropriate location in the new Civic Offices.

Once the service was decommissioned the Business Support Team worked additional hours to provide an interim service for Council Tax, Housing Benefits and Democratic Services. This continued until July 2021 where this service was operating out of the café area in the new Civic Offices. This was not sustainable as this was not an appropriate location for the equipment to be stored due to potential partnership or commercial opportunities within that space. The interim service lacked resilience and was running off good will of Officers. During this period Council Tax annual billing was outsourced to Uttlesford District Council, and other services within the Council used various external suppliers.

During the Accommodation Programme we identified that the Officer to desk ratio was going to significantly reduce and during informal consultation numerous teams highlighted their need for full time desks within the new Civic Offices. One of the most common reasons for this was due to Officers needing to print and send correspondence to residents. We discussed solutions to enable us to support the Officer to desk ratio and we identified that a print to post solution with an external supplier would be appropriate. Although the solution was implemented a year into the pandemic, it also enabled Officers to work remotely during and between lockdowns.

Budget information (actual spend)

2018/19 (the last full financial year that Reprographics remained as an in-house service)

Reprographics	£241,089
Council meeting agendas	£54,860
Other external printing	£35,000
Postage	£160,740
Xerox MFD contract	£33,465.34
Total	£525,154.34

2019/20 (one off costs)

Severance payments and pension strain costs for Reprographics employees	£151,430.09
iPads for Councillors & Youth Council	£62,588
Total	£214,018.09

2021/22

PSL Print Management Limited	£94,352.54
Council meeting agendas via PSL Print Management Limited	£31,967
Other external printing	£67,202.15
Postage	£121,378.81
Xerox MFD contract	£20,221.69
Total	£335,122.19

*N.B. The one off EFDC resource costs of implementing the print to post solution has not been captured above as accurate data is not available.

Although it is not a large amount of money, it is worth mentioning that the Council sold most of the equipment that we owned within the Reprographics service and we gained an income of £3,125.31 plus VAT. The Council also donated other Reprographics supplies to a local school.

Not only have costs decreased when comparing to the Reprographics service, Officers are receiving a new, additional service for that cost within the print to post solution. The other benefits aside from cost savings are increased resilience and a reduction in office footprint requirements, which frees up more space for commercial or partnership opportunities.

Legal and Governance Implications:

N/A.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

By using the solution, the Council has full insight into how much print to post printing is occurring and via which teams. These will allow teams to focus on reducing printing and identifying alternative greener methods. Colleagues are no longer undertaking car journeys to come into the office just to print and post correspondence.

Consultation Undertaken: N/A

Background Papers: N/A

Risk Management: N/A

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. **All Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA.** An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: Business Support

If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: No

Title of policy or decision: **Direct Award of the 3-year plus 1 year plus 1-year Contract for the Print to Post Solution to PSL Print Management Limited**

Officer completing the EqIA: Tel: EXT 2557 Email: : dbaird@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 21st December 2021

Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? Change
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): To provide an efficient and effective Print to Post Solution. What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? Agreement to directly award a 5-year contract to PSL Print Management Limited.
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• service users• employees• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? The decision will affect employees who send post out externally.
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? There are implements for the Business Support Team. Some of the changes have already been adopted as part of the pilot for example the removal of the large printer and enveloping machine. As the Print to Post solution becomes more widespread the amount of post requiring sending at the end of the day will reduce. Further the number of internal printers will reduce.
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? The solution should assist with the corporate outcomes of agile working and becoming greener.

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	What does the information tell you about those groups identified? All colleagues will be affected by this change as they will no longer be required to attend the office to print documents.
3.2	Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision? As teams move across to the Print to Post Solution, they are fully supported by Business Support and PSL Print Management Limited.
3.3	If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know. There is not specific individual impacted by this decision it is rather a new process for printing for all colleagues.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working processes	High
Disability	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working processes	High
Gender	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working process.	High
Gender reassignment	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working process.	High
Marriage/civil partnership	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working processes.	High
Pregnancy/maternity	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working process.	High
Race	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working process.	High
Religion/belief	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working process.	High
Sexual orientation	Positive – not required to travel to print documents. More efficient working process.	High

Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No x <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If 'YES', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.
Colleagues are daunted by the new solution.	Training and ongoing support is being provided.	December 2021

Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: Christine Ferrigi

Date: 21/12/2021

Signature of person completing the EqIA: Dawn Baird

Date: 21/12/2021

Advice

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.