

## THE EXECUTIVE

21 FEBRUARY 2006

### JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE STRATEGY

<b>DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (DTI) INITIATIVE ON 'EMPLOYER PROVIDED HOME COMPUTING' (HCI SCHEME)</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p>This report updates Members on progress regarding the London-Wide arrangement for a Local Authority Home Computer Initiative (HCI) and now seeks approval to enter into a contract to enable the introduction of an HCI scheme.</p> <p><b>Summary</b> The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), together with Industry and Trade Unions are promoting the spread of computing skills by an HCI Scheme. Details of the Scheme and financial implications for the Council and employees have been reported previously and the Council has agreed to proceed with a scheme.</p> <p><b>Wards Affected:</b> None</p> <p><b>Implications:</b> <b>Financial:</b> This proposal is cash neutral as expenditure and leasing will be met by employee contributions.</p> <p><b>Legal:</b> Legal Advice for this London-wide scheme has been provided by the City of London Corporation.</p> <p><b>Risk Management:</b> The key risks for the Authority are that by not participating in a HCI scheme could potentially disadvantage our staff by not promoting the spread of IT skills. Also it would not enhance the Council's reputation as a good employer and affect the promotion of our Community Leadership Role. The financial risks are that the Bull Consortium – the preferred supplier – could go out of business, although the company is a major player in the IT field. Additionally employees could leave, owing more than their final salary payment, in which case the Council would have to pursue the debt.</p> <p><b>Social Inclusion and Diversity:</b> The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a requirement on local authorities to make an assessment of the impact of new and revised policies in terms of race equality. Existing policies have already been subjected to impact assessments. This Authority has adopted an approach of extending the impact to cover gender, disability, sexuality, faith, age and community cohesion.</p> <p>As this report does not concern a new or revised policy there are no specific adverse impacts insofar as this report is concerned.</p> <p><b>Crime and Disorder:</b> There are no specific implications insofar as this report is concerned.</p>	

**Recommendation(s)**

The Executive is asked to agree:

1. Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with London Connects limiting the Council to a single HCI provider for one year.
2. To waive the tender process in accordance with paragraph 4.1 (e) of Part D of the Council's constitution to enable the single provider.
3. Enter into a contract with the Bull Consortium for providing and implementing an HCI scheme in Barking and Dagenham.

**Reason(s)**

1. To help staff in the introduction of IT skills or to improve their skills.
2. To assist the Council in its Community Leadership role.

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**1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 At the Executive on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2005, Members noted the progress being made on the introduction of an HCI Scheme for all permanent council employees, and agreed to participate in a London-wide scheme. This is being operated by Citizens Online (London Connects) on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA).

**2. Progress**

- 2.1 Notification has been received from Citizens Online that following a tendering exercise and contract evaluation process, at which some of the London Boroughs were represented, the Bull Consortium has been selected as the preferred contractor. This means that all of the participating authorities can now enter in a contract with them to provide HCI schemes without any further procurement.
- 2.2 Bull Consortium is a vendor neutral organisation – i.e. they are not promoting the sale of particular brands of equipment - and can provide a wide range of products from numerous household brand companies.
- 2.3. Their consortium includes the most experienced HCI suppliers with a wealth of experience in the public sector. They have also developed innovative solutions for those staff who may be excluded from traditional HCI schemes, such as teachers or lower paid staff.

### **3. Next Steps**

- 3.1 Subject to approval by the Executive to commit to the introduction of an HCI Scheme, a memorandum of understanding with London Connects will be signed which confirms that the Council will use Bull and no other HCI provider, during the coming year.
- 3.2 Although London Connects has conducted a comprehensive tendering exercise, the Corporate Legal Manager advises that the Council's tendering process needs to be waived to enable the use of a single provider.
- 3.3 A contract with the Bull consortium will then be entered into, in consultation with the Divisional Director of Legal Services and Head of Corporate Procurement, following which the scheme's availability can be published fully to staff.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that a scheme could be in place by the end of April 2006 and the various options available notified to staff.

### **4. Consultees**

Executive October 2004/September 2005  
Original Report CMT September 2004  
Solicitor to the Council/Divisional Director of Legal Services/Corporate Legal Manager  
Head of Human Resources  
Trade Unions

### **5. Background Papers**

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)/Cabinet Office Paper:  
'Maximising Potential in the Workplace'

DTI/Cabinet Office/Department for Education and Skills papers:  
'Case Studies – Royal Mail and Air Products'

Executive report – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2005