

	Officer Key Decision
	Report to the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources
	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources
AUTHORITY TO AWARD A CONTRACT FROM A FRAMEWORK FOR PROVISION OF UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS FOR SHARED TECHNOLOGY SERVICES	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Part exempt: Appendix 1 is exempt as it contains the following category of exempt information as specified in Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)"
No. of Appendices:	Appendix 1 – List of Contractors (exempt)
Background Papers¹:	NA
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Name: Gemma McCourt Job Title: Senior Procurement Officer, Shared Technology Services Email: gemma.mccourt@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report concerns the provision of Unified Communications for the Shared Technology Services. This report requests authority to award contracts as required by Contract Standing Order 88. This report summarises the process undertaken in procuring a contract and recommends to whom the contract should be awarded.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources:

- 2.1 Approves the pre-tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.10.
- 2.2 Approves the award the contract for the Provision of Unified Communications for the Shared Technology Services to 8x8 UK Limited for 24 months commencing 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2027 with a 12 months optional extension commencing 1 May 2027 to 30 April 2028 in the sum of £1,804,567.20 ex. VAT.

3.0 Detail

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1 The proposal to implement Brent's current telephony system with 8x8 is a key step in modernising the council's digital infrastructure. It directly supports the council's **Digital Strategy**, which aims to enable a more agile, digitally empowered organisation, improve service delivery, and enhance customer experience. The move to a cloud-based telephony solution will deliver a scalable, resilient platform that improves communication across the council, supports flexible working, and ensures business continuity.
- 3.2 By adopting 8x8, the council will streamline its communication processes, reduce costs, and improve collaboration both internally and with residents, in line with the council's strategic objectives.
- 3.3 The replacement of the Unified communication and telephony systems with 8x8 aligns with several key priorities and outcomes from the **Borough Plan** and **Digital Strategy**, including:
 - **Every Opportunity to Succeed:** Equipping staff with modern communication tools enhances service delivery, helping residents access services more easily and improving response times.
 - **A Future Built for Everyone, An Economy Fit for All:** The new telephony system supports Brent's ambition to be a digitally connected borough, improving the council's ability to engage with businesses and residents while promoting economic growth.
 - **A Healthier Brent:** Enhanced communication capabilities will improve collaboration with health and social care partners, enabling seamless integration and faster coordination of services for residents.
 - **Strong Foundations:** This project is a fundamental part of Brent's digital transformation journey, ensuring that the council's infrastructure is modern, secure, and fit for the future. A cloud-based telephony system aligns with the Digital Strategy's focus on resilience, efficiency, and innovation.

- 3.4 The adoption of 8x8 supports the **Brent Digital Strategy** pillars by:
- **Empowering communities and residents** through better access to services and easier engagement with the council.
 - **Enhancing workplace productivity** by providing staff with flexible and reliable communication tools, supporting hybrid working models.
 - **Ensuring infrastructure resilience** with a cloud-first approach, enabling business continuity and reducing operational risks.
 - **Improving efficiency and reducing costs**, contributing to long-term savings for the council while enhancing service quality.

Background

- 3.5 The council requires the provision of Unified Communications for Shared Technology Services. Council Officers have undertaken a procurement exercise by calling off from the Crown Commercial Services G Cloud 14 RM1557.14 Lots 2 (the “Framework”). Officers have identified a contractor providing the most economically advantageous offer in accordance with relevant criteria set out in the Framework and therefore recommend award of a contract for Provision of Unified Communications Technical Solution for the Shared Technology Services (the “Contract”).

The Procurement Process

- 3.6 The Contract will be called off from the Framework, using the form of award and standard call off terms and conditions prescribed under the Framework.
- 3.7 The Framework permits award by way of a further competition and direct award and sets out rules for the identification of the most economically advantageous contractor. The Framework allows for a direct award on either the most economically advantageous tender criteria or award on lowest price only if they are comparable services. Officers consider that identification of the most economically advantageous contractor using the Framework’s direct award procedure is most appropriate for the procurement of the Contract and is aligned with framework award criteria as:
- the Framework provides the facility to directly award the Contract, and the Council's requirements were formulated based on a market analysis conducted in the third quarter of 2024, facilitating the development of the required services.
 - The direct award route under the Framework allows for a search long list to identify suppliers who best meet the needs of the service, which Officers have utilised. The direct award route enables the shortlisting of the available suppliers who could provide the services based on the search long list terms which are created.

- The Framework allows for the evaluation and selection of a supplier through a direct award route on:
 - 1) Most economically advantageous tender criteria or
 - 2) Direct award on lowest price only if they are comparable services.

3.8 In compliance with the Framework guidance, Officers have reviewed the framework information for all contractors on the Framework as set out at Appendix 1. Officers have carried out the necessary steps required under the Framework to directly award the Contract, and have identified 8x8 UK Limited as the only shortlisted supplier able to provide the services required and are the most economical advantageous supplier. The Contract is for an initial period of 24 months with an option to extend by a further 12 months extension in the sum of £596,522.40 excl VAT.

3.9 The Contract will commence on 01 May 2025 subject to the call-in provided for in the Council's Constitution. As the proposed Contract represents a call-off under a framework agreement, a mandatory standstill period is not required.

