

Committee: E-Government Task Group
Date: 7 October 2004
Agenda Item No: 6
Title: Tenders for Online Services
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Summary

- 1 This report advises Members of the outcome of two recent tender exercises for online service development and recommends the acceptance of the two lowest tenders submitted by Media Paradigm Ltd.

Background

- 2 As part of the approved E-Government Work Programme for 2004/05 tenders have been obtained for two areas of development:

Online consultation products (Priority Outcomes G3 & R15) ~ Tenders were obtained for the supply of a range of online 'products' to assist the Council to fully engage with its citizens, the users of its services, local stakeholders and all other individuals, groups and organisations with a view on Council services and the role the Council plays in leading the local community. These products range from simple YES / NO voting buttons ('quick vote' facilities) providing a rough and ready view of public opinion, to more reasoned & structured consultation and debate on larger, more complex issues. Further information about the products, along with further details of each of the possible public engagement methods, are attached as Appendix One.

Online Booking Products

- 3 A number of the Council services identified for e-enablement will require online booking facilities. These include sports, arts and health-related courses & activities, meetings & conferences, entertainment events and hire of facilities. Tenders have been obtained for a number of modular online booking products, which the Council will be able use to build booking facilities for the various scenarios described above. Further details are provided at Appendix Two.

Results of tender exercises

- 4 Set out below are the results of the tender exercises. For both tenders, tenderers were advised that, dependent upon price, some of the products may not be pursued by the Council.

Tender 1- Online Consultation Services

Product No.	Product Description	T1* £	T2 £	T3 £
1	Online Consultation Form	22,000	23,000	7,300
2	Online Discussion Forum	1,500	5,000	7,000
3	Searchable Archive	9,500	10,000	1,750
4	Quick Poll Facilities	1,100	2,500	1,250
5	Consultee Database	12,500	15,000	7,500
6	Online complaints & comments form	7,000	2,500	1,300
7	SMS text messaging & email notification	9,500	10,000	5,000
8	Feedback Surveys	6,500	2,500	1,800
9	Tenderer's suggested additional products	7,000	0	6,425
	Total Tender Sums	76,600	70,500	39,325

* Tenderer disqualified as tender received two days late.
A fourth company declined to tender as they did not have the necessary skill sets for the project.

- 5 The lowest tender was submitted by Media Paradigm Ltd. Since the receipt of tenders, key staff have been consulted on the outcome of the tender exercise, and after discussion, it is felt that most, but not all, products need to be developed at this stage. This has the following effect on the tender sum:

	£
Total tender sum	39,325
Less: Searchable archive	-1,750
Online Complaints and Comments Form	-1,300
Tenderer's Suggested Additional Products	-2,400
Revised tender sum	33,875

Tender 2 – Online Booking System

Product No.	Product Description	T1 £	T2 £	T3 £
1	Basic Online Booking System	33,000	14,000	15,100
2	Online Payment Option	4,000	3,400	4,100
3	Real-time Booking System	3,000	5,100	2,000
4	Reporting System	4,000	7,500	2,900
5	Multiple break-out options	4,000	8,500	2,400
6	Court and pitch hire	8,000	10,200	2,200
7	Self-service option	4,000	5,100	3,800
8	Tenderer's suggested additional products	0	6,100	6,700
	Total Tender Sums	60,000	59,900	39,200

- 6 The lowest tender was submitted by Media Paradigm Ltd. After discussion, it is felt that most, but not all, products need to be developed at this stage. This has the following effect on the tender sum:

	£
Total tender sum	39,200
Less: Multiple break-out options	-2,400
SMS / Email notification system	-2,750
Revised tender sum	<u>34,050</u>

RECOMMENDED that the tenders submitted by Media Paradigm, for the revised sums of £33,875 and £34,050, be accepted.

Background Papers: [\[Click here to type in background paper details\]](#)

