

Date of meeting	21/1/21 CCB meeting
By	Dave Briggs, Head of Digital Operations
Title	Low code software development platform contract award
Project Sponsor	Neil Williams, Chief Digital Officer
Executive Director	Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Executive Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer
Lead Member	Cllr Young
Key Decision	Yes 0521RFG The notice of the decision will specify that the decision may not be implemented until after 13.00 hours on the working day following the day on which the decision was taken unless referred to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.6th

1. Recommendations

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Financial Governance, in consultation with the Leader, is recommended by CCB to:

- 1.1 Approve the award of a contract to Softcat plc for the provision and support of the Netcall low code software development platform for a contract term of 5 years at a total contract value of £877,350 (£175k pa).
- 1.2 Note, the previous pilot with a different provider was at a value of £84,475.

2. Background & strategic context

What are the relevant Croydon policies and priorities that apply to this Project?

Croydon Renewal Plan

The Renewal Plan submission to MHCLG includes an appendix specifically outlining our approach to service redesign, which depends on the use of a low code rapid software development solution in order to enable the redesign and digitisation of our core statutory service offering to residents, and to drive efficiency savings.

Corporate Plan 2018-2022

The corporate plan sets an objective that our residents can access services easily online, 24 hours a day.

Digital Strategy 2019-2022

This platform is instrumental in delivering frontline digital resident services as per the Digital Strategy – most of which remains relevant post s114. The strategy requires us to be able to build and iterate fast. Having a fit for purpose platform will enable CDS to shift the emphasis from coding and building tools, to user research and design, thereby ensuring we build the right thing, and build it right.

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019

The MTFS sets out a savings target for the council that in part will be met by providing online services for all high volume, low value transactions; reserving high value service provision for our most vulnerable users.

Our digital strategy, and indeed the strategy of the council is to improve online services so that our residents, businesses and visitors can transact with us in a way that suits them 24/7/365. This is not a single piece of technology but instead a number of interlocking components that together enable an end to end digital service.

CDS' aim is to create online digital services that are so good people will choose to use them, over more expensive channels such as the telephone or face-to-face appointments. Unfortunately, CDS initially lacked the tools and expertise to achieve this, so set about investigating low code solutions which would allow us to create transactional online services cheaply, quickly and with a very generic skill-set, to compliment the new website which was already being created.

NB. The funding for the low code platform is within current CDS budgets and is funded by the reductions in spend elsewhere, specifically the 100k on Azure hosting and £280k on Dynamics licences ensuring no overspend

In early 2020, as part of the ongoing MTFS programme, a decision was made to bring forward the decommissioning of CRM / My Account by 1 year to radically improve our online services, and avoid renewal of licencing costs of £280k and hosting costs of £100k, along with further savings to be achieved by decommissioning other CRM related applications in the future.

In addition to the financial savings, this change is necessary due to the following technological factors

- The underpinning software is getting old and increasingly hard and expensive to maintain, and the user journey is lagging behind what people are coming to expect in this day and age.
- Adding new digital services to My Account is similarly difficult and costly.
- The changes Microsoft are making to Dynamics means we would have to do some very costly and time-consuming work on it just to keep it working this year.

This decision led to trialling a new toolset; a 'low code' platform that promises to enable the rapid development of digital services. Last year a low value RFQ was undertaken leading to a 12 month (with options to extend) contract to pilot the platform, assess the benefits and inform the case for an enterprise solution.

The pilot (value @58k) was strictly limited in respect of the underlying technical infrastructure (technical resources such as processor and memory) and number of cases to be handled (licence transaction and population limits). This was to keep pilot costs as low as possible.

Benefits of using the platform so far

A summary of the benefits is shown in this section –further detail is provided in the Appendix.

The Low code platform has already been used, and more than proved its value, during our COVID19 response, to quickly build end to end products such as:

- The COVID19 SitRep tool,
- The shielding case management system,
- For services distributing government funded business and individual financial support.
- LBC Delivery Tracker – used to track MTFS savings proposals

In February 2020 we finalised a procurement of a two-year trial (1 year + 1 year) for a “low code” rapid application development platform called Liberty Create. (“Low code” systems enable apps to be developed with less manual programming). 10 CDS staff attended a 3-day basic training course to learn how to build applications, and many did an additional project to get certification.

