Audit, Governance and Standards Committee
28 June 2016

Contracts Register System - Update

Report by Executive Head of Organisational Development and Strategic Business

**Purpose**

To provide an update on the Council’s Contracts Register System (CRS).

**Recommendations**

To **Note** that Strategic Business Commissioning will continue to oversee the Council CRS and will carry out regular communications to staff to ensure the mandatory use of the Council’s Pro-contract system and Contracts Register System.

**Key Points**

A  Commissioning and Contracts are within the remit of the Treasury Committee. However, this report is being considered by Audit, Governance and Standards Committee to provide a specific update on the Contracts Register System and the role it plays in assuring Council oversight of contractual information and compliance with the transparency code. It follows previous reports on contract signing across the Council and corporate risks associated with commissioning and contracts.

B  The Council is required to publish details for all contracts on a contracts register system (CRS). This Council previous published via the London CRS, but has now transferred this to the Due North CRS, which is part of the same suite of systems that the Council uses for procurement activities.

**Context**

1. The Council has had a long-standing requirement to publish data on contracts over £50k in value (total, not per annum) on a central contracts register system which is accessible for anyone. This data to include contract type, contractor details, contract start date, end date and values, along with names and details of officers responsible in the Council. From 2015 the Local Government Transparency Code requires the Council to publish data on contracts over £5000.

2. The Council’s devolved structure for contract management means that updating and refreshing the CRS has been the responsibility of contract managers and heads of service. An exercise was carried out by Strategic Business Commissioning in 2015 to ask managers to confirm data within the CRS and also to confirm they held appropriate contract documents which were signed. This was reported to the Audit Committee in September and was agreed that Strategic Business carry out a six-monthly refresh.
3. The Council has adopted the Due North CRS System (www.londontenders.org) instead of a standalone system. As the Council uses Due North for its e-Procurement system, it means it is easy to promote data once a contract is awarded or order placed, to the CRS. Strategic Business Commissioning has now rolled out training for the Council so every procurement should take place through the system, meaning it we can be more confident that the data is correct, and there is now only one place this information is stored.

4. Contract managers currently have responsibility across the organisation for ensuring that contract data is correct and up-to-date and is published on time. In addition they are require to ensure they have the appropriate sign-off of contracts and hold an approved contract. Strategic Business Commissioning are carrying out a programme of upskilling contract managers across the Council. This includes contract administration and performance management. Contract Management is a key capability for the Council under the Our Kingston Programme.

5. Some further work is being undertaken to improve how contracts are stored and the potential for using the Pro-contract system as a repository for contracts data.

Proposal and Options

6. That the Council will continue to use the Due North CRS system as a tool for publishing contracts.

7. Strategic Business Commissioning will undertake a further communications to managers that it is mandatory to publish all contracts on the system which are over £5k and that any procurement leading to an order or contract award must also be carried out on the system.

8. Strategic Business will carry out six monthly refresh activities on the system and as part of this will additionally request that service managers/contract managers confirm they have appropriate sign-off of contracts.

Consultations

9. No consultations needed.

Timescale

10. Strategic Business will undertake a regular refresh of the CRS and ensure managers across the services input into the system.

Resource Implications

11. No additional budgets needed, but the Committee are asked to note that the activities to oversee and manage the CRS are undertaken within existing Strategic Business Commissioning resources.

Legal Implications

12. There are implications if the Council does not provide accurate data on the CRS, as it would be in breach of the transparency code, as well as ensuring it has correct oversight of contracts across the Council.
Risk Assessment

13. The process for updating the CRS is now more streamlined, with key data being promoted once a procurement activity is undertaken. Also, Strategic Business

Equalities Impact Assessment

14. There are no equalities implications with the content of this report.

Network Implications

15. There are no network implications with the content of this report.

Environmental Implications

16. There are no environmental implications with the content of this report.

Background papers - Local Government Transparency Code 2015

Author of report - Chris Morgan, Capability Lead Commissioning,
chris.morgan@kingston.gov.uk