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**To: Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board**

**On: 13 June 2024**

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**Report by: Director of Finance and Resources**

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**Heading: Contract Authorisation Report for Payment Processing Service  
(RC-CPU-23-236)**

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**1. Summary**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board to award a Contract (Call-Off Contract) for Payment Processing Services to Access Paysuite Ltd.

1.2 The recommendation to award a Call-Off Contract follows a procurement exercise conducted in accordance with the Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud 13 Framework Agreement RM1557.13 Framework Schedule 5: Award Procedure and the RM1557.13 G-Cloud 13 (lots 1,2 and 3) Buyer Guide (Buyer Guide) and Renfrewshire Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts for an above Threshold Services contract.

1.3 The contract strategy was approved by the Director of Finance and Resources and Strategic Category Manager on the 23 May 2024.

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## 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board:

- 2.1 Authorises the Head of Corporate Governance to award the Contract for Payment Processing Services to Access Paysuite Ltd being a Call-Off Contract made under Lot 2 of the Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud 13 Framework Agreement (RM1557.13).
- 2.2 Authorises the Call-Off Contract for an initial term of 3 years with the option to extend for up to 12 months. The proposed Call-Off Start Date is 1 August 2024 however, the actual date will be formally confirmed in the Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud 13 Framework Agreement RM1557.13 Call-Off Contract (Order Form).
- 2.3 Authorises the maximum approved Call-Off Contract value of up to £260,000 excluding VAT for the full Call-Off Contact period, including any extensions.
- 2.4 Authorises the following liability caps within the Call-Off Contract:
  - Cap of £5 million in the aggregate per annum on direct loss, destruction, corruption, degradation or damage to any Council Data
  - Cap will not exceed 150% of the annual charges all other Defaults.

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## 3. Background

- 3.1 Renfrewshire Council facilitates various ways for customers to make payments for Council Tax, Rates, Rents, Overpayments and Sundry Debtor bills. The Council offers PayPoint, Payzone and Post Office, ensuring that customers have a choice of options and accessibility to payment services which meets the Council's needs, whilst ensuring payment services are accessible within local communities. Once payment by customers of sums due to the Council has been made, the Service Provider will then process the payment transactions into the relevant Council bank account.

3.2 The Council identified that the Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud 13 Framework Agreement RM1557.13 (the Framework) was a suitable route to market. The Framework consists of 4 Lots and Lot 2 (Cloud Software) of this Framework offers a suite of cloud provisioned software and associated services.

3.3 Following the Framework Schedule 5: Award Procedure and the Buyer Guide, the Council followed the steps 1-3 using search criteria and filters as detailed below:

<b>Search Criteria</b>	<b>Search Criteria Details</b>	<b>Resultant Suppliers</b>
1	Post office	76 Suppliers
2	PayPoint, Payzone	2 Suppliers
3	PCI DSS (payment card security)	2 Supplier

3.4 After applying all relevant filter and search criteria, four software solutions were identified from two G-Cloud 13 Suppliers (Allpay Limited and Access Paysuite Ltd) and progressed onto stage 4 evaluation and selection.

3.5 In line with the step 4 evaluation and selection process, a desktop analysis of both Suppliers was conducted by Council officers against the Council's requirements and the individual Supplier Service Offering available on the Contract Award Service (the hosting platform for the Framework). The desktop analysis identified that two software solutions did not comply with the specification. The remaining two software solutions, one from each Supplier, could comply with the specification, therefore the pricing (as per the Supplier Service Offering available on the Contract Award Service) was compared against the volume of transactions.

3.7 It was identified that Access Paysuite Ltd would provide best value to the Council and should progress to stage 5 award. The Contract will be formed using the Framework Award, Call-Off Contract (Order Form) and Call-Off Terms.

3.6 The Council's current contract for payment processing services is due to expire on the 31 October 2024 and the current contract Service Provider is Allpay Limited. As this award will result in a change of Service Provider, a mobilisation period of approximately 12 weeks is required.

The Council will work closely with the new Service Provider, Access Paysuite Ltd, and the incumbent Service Provider, Allpay Limited, to ensure a smooth transition to the new system that will not impact the Council customers when making payments via the Post Office, Payzone and PayPoint.

- 3.7 Community benefits have been requested as part of the Framework Award Procedure and will be confirmed in the Call-Off Contract Order Form.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The maximum approved Call-Off Contract value of up to £260,000 excluding VAT is for an initial 3-year term with the option to extend for a further 12 months. This figure includes the initial set up costs, and will be funded from the Finance and Resources revenue budget. The anticipated start date is 1 August 2024.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – No HR & Organisational development implications have arisen or are anticipated
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
  - **Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all** - this contract will allow the residents of Renfrewshire to access a wide range of services to make payments at their convenience.
  - **Working together to improve outcomes** - this contract will ensure that the residents of Renfrewshire can access different ways to make payments to the Council.
4. **Legal** – This procurement was carried out in accordance with Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud 13 RM1557.13 Framework Schedule 5: Award Procedure and (lots 1,2 and 3) Buyer Guide and the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts for a service contract above Threshold.
5. **Property/Assets** – No property/assets implications have arisen or are anticipated.
6. **Information Technology** – ICT Staff have been involved in this procurement exercise assisting with the desk top analysis and will also assist with the offboarding and onboarding requirements under this Contract.

7. **Equality & Human Rights -**

The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – No Health and Safety implications have arisen or are anticipated.

9. **Procurement** – This procurement exercise was conducted in accordance with Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud 13 RM1557.13 Framework Schedule 5: Award Procedure and the RM1557.13 G-Cloud 13 (lots 1,2 and 3) Buyer Guide and Renfrewshire Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts

10. **Risk** – The insurance cover held by Access Paysuite Ltd was assessed as part of their appointment on to the Framework Agreement.

The following liability caps apply as part of the Call-Off Contract:

- Cap of £5 million in the aggregate per annum on direct loss, destruction, corruption, degradation or damage to any Council Data
- Cap will not exceed 150% of the annual charges all other Defaults.

11. **Privacy Impact** – As part of the procurement process, a data protection impact assessment was conducted by the Service and the Council's Information Governance team. Access Paysuite Ltd are required to adhere to the Framework conditions and Call-Off terms which include provision for Data Protection and GDPR. Access Paysuite Ltd must agree to the Data Protection requirements as noted within the Order Form and Call-Off Contract Schedule 7.

12. **Cosla Policy Position** – No Cosla policy position implications have arisen or are anticipated.

13. **Climate Risk** - The level of impact associated with provision of this service has been assessed using the Scottish Government Sustainability Test and is considered to be low risk.

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**List of Background Papers - None**

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