Events overtook the pilot with the advent of the pandemic urgent applications were developed using the platform. Without the pilot platform the council would not have been able to create the applications so quickly and the cost would have been greater (please see the financial section). *However the demand has exceeded the capacity of the pilot platform in respect of both technical resources and the licencing limits.*

*A low value upgrade to the infrastructure has already been put in motion to ensure it does not fall over
At a cost of @£18k against the pilot contract value of 56k.*

(GRAPHS of usage below show the pilot platform has reached capacity)



In order to continue to deliver value from the platform, maintain the developed applications and introduce new applications to replace more expensive systems, and retain the use of the Covid19 solutions, either a different platform is required or retain the platform and upgrade to an enterprise level capable of meeting the demands of the Council.

The procurement of a low code platform will enable us to extract much more value for money, as in the future we will need to purchase less, as we can make more in-house.

We intend to use Low code to bring further benefits and savings:

- **Improve My Account** – rebuild existing digital services so they work better for residents (reducing avoidable contact) and can be maintained more cost-effectively
- **Shift more transactional services online** – digitise services that currently operate on paper, by phone, face to face, or use rudimentary forms (Word/PDF files)
- **Build the engine for localities and future council agility** – a system of small parts, loosely joined that enable us to bust silos between service verticals, combine and share data sources, tailor and target services to localised needs, and enable LBC to adapt more rapidly
- **Replace the Microsoft Dynamics based MyAccount CRM system** with a Low code based application will save 280k pa against the Microsoft License Agreement.
- **Continue to support COVID 19 activities** with applications developed on the platform.
- **Achieve net savings of approximately £160,000 per annum** by changing provider (see financial section for full breakdown)

The platform will be used to improve online services throughout the council including Health and Care systems.

For each online process that is built on the platform there will be a positive impact upon services in the council, as they will be built in a user-centred way, designed to minimise processing tasks by making use of good data management, automation and collaboration between teams. This should reduce the time it takes to resolve cases.

CDS expect the benefits to be less calls to the contact centre requesting services and chasing outstanding issues, less footfall in Access Croydon, and those people attending should be able to self-serve (possibly with assistance at first) using the public access computers already provided.

3. Financial implications

Section 114 Essential Spend

The requirement is considered to meet the essential spend criteria and *has been approved by the Executive Director. [sign off to be confirmed] Jacqueline Harris-Baker on 12 January 2021.*

The expenditure meets the following criteria for new' spend in accordance with S115(6A) of the Local Government Finance Act:

- *Expenditure to prevent the financial situation getting worse:*

This is because:

A) £160k net savings from FY 21/22. This is a lower cost, more flexible solution to replace the existing technologies behind My Account and online resident services and customer relationship management (CRM).

B) The platform is currently being used (under prior 1-year trial contract) as the primary tool for the Programme Management Office (PMO) to manage and track MTFS savings proposals. If the contract were not awarded then this system would no longer be usable for this purpose and the PMO would have to find a new way to manage and monitor all savings put forward, potentially putting the delivery of all savings at risk.

Furthermore, this meets the finance criteria for essential spend, as follows:

- Expenditure required to deliver the council's provision of statutory services at a minimum possible level
- Urgent expenditure required to safeguard vulnerable citizens

The platform provides assistance to vulnerable residents and local businesses affected by the pandemic. Without this new contract, we would have to find alternative solution for the shielding app, business grants and Sit Rep (tool in use to track and monitor performance, resourcing and prioritisation of every service across the council).

Note expenditure of @£84k on the pilot was with Netcall not with Softcat which brings overall spend including the contract with Softcat to £947k.

Table 3.1

Details	Internal		Period of funding	External		Period of funding
	Capital	Revenue		Capital	Revenue	
Terminating current costs: My Account hosting/Azure CRM Dynamics Licences		100k 280k	C14127/C14124 C14141			
Total old cost		380k				
Netcall low code software contract	18k	175k	5 years Feb 2021 - 2026			
Other expenditure: Complaints module Alternative products that may be required (estimated)		20k 25k				
Total new cost		220k				
Net saving		160k				

IMPORTANT: There is a pressure on CDS licence and software expenditure of approx. 250k due to partly unachieved savings from MTFS 2019. This pressure has been mitigated in financial year 20/21 by a one-off income from data and cabinet rental to another London Borough. The saving provided from this contract award will be used to reduce the pressure and should not be treated as an additional saving. (Further work is underway to fully remove the pressure for 21/22 and beyond.)

