

WIRRAL COUNCIL

COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4 JULY 2012

SUBJECT:	CORPORATE FIREWALL
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the award of a contract, under delegated authority, for the provision of a pair of firewalls to protect the Council's corporate connection to the Internet. The contract was awarded to Sapphire, who submitted the lowest priced bid at £64,934, which includes the first twelve months support and maintenance. Ongoing provision of support and maintenance will be assessed on an annual basis.
- 1.2 The evaluation matrix used to assess the tenders is included in Appendix 1 but since it contains commercially sensitive information it should be considered exempt from publication under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Firewalls are computerised devices that prevent or restrict access to data networks or computer systems. The two devices purchased under this contract have been installed between the Council's computer network and the corporate connection to the Internet to prevent unauthorised access to the Council's computer systems by potential hackers. They replaced two existing devices that had reached the end of their useful life and were no longer supported by the manufacturer.
- 2.2 Tenders were invited in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and with the assistance of the corporate Procurement Unit. They were published via the Chest procurement portal and responses were received from three potential suppliers, Sapphire, Enline Plc and Network Defence Ltd. Submissions were assessed against pre-determined evaluations criteria. Sapphire achieved the highest score and had also submitted the lowest priced bid; consequently they were awarded the contract under delegated authority.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 There is a present and growing risk that data stored in computer systems residing on a network connected to the Internet may be accessed by unauthorised individuals and any data acquired used for criminal purposes. The legislation contained within the Data Protection Act requires the Council to safeguard all personal information and the Information Commissioner has the power to fine an organisation that fails in this duty up to £500,000. Firewalls are part of the security systems used to mitigate this risk to the Council.

- 3.2 The Council's use of the Internet to deliver services is increasing. Since the firewalls are installed between the Council's network and the Internet there is a risk that if they fail then service delivery will be affected. The two firewalls purchased have been installed as a high availability pair. During normal operation they share the data traffic between the Council's network and the Internet. If either device fails then the other assumes the full load and service continues. Once the failure is rectified then the device can be brought back into use without disrupting services.
- 3.3 Several staff have been trained to manage, configure and maintain the firewalls to mitigate the risks associated with over reliance on a single member of staff.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Primarily there are two options; not to connect the Council's network to the Internet, which is not practicable due to the use of the Internet for service delivery, or to connect the Council's network directly to the Internet without the use of firewalls, which would leave the Council's computer systems vulnerable to hacking and misuse via the Internet. Both have been discounted.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 No consultation was undertaken.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community and faith groups

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 The project has been financed from the corporate computer budgets. Existing staff from the Telecommunications team have implemented the systems and will provide ongoing support. There are no asset implications.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Implementation of these devices assists the Council in protecting personal data and hence compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no carbon reduction implications. The power consumption of the new devices is similar to those they replaced.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no planning or community safety implications.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That Members note the award of a contract under delegated authority to Sapphire for the provision of two firewalls, including twelve months support and maintenance, at a total cost of £64,934.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 Sapphire submitted the lowest priced bid and scored highest against the tender evaluation criteria.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 ~ Tender evaluation matrix

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date