Appendix One ~ Online Consultation

Table A – Product Descriptions

Product Number	Product Name	Product Description
1	Online Consultation Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An online HTML form template, linked to an SQL database template (not visible to public) for subsequent analysis. The template should enable users to add questions (up to a maximum of 15, either in a YES/NO format, or a free-text format ~ longer questionnaire will be handled through the Council's e-forms system). 2. Staff able to add questions to the form, either requiring YES / NO / Don't Know type answers, or a free-form answers. 3. Citizen receives an automated acknowledgement upon submitting form. 4. Access to the SQL database of responses will be required by both the central Public Relations Team, and, where appropriate the survey commissioning department. Standard reporting options will be required (for example, number & percentage of Yes / No / Don't Know answers, total number of responses etc) and the results should be in a format that can be published onto the website. 5. Access to templates will be restricted to authorised users only ~ it is not intended that other partners, such as voluntary groups & parish councils. Will have direct access to the system.
2	Online discussion forums	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A general on-line discussion forum, plus topic specific discussion forums. 2. Some of the discussion forums will need to be restricted to registered users, e.g. citizens' panel members. Where necessary, access should be password controlled. 3. There will need to be control over the content of contributions to discussions, to ensure, for example, that obscene language is not posted onto the site. This could be achieved in a variety of ways, for example, through content filtering, or by placing contributions into a holding table for manual review before being posted onto the live website.
3	Searchable Archive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An archive of previous consultation exercises and consultation reports. Appropriate metadata should be added to the archive database to aid search results. 2. The archive should include, as a minimum, key-word, topic, and date search options.
4	Quick Poll facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A facility to enable citizens to respond to a single question with a YES / NO, or similar response. 2. The quick poll facility may need to be added to the Home Page, the consultation area of the website, or a service specific area of the website.
5	Consultee database	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to capture online pre-defined information about a consultee, such as name & address, email address, mobile 'phone number, age, gender, ethnic origin, subject interest areas, willingness to participate in online surveys etc. 2. The ability to use the database of consultees for different purposes, such as recording membership of Citizens' Panels,

		<p>focus groups and consultative committees, recording details of respondents to online surveys, questionnaires and service-specific consultation exercises etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. It should be possible to link the consultee information to a specific survey or questionnaire. 4. The database will be used for intelligent targeting of surveys to produced structured samples. Consequently, it should be possible to extract contact information from the database using various pre-defined criteria, such as consultees age group etc. It will also be used to advise consultees of forthcoming meetings & events that they may be interested in attending. 5. Consultees should be able to add, delete and amend their details online. In addition, they should be able to register online to join Citizens' Panels and Focus Groups. 6. Where consultees agree, ability to publish their email addresses on the website to enable others to contact them to discuss specific subjects.
6	Online complaints & comments form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structured form to capture complaints and comments. 2. Information should be in XML format for transfer to the back office CRM system. It should also be captured into an SQL database for analysis / management reporting. 3. The facility should be able to differentiate between comments, complaints and compliments (possibly by the use of tick boxes or a drop-down list). It should also be able to identify the service to which the matter relates (and be visible on different parts of the website). 4. An automated acknowledgement, advising complainants of how their complaint will be handled, and the timescales that will apply. 5. The SQL database should be used to store comments received from citizens about Council services. Where citizens agree, comments should be capable of being displayed on the website.
7	SMS text messaging & email notification	<p>Briefing papers, invitations to events & meetings, and follow-up reports to be sent by email to citizen panel, focus group and other registered consultees.</p> <p>SMS text message alerts to be sent to registered consultees advising them of forthcoming events, to remind them to take part in online referendum etc.</p>
8	Feedback Surveys	<p>Online feedback survey form to be completed by attendees following public meetings, stakeholder events etc.</p> <p>Survey data to be captured into SQL database for subsequent analysis.</p>

Table B – Public Engagement Methods

Public Engagement Method	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
Published consultation documents	Publication of a detailed consultation paper, usually including analysis & policy options. The paper invites consultees to respond ~ either in general terms or to specific questions.	<p>Calendar of forthcoming consultations (MSCMS)</p> <p>Publication of consultation documents on the website. (MSCMS)</p> <p>Consultees able to respond online, either to the document in general, or to specific questions arising from the document. Responses captured into an SQL database for subsequent analysis.</p> <p>Automated acknowledgement of submissions.</p> <p>Each consultation to be supported by an online discussion forum.</p> <p>Searchable archive of all consultations and consultation reports – searchable by up to 3 keywords.</p> <p>Consultation portlet to be made available to local voluntary organisations and town / parish councils.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>1</p>
Self-completion questionnaires & email / SMS surveys	Market-research-style exercises to gather quantitative data on attitudes, performance or customer satisfaction.	<p>Online surveys and questionnaires ~ these could either be complex questionnaires & surveys for in-depth consultation</p> <p>Or</p> <p>‘Quick poll’ facilities for simple questions.</p> <p>Respondents could be required to provide certain pre-defined information about themselves, such as age, gender, race and location.</p> <p>Consultation facilities could be used for service-specific consultation exercises ~ links from services’ own web-space would be built to the consultation area of the website. The results of these consultation exercises would feed</p>	<p>1</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>1</p>

