



**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Edward Stewart

**Tel:** 07774 951123

---

**Report of:** *Mark Gannon, Director of BCIS*

**Report to:** *Councillor Cate McDonald*

**Date of Decision:** *From 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021*

**Subject:** *Website and Intranet Replacement Project*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision: -	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? Resources		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? TBC but EIA attached		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below: -		
<i>"The <b>appendix</b> is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>		

**Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to award a contract for the re-platforming of the Council's Website and Intranet to support the Council's ongoing improvements to end-to-end digital services for customers and to approve the use of funding required to pay for its implementation.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Councillor Cate McDonald:

- Approves the direct award to Big Blue Door Ltd via the CCS G-Cloud 12 Framework for the delivery, hosting and ongoing support & maintenance of a Drupal website platform for an initial term of 24 months plus an optional extension of up to a further 24 months.
- Approves the use of Reserves, re-purposing the already approved Customer Experience Programme Budget to fund the one-off investment cost required for the re-platforming project of £498,269 – the net cost over 5 years is £151,909. This includes funding for 6 additional temporary roles needed to deliver the project.

**Background Papers:**

- None.

Lead Officer to complete: -		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Liz Gough, Kayleigh Inman
		Legal: Henry Watmough-Cownie
		Equalities: Bev Law
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	<b>EMT member who approved submission:</b>	Eugene Walker
3	<b>Cabinet Member consulted:</b>	Cllr Cate McDonald, Executive Member for Finance and Resources
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> Mark Gannon	<b>Job Title:</b> Director of BCIS
	<b>Date:</b> TBD	

## 1. Proposal

- 1.1. Sheffield City Council's website and intranet are currently delivered using the Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) platform, which was delivered by Capita Business Services in 2016, as part of the then outsourced arrangements.
- 1.2. This platform is not in use by any other local authorities in the UK and requires very specific and very complex technical skills to support and develop. These skills are very expensive and very hard to find. This means that the current website and intranet solution is a risk to the Council, particularly as we are about to embark on some intensive improvements to our end-to-end digital services. We, therefore, need to move to a platform that is much more widely used, particularly in local government and the public sector which is more supportable and sustainable.
- 1.3. To achieve this, the Council plans to move the website and intranet from their current AEM platform to a new Drupal platform which is an open source, modular content management system. It is widely used globally and has a significant footprint within local government. It brings with it significant financial savings on the annual licensing, maintenance, and hosting costs of the current AEM platform. Due to its wide level of adoption, it also provides access to better development support, learning and sharing, as Drupal is widely used in local government. As part of this transition, we have committed to signing up as a member of LocalGov Drupal which brings benefits in terms of sharing knowledge and saving time on developing core website elements.
- 1.4. Implementing a Drupal solution brings several important benefits:
  - Improved customer/user experience making the website and intranet more accessible for all, making the Council better able to adapt to customer needs and priorities, as the Council's website team will be less focused on support/maintenance issues and more focused in supporting end-to-end digital services with Council service areas.
  - Enhanced accessibility for all customers, making it easier to access and navigate the Council website and Intranet.
  - Using an open-source Drupal provider will reduce the licensing costs required for the ongoing provision of these services, creating a material saving compared to the existing arrangement with Adobe.
  - Easier training and knowledge sharing will enable Sheffield City Council to build and retain Drupal knowledge in house, increasing resilience and giving us a wider pool of resources to call upon internally rather than use of expensive specialised developers and support.
  - There will be greater collaboration with other councils enabling Sheffield City Council to become an active Drupal community contributor, sharing and receiving skills, good practice and knowledge.

- Drupal are a member of the Living Wage Foundation and, therefore, fits within the Council priority of ensuring our supply chain pay their employees a living wage.

