

Report of: Business Systems Business Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 16 April 2006

Item No:

Title of Report : Big Oxford Computing Company Ltd. (BOCC) Contract

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report the status of the relationship with the Big Oxford Computing Company Ltd ("BOCC") and gain approval for the Council's entry into an agreement with BOCC in regard to the Council's external web site facility.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen Tall

Scrutiny Responsibility: Finance

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen Tall

Legal: Lindsay Cane

Finance:

Strategic Director: Mark Luntley

Policy Framework: None

Recommendation(s):

Grant Major Project Approval for the implementation and maintenance of Council's external web site facility.

Authorise the Council's entry into an appropriate agreement with the Big Oxford Computer Company Ltd ("BOCC") to ensure the on-going maintenance of the web site facility.

Context

1 The Council appointed the Big Oxford Computing Company (BOCC) in July 2004 to build, maintain and host the Council's public (external) Web site www.oxford.gov.uk

2 The appointment of BOCC followed the Council's tendering and procurement process. Other tenders were received from Goss International and Tagish limited, and that from BOCC was selected.

3 This project was undertaken as part of the £1.24m IEG programme (£900k IEG grant and £340k from City Council).

Contracts and authorisation

4 Contracts were not signed before work on building the site began, as a number of commercial issues remained unresolved.

5 Initial Tender costs for Phase 1 of the project were £95k implementation & training, plus £30k pa hosting & support, Phases 2 and 3 were not costed. Post tender discussions resulted in the project being restructured:

- Phase 1 £115k (Key themes - Basic website including Content Management)
- Phase 2 £75k (Key themes - On-line Council Tax and Rent payments, Planning integration)
- Phase 3 £47k (Intranet)
- Hosting and maintenance £30k pa for 5 years

6 Actual (BOCC) one-off and maintenance costs are shown below:

2004-5

Website Development / Build (one-off costs)	£199k
Annual support, maintenance and hosting	£ 27k

2005-6

Website Development / Build (one-off costs)	£ 29k
Annual support, maintenance and hosting	£ 30k

2006-7

Website Development / Build (one-off costs)	£ 51k
Annual support, maintenance and hosting	£ 30k

Whilst there were some changes to project scope during the development cycle (additions and deletions) the delivered scope is broadly in line with the original specification.

The bulk of Phase 1, 2 & 3 developments took place during 2004-5 and 2005-6, additional functionality to enhance the Website have been delivered during 2006-7.

7 The time pressure to press ahead with the project came from the deadlines associated with the IEG programme and conditions around availability of funding. Grants made available for 2001-2 (£150k) and 2002-3 (£150k) had not been spent by 2003-4 and were at risk.

8 The then interim Business Manager (Chris Brooke) acted in the belief that he had delegated powers to spend the external funding without reference to EB and so authorisation was never sought.

Relationship going forward

9 The relationship with BOCC continues on a sound basis, The web site facility was created in accordance with the Council's requirements, and BOCC provides effective support and plays a key role in the development and delivery of the site. Developments include a Members' area, giving Members secure access to the Council's Intranet via the public Web site.

10 Support, maintenance and hosting costs going forward are estimated at £30k pa from FY 2007/08

11 Future costs to develop new features and functions for the Website can not be accurately predicted as they depend upon the specification of the desired developments from time to time.

Where we are now and recommendations

12 The Council's legal services were instructed and the commercial and contractual issues concerning the on-going maintenance have been resolved to both parties' satisfaction. We are now, therefore, in a position to complete these contract formalities.

13 Whilst there are other supply options available, BOCC's performance is generally good and there's no compelling reason to move the maintenance service to another supplier.

14 This report now seeks approval from the Executive Board to conclude these formalities and to enter into the agreement with BOCC in regard to on-going web site maintenance and development work. In addition, the Executive Board is requested to grant major project approval for the web site facility project.

Name and contact details of author:

Rob Sproule

rsproule@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers: None