Public Engagement Method	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
		<p>directly back to the relevant service for analysis (the summary results would also be sent to the Public Engagement Team). Results would be published on the website.</p> <p>Respondents would be able to register for general and / or service-specific feedback and to take part in future consultation exercises. A database of consultees would need to be maintained, which could be used for the intelligent targeting of surveys to produce structured samples. These subsequent surveys could be carried out by email, with e-mail responses, and with automated acknowledgements & feedback.</p> <p>Consultation facilities could be made available to local voluntary groups who may want to use the facilities.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
Citizens' Panels	A demographically representative cross-section of the population available for regular surveys	<p>A special portal would be created to accelerate & improve contact with panel members.</p> <p>Panel members can use consultation portlet to respond to surveys.</p> <p>Panel members to be able to register online, providing certain pre-defined information about themselves, such as age, gender, race and location. Also able to withdraw registration and amend / update registration details.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>1</p> <p>5</p>
Discussion Forums	Opportunities for members of public to exchange views, either on general issues affecting the Uttlesford district, or specific 'threads' either instigated by the Council, wishing to open a debate on a particular subject, or by the citizens themselves.	<p>Development of a general discussion forum.</p> <p>Development of specific, topic-related discussion forum. Some of these could be limited to registered users, such as citizens' panel and focus group members. Where necessary, access to topic-related forums could be password protected.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>
Comments / complaints	Opportunities for the public to make	Online form for general comments / complaints. Submitted data should be	6

Public Engagement Method	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
	<p>comments, compliments and complaints about Council services. Such information should be captured into a database, for subsequent re-distribution / analysis & reporting.</p>	<p>capable of being passed seamlessly to the CRM workflow application (yet to be installed). Should be able to differentiate between comments, complaints and compliments (possibly by the use of tick boxes or a drop down list on the online form).</p> <p>Automated acknowledgement of submissions.</p> <p>Create an archive of comments by citizens about Council services and, if the citizen's consent is given, to be viewed by the public on the website.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>6</p>
<p>Focus Groups</p>	<p>A facilitated group discussion designed to explore particular issues in depth and to obtain the views of participants. Could include, for example, tenant forums, leisure centre user groups etc.</p>	<p>Focus group members to register online, providing certain pre-defined information about themselves, such as age, gender, race and location.</p> <p>Website to advertise forthcoming focus group events. Briefing papers, invitations and follow-up reports to be sent to focus group members by email.</p> <p>Online discussion forums to help identify issues needing detailed exploration.</p> <p>Websites to advertise for focus groups participants.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7</p> <p>2</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Public meetings</p>	<p>Regular or one-off, advertised meetings where citizens and / or stakeholders can hear about plans, proposals or programmes, ask questions and express opinions.</p>	<p>Promotion of forthcoming meetings via email (to registered citizens) and through website. Online registration option for those interested in attending please note: this will need to be linked to an online booking system, particularly where demand may exceed availability of places.</p> <p>SMS text messaging / email notification to remind registrants immediately prior to events.</p> <p>Email distribution of invitations, agendas and minutes.</p> <p>Online publication of agendas, minutes and press releases.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>7</p> <p>7</p> <p>N/A</p>

Public Engagement Method	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
		Online feedback survey option from participants. Feedback survey data to be captured in SQL database for subsequent analysis.	8
		Webcasting of key council meetings (not part of this contract).	N/A
Consultative committees	Permanent body designed to provide formal input opportunities for selected stakeholders.	Website to publicise role and activities.	N/A
		SQL databases to be maintained of consultative committee members, including email addresses and / or mobile 'phone numbers (not for publication without express agreement)	5
		SMS text messaging and emails to alert committee members of forthcoming meetings & other issues.	7
		Distribution of invitations, agendas and minutes via email.	7
Stakeholder conferences	A special event convened to consider one or more complex issues, and designed to give citizens and stakeholders a good opportunity to discuss among themselves, as well as with the council. Could include Meetings organised by elected councillors at ward or community level and designed to let citizens and stakeholders express views directly about specific issues.	Creation of a 'Stakeholder portal' to ascertain citizens' interest in various subjects and gather data for determining invitation lists.	N/A
		Online booking with multiple break-out options (please note: this may need to be linked to an online booking system, particularly where demand may exceed availability of places. However, for the purposes of this tender, it is assumed that places will not be restricted).	Online Booking System
		Email distribution of invitations.	7
		Event attendance register with email distribution of minutes, powerpoint presentations etc.	Online Booking System & 7
		Electronic voting on key issues using 'gameshow' technologies (not part of this contract).	N/A
		Online feedback survey from participants.	8

