

Full Council

Title:	Town Hall Telephone System – New Contract
Date:	5 October 2021
Contact Officer:	Karen Slater, Acting RFO & Office Administration Manager

Purpose of Report

1. A contract to renew the telephone system in the Town Hall was awarded to Incom Business Systems on 19 September 2018 for a 3-year period. This was a contract renewal, the original one / equipment dates back to April 2008.
2. Throughout this time the above contract was fit for purpose until the pandemic came into effect which flagged up flaws with our existing equipment / system proving it has limited capability. We have also noted that ISDN lines will be disconnected within next few years and a new telephone system upgrade is inevitable.
3. We would like to propose an upgraded cloud-based telephone system using Wi-Fi which will improve services to and from TTC enabling staff to work more efficiently and more importantly callers can receive a more professional service.

Scope of the Contract

4. Eight companies including Incom were approached to submit quotations for a more updated telephone system.
5. TTC advised each company that they should quote on our existing system but with additional features as follows:
 - Call diversions to external telephone numbers / mobiles
 - A programmable answerphone so that staff can advise they are in a meeting or on holiday and Info Centre can change wording to lunchtime closure, nighttime closure, extra options on menu for a caller such as 'press number 1' for bin collections and this will direct to SODC press 2 for bus passes and direct to OCC and no.3 for finance and so on...,
 - Calls being recorded for staff training
 - A system that will work remotely for 'flexible working'.
 - To include 2 additional handsets for staff growth.
 - To be on-screen programmable so the equipment and service can be customised for TTC's needs and demands,
6. All companies recommended a cloud-based system for consistency which would run off Wi-Fi, the contractors would ensure that we have a backup Wi-Fi supply should one system be affected for a short period of time although this is very rare as boosters will be installed.

Resource Appraisal

7. The top 3 quotations received are detailed below, please note that these prices include new equipment, software, installation, training & helpdesk support / maintenance support.
8. The Officer's recommendation is to award a 5-year contract to Company A who can provide us with free updated equipment and monthly call charges which are less than we currently pay!
A definite 'win win' situation as no increase to budget means that TTC will get an improved service / new equipment at a saving of approx. £200 per year.

(Copy of proposed new system is attached (6A) for easy reference)

COMPANY	ANNUAL COST (£)
A	1560
B	2202
C	2365

Risk Assessment

9. If the telephone system is not properly maintained, then the hardware will become damaged and unusable, and the telephone service could be lost.
10. The Council must always remain accessible to allow the public the ability to contact the Town Hall and staff need to work efficiently both in office and at home via telephone system.

Legal Powers:

- Local Government Act 1972 s. 111

Recommendation

It is recommended:

A new 5-year contract with support / maintenance be agreed with Company A.