



PORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC23/067

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	24 th January 2024
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Website
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval to migrate the Council's website away from 2Commune by the end of March 2024.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council transfer its website hosting agreement to Cuttlefish media and review the performance of the hosting agreement after 6 months, with a view to potentially contracting to Company B below if it is not a satisfactory service.

3. Information

- 3.1. As advised to Council on 17th January, 2Commune have given notice that they will be unable to continue hosting the Council's website after the end of March 2024, because of a dispute with their technology supplier, Cuttlefish media.
- 3.2. Since we were advised of this
 - a) Quotes have been obtained from three suppliers familiar with the sector.
 - b) An offer to assume the hosting arrangement has been received from Cuttlefish Media
 - c) A further offer to assume the hosting arrangement has been received from a fifth organisation, Parish Online, with whom the Council had some interaction in 2022 on a separate matter.

- 3.3. The three companies asked to quote have all done so and their proposals are summarised below. All three are experienced in providing parish council websites and have a significant market profile and share.

	Company A	Company B	Company C
Set up cost	£2850	£2200 (includes £720 for extended support during first year).	£600 but this excludes content transfer which would have to be procured separately
Set up period	6 weeks	5-7 weeks	3 weeks
Annual fee	£336 - plus domain name admin - £88 every two years	£499 inclusive of domain name admin	£330 plus domain name admin £60/yr
Total five year cost	£4750	£4695	£2580
Options/comments		<p>£500 one off fee for an online payments function;</p> <p>£720 ongoing annual cost from year 2 for extended support of up to 12 hours</p> <p>£300 for WCAG website compliance monitoring scan and reports</p>	Assume additional £600 for content transfer

- 3.4. Cuttlefish Media's offer is to host and maintain the existing website for the same fee that 2Commune charged and on the same or very similar contractual terms. They will effectively take over the website from 2Commune and continue to provide it in its current format.
- 3.5. Parish Online's offer is to transfer the Council's website content over to their own website hosting service for free – this will be a different design and the functionality will vary. They will maintain the gov.uk domain name that we have for free. They will take on the website from 1st April or earlier if we wish. They appear to have a working relationship with 2Commune's staff already. They will price match 2commune's charges.

- 3.6. All suppliers estimate that transition to a new website can be achieved in under 7 weeks, although company c's quote means that content transfer might not be possible in time if we had to do it ourselves or procure additional resource in to do it. There will, in all cases, be a requirement for KTC staff time to oversee and problem solve during the transition. There are over 1000 documents on the website currently. Staff would also need time to be trained in how the eventual new system works and is managed.

4. Summary

- 4.1. The main challenge in moving our website is the short period of time to set up a new website and transfer all or most of its contents to a new platform. Therefore, the offer from Cuttlefish is attractive in that it is the same website, with the same functionality at the same cost, and involves little or no work on our part. However, we have had no dealings with Cuttlefish to date and it is not clear what experience they have had in hosting websites or within the local council sector. An incidental benefit in moving websites is that some necessary improvements can be incorporated into the changeover, and these will therefore remain outstanding pieces of work to do later in 2024 if we transition to Cuttlefish.
- 4.2. The interesting offer from Parish Online is also attractive in that they are offering a free transition, but there still will be a transition process and we will end up with a website which looks and functions differently. (Parish Online provide the platform for the county wide asset mapping process undertaken in 2022 – through NCALC – which we participated in). Some of their existing websites appear quite basic and they therefore might not be suitable for a council of our size.
- 4.3. Of the three competing quotes for a completely new website, the offer from company B seems the most attractive in that they can show some good quality websites and they have a range of optional extras which will be attractive over time.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1. The current hosting arrangement costs £460 per annum and was expected to cost less than £500 in the coming year. The hosting arrangement runs from February to February, so it is likely that there will be a residual cost in this financial year from 2Commune of about 6 weeks of support. 2Commune also charged for training and for changes to the configuration of the website where this is necessary.
- 5.2. As reported to Council, the Council must have a website to enable it to fulfil its financial, administrative and communication responsibilities.
- 5.3. There is no provision in the budget for the set up costs of a new website.

6. Climate change implications

None specifically

7. Policy Implications

The Council's policy is make best use of its resources and to communicate as widely as it can its activities, policies and procedures.

Background Papers

Offers and quotes from all five companies