## 2. Approach to Implementation

- 2.1. The proposed Drupal solution will provide the new, core website and intranet platform. However, we also need to have online forms capability in place to enable online end-to-end digital processes for our customers. Our current online forms are also provided as part of the AEM platform, and we currently pay for them as part of our existing licensing.
- 2.2. The Council already uses Verint Online Forms (VOF) as part of our Lagan Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform provided by Verint and it is proposed to migrate all existing online forms to this solution from AEM. The Council will not incur any additional expenditure in using the VOF package over and above 'one off' consultancy fees from Verint which may be needed for specific functionality changes.
- 2.3. To enable the transition to a new, modern, sustainable website and intranet platform, this report, therefore, seeks approval of:
  - A direct award to Big Blue Door Ltd via the CCS G-Cloud 12 Framework for the delivery, hosting and ongoing support & maintenance of a Drupal website platform for an initial term of 24 months plus an optional extension of up to a further 24 months.
  - The use of Reserves, re-purposing the already approved Customer Experience Programme Budget to fund the one-off investment cost required for the re-platforming project of £482k. This includes funding for 6 additional temporary roles needed at the Council to enable the delivery of the project, including transition to the Lagan Online Forms solution.
- 2.4. Big Blue Door have a wealth of experience and their client base is made up of many household names within the .gov.uk, .org.uk and .ac.uk domain spaces and includes local authorities such as the Greater London Authority, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, the City of Wolverhampton Council, Reading Borough Council, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London Borough of Ealing, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Slough Borough Council, Walsall Council and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley and Sandwell.
- 2.5. They also work with, among others, Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Trust (for whom they have built both a corporate website and an Intranet on Drupal), Leeds Inspired, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (undergoing development of new website), Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (undergoing development of the

website), the Low Carbon Contracts Company (LCCC) (corporate site and extranet).

- 2.6. An extension to the existing product licenses with Adobe has been put in place which extends the two existing product licenses up to 31st May 2022 for the Webforms license element and 31st July 2022 for the Content Management System (CMS) element. This timeline enables the Council to work with a service provider to re-platform the existing CMS functionality in good time. This work will be delivered in 2 workstreams.
- 2.7. The first workstream will be to migrate the existing Council website and intranet platform to a Drupal platform with the support of specialist provider 'Big Blue Door', who are the preferred bidder following a compliant procurement exercise. They will work with the Council project team to enable a full as-is migration before July 2022. The migration will be seamless from the point of view of our customers.
- 2.8. The second workstream will be to migrate all the current online forms from the Adobe AEM forms to the Verint Online Forms (VOF). It is envisaged that there will not be any more than 5 days of consultancy at a cost of £950 per day and will be funded if required from the project's contingency fund. As well as replicating the existing webforms by May 2022, the use of VOF will allow the Council to build new online capability to support the commitments from the new administration around our online services. We will be building and migrating forms throughout the whole period between now and May 2022.

### **3. How Does This Decision Contribute?**

- 3.1. Contracting with Big Blue Door will enable the move to a new efficient and more manageable Drupal website and intranet solution and will migrate the existing functionality from Adobe to the new platform. This is a key enabler to take Sheffield City Council forward into a new era of digitisation through further development of the Council website, intranet and forms functionality and will be a key enabler for the administration's key priorities to improve the Council's online offer.
- 3.2. Using the existing Adobe Platform is a high-cost arrangement (circa £85k per annum) when compared with the rest of the marketplace. Using this Platform also requires specialist knowledge to maintain and develop the Council website and intranet.
- 3.3. Training colleagues on the AEM Platform is a lengthy process, limiting the development of in-house web development and building of knowledge amongst the Digital Services Team. It also makes it virtually impossible to devolve any forms development outside of the Digital Services Team.

#### **4. Has There Been Any Consultation?**

- 4.1. Consultation for this procurement by the project team has taken place in conjunction with Commercial Services and we have worked with colleagues from the Council's Digital Services Team (DST), Operational Services Team (OST) as well as with specialist colleagues from IT who have provided a high level of technical expertise and guidance. In addition, the project team liaised with wider key stakeholders from other key BCIS change programmes during the requirements gathering phase to collate key high level technical requirements to support their programmes.
- 4.2. Prior to undertaking a formal selection process, a soft market test exercise was undertaken. The project team coordinated the gathering of requirements with stakeholders and developed a Soft Market Test response document. G Cloud 12 registered service providers were invited via the Councils Procurement e-Portal and asked to complete the document by responding to questions Colleagues from the teams highlighted above. The team met with 6 of the responding service providers who could deliver the 3 elements of our requirements to assess solution options to get a sense of what the market could offer.
- 4.3. The group came back together to rationalise the priorities and an activity was undertaken based on the Council's key requirements with Commercial Services using the online G Cloud 12 search function. This generated a long list of potential suppliers which were narrowed down to a final short list of 3. We requested quotations from these 3 selected service providers and interviewed them using agreed questions from the project group. Big Blue Door was chosen as the preferred supplier following this process.

