

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Deputy Leader, Delegated Powers</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> January 2012</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>FastWEB Purchase</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Resources</b>

### 5. Summary

This report is seeking approval for exemption from Standing Orders in procuring the Civica FastWEB product to encourage more customer online self-service for planning enquiries, on the basis that this is the only practical option available for the Council.

The Directors of Finance and Legal and Democratic Services have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposal.

### 6. Recommendation

**Approval be granted to award the contract for the supply of a customer online self-service for planning enquiries to Civica, through FastWEB, and that it be exempt from the provisions of Standing Order 47.6.3 (requirement to invite at least two oral or written quotations for contracts with an estimated value of £5,000 but less than £20,000)**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

The Council has had a long standing contract with Civica for the back office software for planning / building control applications and local land charges. Civica provide a range of software to the authority through their FastSuite of products (FastPlanning, FastControl and FastCharges).

In addition to the FastSuite of products, RMBC already uses a number of Civica products including FlareAPP (Environmental Health), Parking Management and the new Integrated Housing Management System (IHMS).

One of the stated aims of the RMBC ICT and Customer Access Strategies is to encourage online citizen self-service. The Council does already have a limited self-service planning tool which is delivered by the ROAM system (Rotherham's Online Application for Mapping). The functionality offered by ROAM is limited and it is difficult to use – this has resulted in customer complaints. Furthermore ROAM is based upon out-dated technology which will be decommissioned in 2013. We have a requirement, therefore, to implement a new online self-service tool. Also, by implementing a fully functioning online search tool for planning we will be able to direct more planning related FOI requests to this system and reduce the amount of officer time spent responding to FOIs.

Civica provide a range of online e-planning solutions. Their FastWEB product provides direct facilities on a local authority's website for searching, interrogating and commenting on current planning applications. The FastWEB application provides direct integration between the public website, and Civica's back office FastPlanning system.

As the back office is provided by and supported on a sole supplier basis, this means that Civica's FastWEB is the only product which we can use to make the backend systems fully searchable online.

As such an exemption is sought to Standing Order 47.6.3 (requirement to obtain at least three written quotations for contracts with an estimated value between £5k and £20k) under standing order 38 (exemptions).

## **8. Finance**

The Capital budget which underpins the ICT Strategy includes an allowance of £740,000 to invest in technologies and integration which would enable citizen self-service.

It is proposed to use some of this capital allocation to fund the purchase and installation of the FastWEB system – this amounts to £11,495 of capital investment.

Annual support and maintenance costs for FastWEB are £1,368 from year 2 onwards. Ongoing costs will be met from existing revenue budgets within EDS.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The usability of RMBC's current online planning information through ROAM is low. If we do not replace it with a more appropriate tool there is a risk that we will continue to receive complaints from customers and that we will invest nugatory time in responding to FOI requests when we could instead direct the requestor to FastWEB.

If we do not implement an online planning tool before the ROAM system is switched off there is a risk that we will no longer have any online planning data.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

As detailed elsewhere in this report.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Consultation has taken place with colleagues in ICT and Procurement and with the Director of Internal Audit and Asset Management and Director of Planning & Regeneration.

The proposal to implement FastWEB has been approved by the Corporate ICT, Information Governance and Web Strategy Board (22/11/12).

### **Contact Names:**

Richard Copley, Corporate ICT Manager, Resources Directorate  
Tel. ext. 54525, [richard.copley@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:richard.copley@rotherham.gov.uk)

Nigel Hancock, Development Manager, Planning and Regeneration,  
[nigel.hancock@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.hancock@rotherham.gov.uk)