

OFFICER DECISION NOTICE



Reading
Borough Council

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This notice is to be used for the following types of officer decisions. (Select one option).

A. Decisions taken by officers under a specific express delegation from Council or a Committee.

B. Decisions taken by officers under a general delegation from Council or a Committee, which relates to (i) a permission or a licence, or (ii) the rights of an individual, or (iii) a contract or expenditure over which materially affects that relevant local government body's financial position.

1. Title of decision:	Housing Digitisation (Phase 2)
2. Date of the decision:	29 August 2023
3. The decision maker:	Zelda Wolfe, Assistant Director for Housing & Communities Martin Chalmers, Chief Digital & Information Officer

4. Decision details:

To deliver initiatives that will improve interaction with customer and partners through self-servicing capabilities and other engagement channels across the housing service. Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) have previously delivered twelve weeks of work to prioritise and begin to deliver a set of requirements to improve digital enabled operations and citizen engagement to support this objective. This work is to continue to support and deliver this prioritised backlog of requirements for an additional 12 weeks.

5. Reasons for the decision:

Reading Borough Council is entering a period of significant change. Over the next 2-3 years the scale of the digital and cultural transformation activity we need to deliver to both modernise and streamline services to deliver and safeguard the Council's future budget position is significant.

The work continues to build on the phase 1 activity, with the areas in scope summarised below:

- Improve housing digital journeys to channel shift through self-serve, user friendly and engaging content.
- Website enhancements to satisfy the needs of the Housing Personas end-to-end journey. Featuring improvements to navigation, content breadth and quality and creation of how-to videos and self-assessment forms

- Support the set-up of additional/ improved reporting governance to utilise data and report more effectively.
- Support UAT of new housing portals and new online tools
- Support the decision and implementation for a new housing community engagement tool to increase customer engagement.
- Support decisions on, and implementation, of a web chat and chatbot service pilot for the website, thereby playing a pathfinder role in establishing the strategy for wider chat automation for the Council.

We have engaged PWC (who is our procured Digital Transformation Partner) to support on this activity.

6. Alternative options considered (if any) and rejected:

- 1) Do nothing and slow down the pace of change of these initiatives in scope – this was rejected as the changes need to happen now.
- 2) Procure advisory support for this work separately – this would have created a delay (months) and lost the economies of delivery/management scale that we have from using our Digital Transformation Delivery Partner, given that the majority of projects in the portfolio have a digital component.

7. List of open Background Papers:

None

8. List of confidential or exempt Background Papers:

None

9. Any other matters taken into consideration:

<input type="checkbox"/> Legitimate expectation of consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> Procedural requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Health implications	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental or Climate Change
<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Management implications
<input type="checkbox"/> Transparency of Information (FOI etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Privacy Impact Assessments
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights Act Duties	<input type="checkbox"/> Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Parenting	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory duties	<input type="checkbox"/> EU withdrawal
<input type="checkbox"/> Armed Forces Covenant	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Details of the matters taken into account:

None

10. Legal considerations

Statement of works has been drafted and signed to commence the work under the PWC Digital Transformation Partner contract.

11. Financial considerations

The work will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Cost for work is: £218,880

12. Internal consultations

None.

Sections 13- 18: To be completed only for Decision A (express delegation from a Committee)

13. The name of the Committee:

14. Date of the meeting:

Click or tap to enter a date.

15. Minute number:

16. The delegation given by the Committee:

17. The name of any member of the committee who declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision:

18. Any councillor or officer required to be consulted prior to the exercise of this delegation and details of their response.