#### **5. Risk Analysis and Implications of the Decision**

##### **5.1. Equality of Opportunity Implications**

- 5.1.1. The implementation of the new platform will make accessing the Council's website better for those users with disabilities due to having a much-improved range of accessibility functionality as standard that are higher than the current guidelines require.
- 5.1.2. As you would expect with a supplier to the public sector, Big Blue Door develop websites and organisation intranet in line with the latest accessibility regulations. Drupal as a content management system is committed to ensuring websites developed on the framework fully adhere to these standards. Website administrators can run tests on individual pages and across the entire website to highlight pages and sections that do not conform with accepted standards (Big Blue Door use a combination of W3C validators, WAVE and Google's 'Lighthouse' service). The Content Management System (CMS) offers suggestions on how to ensure compliance via a dashboard and a traffic light system.

Training and accessibility awareness will be provided to those managing the site and the content owners. We will also test out the website with users with lived experience of accessibility issues e.g. The Disability Confident working group (internal), and Disability Sheffield (external). Content owners will also be trained to ensure awareness of digital exclusion to ensure all content is accessible and in accordance with the accessibility regulations (2018).

5.1.3. As new standards are released, these are added to Drupal core during monthly operating system updates. In line with the accessibility regulations, Big Blue Door build all websites to the WCAG 2.1 AA guidelines as a minimum - most exceeding the guidelines - and have developed their own accessibility module. Screen Readers and Assistive Technology – Both Drupal and Big Blue Door are fully committed to ensuring that all technical features conform to the World Wide Web Consortium’s (W3C) guidelines: WCAG 2.1 AA and ATAG 2.1 as a minimum.

5.1.4. For users who rely on screen readers or other assistive technology, Drupal has been built to encourage and support the proper use of semantic markup. For example, you will be able to use headings reliably for page-level navigation. View Modification Tools. Big Blue Door have developed their own accessibility module, including a high contrast switch and allowing users to resize text automatically to assist visually impaired users - these features can allow users with colour contrast restrictions to view and navigate websites with ease and will be included as part of this project as standard.

5.1.5. As part of a project with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Big Blue Door worked in partnership with a specialist agency to develop their own bespoke accessibility module that exceeds WCAG 2.0 guidelines. This module is now used on all Big Blue Door local authority websites, including Solihull, Wolverhampton and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

5.1.6. Equality impact assessment completed, please see Appendix A.

## 5.2. Financial and Commercial Implications

5.2.1. To deliver the re-platforming of the Council’s Website and Intranet, investment of £498,269 is required upfront to cover the period from July 2021 to July 2022. This is made up of the following costs:

Project funding element	Year 1 (July 2021 to July 2022)
Additional in-house resourcing required	£313,983
Build and implementation	£119,000
Annual support and maintenance and hosting	£18,600
Contingency	£40,000

Contract extension of Adobe Licences to July 2022	£6,686
<b>Total</b>	<b>£498,269</b>

- 5.2.2. Approval is sought to fund the one-off costs to be incurred in Year 1 from the Customer Experience Programme Budget, which has already been approved from Reserves on the basis that longer-term benefits for the organisation will be realised.
- 5.2.3. The effect of switching to a Drupal platform will mean that the annual licensing costs for 22/23 onwards will reduce from £84,152 down to £18,600 per annum, generating an ongoing saving of £65,552 per annum. The total net cost over 5 years is, therefore, £151,909.
- 5.2.4. The recommendation put forward in the Procurement Strategy / Contract Award document is to enter into a contract with Big Blue Door via the CCS G-Cloud 12 Framework for an initial term of 2 years with the option to take extension periods up to an additional 24 months. The contract will be for the delivery, hosting and ongoing support & maintenance of a Drupal platform for the Council's external internet and internal intranet sites.
- 5.2.5. The Contract will be let on the Framework Call-Off Agreement Terms and Conditions which hold no risks to the Council as we use these on a regular basis so are aware of their clauses. All suppliers on this Framework have already signed up to these Terms and Conditions as part of the Framework onboarding process.
- 5.2.6. The price quoted by Big Blue Door is fixed price therefore there is no risk of budget creep for the specified activities.
- 5.2.7. This route to market is fully compliant with the Public Contracting Regulations 2015 and all activities have been undertaken in line with the Framework guidelines.
- 5.2.8. To enable the procurement and migration to the new platform we have organised a 12-month extension of our current Forms product and a 14-month extension for the other elements of our agreement with Adobe to ensure continuity of access to the Council website.
- 5.3. Legal Implications
- 5.3.1. The procurement route proposed in this report of using the Crown Commercial Services framework ensures that the Council are compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 5.3.2. If a decision is made to approve the recommendations outlined above, then the Council will commence the activity for signing of the contract between Sheffield City Council and Big Blue Door which is in the process of being constructed by Commercial Services. This will enable us to keep to the project timeline and enable activities to

commence as planned at the end of August / beginning of September 2021.