Public Engagement Method	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
		Allow registered users who have made consultations, to have their email addresses available to be viewed by other registered users, with their consent. This would enable contact to be made to each other, but would be outside of the website.	5

Appendix Two

Table A – Online Booking Products

Product Number	Product Name	Product Description
1	Basic Online Booking System	<p>An online system, linked to an SQL database(s) (not directly visible to the public) to record bookings & details of those making the bookings. The system should be accessible via the Council's website. It should also be capable of being updated by staff, when accepting bookings by 'phone and post.</p> <p>The system must be flexible enough to cope with a wide range of new events, activities and courses. Staff will need to be able to add new booking criteria to the system as new requirements emerge. It is likely that booking criteria will take the form of YES / NO type questions, drop-down or pick lists (e.g. for the name of courses, locations, dates etc) and free-form questions (e.g. name, address, telephone number etc).</p> <p>Automated acknowledgement that booking has been received. The precise wording of the automated message should be configurable, to take account of the particular circumstances of the booking.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, users will apply to join a waiting list. When sufficient numbers are on the waiting list, a further course will be arranged. The system should trigger a notification that the number has been reached / nearly reached and that a course should be arranged.</p> <p>Although it is intended to accept bookings for events organised by third parties, access to the booking system will be restricted to authorised users only ~ it is not intended that other partners, such as voluntary groups & parish councils will have direct access to the system.</p> <p>Staff able to display / print:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of bookings, including a hard-copy course attendance register / tick sheet, for use by person running course. The register should include basic information about the attendee including name and age. • Mailing labels.
2	Online Payment Option	<p>The system should be able to link to the Council's e-payments system so that attendee can pay for place at same time as booking. In certain circumstances, this will need to be a pre-requisite of accepting the booking.</p> <p>System should clearly guide attendees through the booking process, on an easy to follow step-by-step basis.</p>
3	Real-time booking System (additional functionality)	<p>Ability to limit the number of places for a course, event etc, by pre-entering the total number of places available.</p>

Product Number	Product Name	Product Description
	to 1 & 2)	<p>A booking entered into the system will reduce the remaining number of available places.</p> <p>Bookings added to the database in real-time. When available places are full, public unable to book any further places. It is important that the public are advised when and why their booking is not accepted.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, council staff will be taking bookings over the 'phone, in person and by post at the offices. They therefore need the ability to enter bookings to the database in real-time and / or book against a separate block of places to those allocated for Internet bookings (this will often apply to bookings accepted by the Tourist Information Centre).</p>
4	Reporting System (additional functionality to 1 & 2)	Able to produce a series of standard or bespoke reports. Likely information would include; number of bookings, summary information for individual bookings, available places remaining on courses, total income collected, etc.
5	Multiple break-out options (additional functionality)	For certain larger events, delegates 'break-out' into a number of smaller workshop sessions, or similar. These breakout sessions may be for part of the event only, or delegates may follow different 'streams' throughout the whole event. The system should enable delegates to choose the particular workshops they wish to attend. The system should be able to keep track of the numbers booking onto each of the break-out sessions, and advise delegates when sessions are full.
6	Court and pitch hire (additional functionality)	<p>The system should be able to allocate particular courts or pitches for pre-defined periods (could also apply, for example, to school trips to the Museum, where users may be able to select specific dates or times only).</p> <p>User notified of whether booking successful and which court / pitch they have been allocated, and for what period.</p>
7	Self-service option (additional functionality)	<p>Users able to view a list of the bookings they have made, including details of dates, times etc.</p> <p>As this information may be sensitive, some form of authentication will be required before the user can view the details. This authentication will need to be built into the booking system database (for example, when making the booking, the user could be required to include a password, which they then use to view details of their bookings at a later date).</p> <p>User able to cancel a booking (where permitted) &, if booking criteria allows, request a refund (this will not be completed online).</p>