Pre-tender Considerations

3.10 The pre-tender considerations relevant to the Contract are as follows:

Ref.	Requirement	Response	
(i)	The nature of the services / supplies / works.	As detailed above	
(ii)	The value.	£1,804,567.20 + VAT	
(iii)	The contract term.	24 months with an option to extend by a further 12 Months.	
(iv)	The tender procedure to be adopted.	Direct Award from a Framework	
(v)	The procurement timetable.	Stage in Procurement	Indicative dates
		Shortlisting Suppliers on Framework	January 2025
		Decision on Contract	March 2025
		Mobilisation	March - 30 April 2025
		Contract Commencement Date	1 May 2025

Ref.	Requirement	Response
(vi)	The evaluation criteria and process.	N/A – Direct Award
(vii)	Any business risks associated with entering the contract.	No specific business risks are considered to be associated with entering into the Contract.
(viii)	The Council's Best Value duties.	For the reasons set out in Section 3, it is considered that Direct Award will result in the Council achieving best value.
(ix)	Consideration of Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012	Officers have had regard to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.
(x)	Any staffing implications, including TUPE and pensions.	There are no implications for Council staff arising from the procurement.
(xi)	The relevant financial, legal and other considerations.	Financial – See Financial Considerations at Section 5.
		Legal – See Legal Considerations at Section 6.
		Other – N/A
(xii)	Sustainability	Given the nature and value of the Contract, it is not possible to include specific sustainability requirements.
(xiii)	Key Performance Indicators / Outcomes	Appropriate Key Performance Indicators / Outcomes will be included in the Contract.
(xiv)	Policy requirements including the National Procurement Policy Statement; prompt payment; London Living Wage; modern slavery; and carbon reduction	The potential suppliers will be required to provide Services in accordance with all relevant policy requirements, to include those detailed in the National Procurement Policy Statement, to comply with a 30 day payment requirement, to provide evidence of wage compliance, evidence due diligence in supply chain (including modern slavery) and provide report on carbon emission and sustainability initiatives during contract delivery

Ref.	Requirement	Response
(xv)	Sharing information to allow understanding of the Council's procurement policies and decisions	All relevant policies and information will be shared with the bidders through the tender process.
(xvi)	Steps undertaken to remove or reduce barriers for SME participation in the procurement	Officers have considered whether any steps can be taken to remove or reduce barriers for SME participation in the procurement. It is considered that the tender process recommended is appropriate for Services required and upholds the principles of equal treatment, transparency, and non-discrimination, ensuring that SMEs and large enterprises are evaluated fairly without any undue advantage given to larger enterprises.
(xvii)	Contract Management	A contract manager will be appointed and appropriate contract management provisions will be included in the Contract.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The relevant stakeholders have been consulted on a regular basis in relation to this procurement
- 4.2 The formal proposal was submitted to the Operational Management Group for partner Boroughs of the Shared Technology Services on 28 Feb 2025 to outline the procurement process undertaken for this contract.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 Part 3 of the Council's Constitution states that the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources has delegated authority to approve the award of contracts for service valued at less than £2 million. The estimated value of the Contract is £1,804,567.20 and is under this threshold.
- 5.2 The cost of the Contract will be funded from Shared Technology each Boroughs' ICT Budget.
- 5.3 Cost breakdown is;

	Brent (inc. LGA)	Lewisham	Southwark	Total
Year 1	£216,870.00	£176,958.00	£217,694.40	£611,522.40
Year 2	£216,870.00	£176,958.00	£202,694.40	£596,522.40
Year 3 (optional extension)	£216,870.00	£176,958.00	£202,694.40	£596,522.40

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 Officers recommend the use of the Framework to procure a contract for the Provision of Unified Communications for the Shared Technology Services. This Framework was procured prior to 24 February 2024 in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“PCR 2015”). As a result, the PCR 2015 governs a call off under the Framework.
- 6.2 The PCR 2015 allow the use of framework agreements and prescribe rules and controls for their procurement. Contracts may then be called off under such framework agreements without the need for them to be separately advertised and procured through a full procurement process. Call offs under the framework agreement need to be carried out in accordance with the framework rules, to include using evaluation criteria specified in the framework agreement and utilising the terms and conditions set out in the framework agreement.
- 6.3 The Council’s Contract Standing Orders state that no formal tendering procedures apply where contracts are called off under a framework agreement established by another contracting authority, where call off under the framework agreement is approved by the relevant Corporate Director or Director and provided that the Corporate Director, Law & Governance has advised that participation in the framework is legally permissible. The Corporate Director, Law & Governance has confirmed that participation in the Framework is legally permissible.
- 6.4 The award of the Contract is subject to the Council’s own Standing Orders in respect of Medium Value Contracts. The Corporate Director, Finance & Resources has delegated power to award Medium Value Contracts in accordance with paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution.
- 6.5 The decision to award the contract will be subject to call-in as provided for in the Council’s Constitution. As the procurement of the Contract is from a framework, there is no requirement for the Council to observe a 10 day standstill period under the PCR 2015. Subject to no challenge preventing award, Officers will seek to implement the decision to award.
- 6.6 There are no Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) implications as the Contract is being awarded to the same

provider who is delivering the current services and there will be no Council staff impacted by this decision.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010 (the “Public Sector Equality Duty”), the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

7.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.3 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

7.4 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.

7.5 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications.

7.6 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no adverse health equality implications

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 The Council is committed to reducing its environmental impact and aligning its services with sustainability goals. As part of the Contract, Council will implement measures to support carbon reduction, energy efficiency, and environmentally responsible practices.

8.2 The Contract will support the Council's sustainability goals by prioritising digital communication, reducing energy consumption to cut carbon emissions.

Energy-efficient infrastructure, paperless operations, and sustainable procurement will help align services with Brent's commitments.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 9.1 This service is currently provided by an external contractor and there are no implications for Council staff arising from retendering the Contract.
- 9.2 There are no TUPE implications as the Contract is being awarded to the same contractor who is delivering the current services.
- 9.3 This service is currently provided by an external contractor and there are no property considerations.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 Consistent and proactive engagement has been undertaken with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure effective communication, address key concerns, and facilitate a smooth progression of activities in the provision of the Unified Communications for the London Borough of Brent, Lewisham and Southwark.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel
Corporate Director, Finance and Resources