- 5.3.3. The Council can terminate the Contract by giving 30 days' notice, if the Contract is terminated prior to the end of the 24 months then early termination charges will be payable by the Council along with reasonable losses.
- 5.3.4. The Council must comply with all applicable legislation and regulations including but not limited to UK GDPR, Data Protection Regulations 2018, the Public Contracts Regulations and the Councils Contracts Standing Orders.
- 5.4. Other Implications
  - 5.4.1. None identified.

## 6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1. **Do Nothing:** This option is not recommended due to the ongoing high costs that would be incurred in continuing to use the AEM Platform and the risks and limitations that the continued use of AEM places on the Council in developing the website and intranet features further at an economical cost. This option would also make the Council non-compliant with PCR 2015.
- 6.2. **Conduct an open market procurement:** This option has been rejected as there are many web platforms in existence and the work that would be required to assess each one would be unmanageable and too onerous. Public sector frameworks available in which the Council can procure against saves the Council conducting a full tender process.
- 6.3. **Access an Open Framework through Direct Award:** This is the recommended option as it is an available option within the public sector frameworks open for the Council to use. It also has the advantage of being a quicker process than other options and is also compliant with Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

## 7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1. The reason for the recommendations is because:
  - 7.1.1. The Contract will be let on the G-Cloud Framework Call Off Agreement which we have used many times and have no issues or risks associated with them.
  - 7.1.2. The Council has an urgent requirement to ensure that both the Website and Intranet Replacement Project and Verint Webforms Project are supported sufficiently with appropriate roles to enable the projects to be successfully delivered.

- 7.1.3. By opting for procuring our chosen service provider Big Blue Door via the G-Cloud framework to enable a direct contract award, this enables a shorter timeline to commence the migration onto Drupal and reduces the timeline in continuing to pay higher licensing fees with Adobe.

## **Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment**

### **Summary of impact**

The current website is accessed using broadband and mobile internet. Although, such services can be accessed for free, such as in libraries, it still represents a potential cost barrier for some people. With the implementation of a new website and intranet platform, this situation will not change either positively or negatively.

However, longer term, the new site will have more features which will reduce the cost of accessing council services, such features include:

- The ability to complete forms and apply/register for services without the need to print and mail paper forms.
- The ability to access more information online without needing to call or visit the council in person.
- The ability to use all web functionality using cheaper equipment such as tablets or existing equipment such as smartphones.

This project is not changing the channel mix through which customers access council services – it is making one channel (the Council's website) more effective in serving those customers who wish to use it to access council services. The council will still maintain a call centre, a mailbox and a face-to-face service for those who are digitally excluded or just prefer those channels and, obviously, not all services can be provided digitally. Therefore, we do not anticipate this change resulting in a negative impact but there are positive impacts associated with improved digital accessibility

### **Details on impact**

Research has consistently shown that the use of internet services is significantly lower for citizens who are 65 years old and over. As an example, Ofcom research shows that around 2 in 3 65–75-year-olds and 1 in 3 75+ year old citizens have home internet access. In contrast around 80% of all adults have home internet access.

However, the trend indicates that this gap is gradually closing. This is driven by the huge popularity of tablets and smartphones. Between 2013 and 2014 the increases in tablet ownership has been higher amongst 65+ citizens than the wider population and in 2014 1 in 4 65+ citizens owned a tablet. This is a similar story for smartphone ownership with 14% of 65+ citizens now owning a smartphone.

For the purposes of this project, a refreshed website will not radically alter the existing position that some customers are digitally excluded from using Council's digital services. However, as the data suggests this proportion is likely to gradually decrease. Furthermore, this project will utilise the some of the drivers of this change, tablet and smartphone usage, by ensuring a better mobile and tablet friendly website in order to ensure that the Council's digital services can be effectively accessed by a wider variety of devices and a greater proportion of

customers. The Council is also leading a city-wide programme to remove the digital divide, working with partners.

We will need to factor in the need to overcome barriers for residents who's English may not be a first language. We will explore options moving forward and will work with established community groups to ensure accessibility. We will also test out the website with users with lived experience of accessibility issues.

Finally, the existing mitigation activities – alternative contact channels, supported self-service – will remain in place to ensure that this group of Citizens can still access all Council services.