Table B ~ Practical Applications for Booking System

Booking Requirement	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
Sports courses, activities & facilities.	Including summer play scheme activities, drama & art classes, cultural activities, sports courses & festivals, court & pitch hire, coaching courses, cycle safety training, outdoor adventure days, activities for older persons, hire of Bridge End Garden, minibus booking etc. A back-office booking system, built in MS Access, is currently used to record these bookings. No online functionality currently exists.	System captures details of those making bookings into a back office application (existing application will need to be converted from Access to SQL ~ a copy of the system is available to view upon request). Bookings will be accepted by 'phone, by post in person and via the website.	1
		Automated acknowledgement of online bookings.	1
		Real-time booking of places, advising user when course etc is full.	3
		User able to pay for facility at time of booking ~ in certain circumstances the user will be unable to complete the booking without first having paid.	2
		Able to book specific 'slots', for example, a tennis court between particular pre-set times.	6
		Staff able to display / print: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of bookings, including a hard-copy course attendance register / tick sheet, for use by person running course. The register should include basic information about the attendee including name and age. • Mailing labels. • Management information regarding individual courses & overall course attendance. 	4
		User able to check online what bookings they have made, cancel bookings, change dates etc.	7
Museum	School trips, children's activity days, educational talks, hire of Museum premises, invitations to exhibition	Many of the above features. Able to book specific slots, for	6

Booking Requirement	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
	openings etc. No online, or back office, systems currently exist.	<p>example specific dates or times for school trips.</p> <p>Some events held at the Museum are free to members. Therefore, a membership number will need to be entered to avoid the charge.</p>	1
Tourism	The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) accepts bookings on behalf of various local voluntary & commercial organisations for concerts, shows & events (see the What's On section of the website for examples). No online or back office electronic systems currently exist.	<p>The system provides the customer with overview information about the event & venue.</p> <p>Staff able to add new events, including free text overview information.</p> <p>Customer able to select an event from a list and make an online booking. System captures details of those making bookings into a back office application. Bookings will be accepted by 'phone, by post in person and via the website.</p> <p>TIC staff able to identify the event to which the booking relates.</p> <p>Automated acknowledgement of online bookings.</p> <p>Real-time booking of places, advising user when course etc is full.</p> <p>User able to pay for facility at time of booking ~ in certain circumstances the user will be unable to complete the booking without first having paid. Booking must be linked to the Council's e-payments system.</p> <p>User able to check online what bookings they have made, cancel bookings, change dates etc.</p> <p>System should produce a printed report that can be used to reconcile tickets sales to</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>7</p> <p>4</p>

Booking Requirement	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
Environmental Health	Bookings for food hygiene courses & similar events	<p>income collected.</p> <p>System captures details of those making bookings into a back office application. Bookings will be accepted by 'phone, by post in person and via the website.</p> <p>Automated acknowledgement of online bookings.</p> <p>Real-time booking of places, advising user when course etc is full.</p> <p>Staff able to display / print:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of bookings, including a hard-copy course attendance register / tick sheet, for use by person running course. The register should include basic information about the attendee including name & organisation. • Mailing labels. • Management information regarding individual courses & overall course attendance. <p>User able to check online what bookings they have made, cancel bookings, change dates etc.</p>	<p></p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>7</p>
Public meetings	<p>Regular, or one off, advertised meetings where citizens / stakeholders can hear about plans, proposals or programmes, ask questions and express opinions.</p> <p>These events are almost certainly free of charge.</p>	<p>System captures details of those making bookings into a back office application. Bookings will be accepted by 'phone, by post in person and via the website.</p> <p>Automated acknowledgement of online bookings.</p> <p>Real-time booking of places, advising user when meeting is full.</p> <p>Staff able to display / print:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of bookings, including a hard-copy meeting attendance register / tick sheet, for event organiser. The register 	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>

Booking Requirement	Description	Required Developments	Product No.
		<p>should include basic information about the attendee including name and organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailing labels & labels for name badges. • Management information overall event attendance. 	
Stakeholder Conferences	<p>A special event convened to consider one or more complex issues, and designed to give citizens and stakeholders a good opportunity to discuss amongst themselves, as well as with the council.</p> <p>Could include meetings organised by elected councillors at ward or community level and designed to let citizens and stakeholders express views directly about specific issues.</p>	<p>System captures details of those making bookings into a back office application. Bookings will be accepted by 'phone, by post in person and via the website.</p> <p>Automated acknowledgement of online bookings.</p> <p>Real-time booking of places, advising user when conference is full.</p> <p>Staff able to display / print:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of bookings, including a hard-copy conference attendance register / tick sheet, for event organiser. The register should include basic information about the attendee including name and organisation. • Mailing labels & labels for name badges. • Management information overall event attendance. <p>For certain events, attendees will be given a choice regarding the particular 'breakout' workshop or presentation they wish to attend. These may be for part of the day only, or attendees may wish to follow different 'streams' throughout the day. The system should be able to give attendees the options, keep track of numbers and advise when particular break-out sessions are full.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>5</p>