The current website and intranet contain features which allow it to be used by people with disabilities. Such features include:

- Compatibility with screen readers.
- Adjustment of font sizes.
- Compatibility with keyboard shortcuts.
- Compatibility with OS accessibility tools.

The specification for the new sites requires that the above features are maintained. Furthermore, additional specifications have been set, which will extend the accessibility of the site, these are:

- Automatic adjustments of layouts, fonts, colours and resolutions that will ensure the user interface is altered to best suit the device type being used to access the site.
- Simpler navigation based on better design, to allow users to complete their journey with fewer steps.

The Council is fully committed to ensuring its websites and intranet are fully adherent to the latest accessibility standards. As new standards are released, these are added to Drupal core during monthly operating system updates. Website administrators can run tests on individual pages and across the entire website to highlight pages and sections that do not conform with accepted standards (such as a combination of W3C validators, WAVE and Google's 'Lighthouse' service).

In line with the Equality Act, our public Sector duty, the web accessibility requirements 2018 [Understanding accessibility requirements for public sector bodies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682000/Understanding_accessibility_requirements_for_public_sector_bodies_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf), and in line with our Equality Objectives, we will work with our Drupal Website and intranet partner to ensure we build all our websites to the WCAG 2.1 AA guidelines as a minimum - most exceeding the guidelines.

For users who have impaired hearing, rely on screen readers or other assistive technology, Drupal has been built to encourage and support the proper use of semantic markup. For example, you will be able to use headings reliably for page-level navigation.

We will develop our own accessibility module, including a high contrast switch and allowing users to resize text automatically to assist visually impaired users - these features can allow users with colour contrast restrictions to view and navigate websites with ease and will be included as part of this project as standard.

Accessibility is a core pillar of Drupal and such tests can be run at any time by your editors, both on individual pages and across the whole website. The incorporation of these types of features ensures that in comparison to current provision there will be a positive impact for both staff and customers.

Accessibility is a core pillar of Drupal and such tests can be run at any time by our editors, both on individual pages and across the whole website. We will work with the service provider on tools to support us to develop our digital communication further to reach our diverse customers. We will work within the accessibility guidelines to support us as we know that English may be a 2nd language.

### **Overall summary of possible impact**

The Website and Intranet Replacement Project has been formed to re-platform the Council's existing Content Management System (CMS) which hosts the customer website and staff intranet. Once delivered, phase 2 of the project will enable this new platform to form the basis for developing further means for customers to access more services online. It will enable the Council to collaborate more widely with other Local Authorities, within the Drupal community.

By developing and sharing high quality open-source products with other members of the LocalGov Drupal community, it will provide better value for money, improved functionality and a more consistent look and feel for citizens and staff using the Councils website, intranet and online forms. Drupal is also very focused on accessibility. We, therefore, do envisage that the replacement of the Councils Website and Intranet and will have a positive impact on accessibility equality and inclusion.

Sheffield City Council follows an Ethical Procurement policy ensuring that the Council works ethically throughout the supply chain enabling greater return in social value in Sheffield.

In line with our [Equality Objectives](#), we aim to have a workforce reflective of the working population of Sheffield.

We are to establish a team of employees to assist us with this work. We know that BCIS, along with the rest of the Council, is not currently reflective of Sheffield's diverse community. We are a Disability Confident employer and with this, we are committed to supporting people who are disabled in our workforce and those seeking work with Sheffield City Council.

We will ensure our plans to recruit to the staffing structure will have positive action methods from the outset to ensure this service reflects the diversity of

Sheffield's community. This requires a far-reaching recruitment campaign to ensure inclusivity. A representative, diverse team will help to ensure that our service is in touch with issues affecting the residents of Sheffield, is accessible and appropriate and, as a result, contribute towards reducing inequalities in our city.

## Appendix B – Funding Calculation over 5 years

Project funding element	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Additional in-house resourcing required	£313,983					£313,983
Build and implementation	£119,000					£119,000
Annual support and maintenance and hosting	£18,600	£18,600	£18,600	£18,600	£18,600	£93,000
Contingency	£40,000					£40,000
Contract extension	£6,686					£6,686
<b>Total</b>	<b>£498,269</b>					<b>£572,669</b>

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Existing annual cost for 12 months of Adobe licenses	£84,152	£84,152	£84,152	£84,152	£84,152	£420,760
<b>Annual saving on the license cost</b>		<b>£65,552</b>	<b>£65,552</b>	<b>£65,552</b>	<b>£65,552</b>	<b>£262,208</b>

<b>Net cost</b>	<b>£151,909</b>
-----------------	-----------------