4. Supporting information

The council has already undertaken a competition and assessed the suitability of the platform against requirements. The new agreement will upgrade the underlying infrastructure to support the larger volumes Croydon now require and the licence needed for the population and volumes of cases transacted using the platform. The CDS team have managed the contract and relationships with the platform provider and will continue to do so. There is also a strong user community, of which Croydon is part, where public sector organisations can take advantage of shared code for solutions, thereby further reducing development time and increasing collaboration across the public sector.

Procurement Route

The CCS framework RM3821 DATA AND APPLICATION SOLUTIONS Lot 2c Citizen services underpinned by the Framework terms and conditions is a compliant route to contract and offers a call from the government e-marketplace as a direct award provided two conditions are met:

Call offs can be completed where:

- The requirement must be intrinsically linked to a system already within the customers organisation
The system is already in use at Croydon

My Account Hosting		100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000		
Total savings		380,000	380,000	380,000	380,000	380,000		
Net savings		171,400	160,250	160,250	160,250	160,250	812,400	

- Under the Netcall proposal and with the Framework the pricing of the licence and class server upgrade is fixed for the contract term.

In addition to the net savings itemised in Table 4.1 there is potential to replace current products with a new build on the low code platform providing further cost avoidance:

- Replacing Blue Badge system: 10k p.a. (50k over 5 year term)
- Replacing e-base: 9.5k p.a. (45k over 5 year term)
- Replacing Form.IO: 7.2k p.a. (36k over 5 year term)
- Replacing Love Clean Streets: 8k p.a. (40k over 5 year term)

Total saving per annum: 34.7k p.a.

Moving these additional services to the low code platform would not increase the contract costs due to the nature of the contract. The timings are yet to be confirmed and so it is likely that some or all of these additional savings could be achieved by FY 22/23.

The platform brings an almost limitless list of opportunities to improve services for our residents and businesses. It can help with driving down the cost of providing services, reducing expenditure on existing systems and reducing demand on our staff. There will be savings made in service areas through efficiencies in working that are not detailed here. Furthermore, this platform may support services in delivering MTFS savings.

Future opportunities for savings also include:

- Replacing 'About your area'
- Integrating with a new telephony provider to improve efficiency in the contact centre
- Integrating with a webchat tool to reduce calls, and encourage cheaper forms of engagement for those who are not able or IT confident enough to self-serve.

To illustrate the potential savings achievable by adopting a Low code based strategy, we took the creation of new functionality for the Selective Licencing Team delivered by the former CRM (contract based) developers and re-calculated against the CDS low code programmers:

Resource	£Daily Rate per head	Total Days	£TOTAL
CRM developers	£600	40	£96,000
Low code Team	£250	40	£40,000
Potential Saving	£350		£56,000

Another example, the "Red File" project was created directly in Low Code. As a result, the work was delivered a lot quicker and using fewer resources, thereby saving more expenditure whilst providing a key service needed by the users much sooner:

$$£250 \text{ per day} \times 3 \text{ people} \times 3 \text{ days} = £2,250$$

options considered:

1. Do nothing - this would entail continuing to use the existing CRM platform, resulting in significantly greater costs and not achieving MTFS savings. This would result in a lack of ability to provide new digital services that meet the needs of our users. Furthermore, we would have to rebuild all of the Covid apps (shielding, business grants, SitRep etc), a new housing booking system, PMO tool in CRM all of which we do not have budget for and would take approximately two years to do on the current system as the development is much more manual and slower.
2. Engage the market through a formal tender process - running a procurement would take time and cost money that we don't have. As in the instance of doing nothing above, we would have to rebuild all of the Covid apps currently in the lowcode platform which would result in LBC not being able to provide statutory services related to Covid.

Additionally, were we to change provider, as a result all the work done in the last year would have to be repeated, at additional cost and delays to delivering new services.

3. Recommended option - direct award of a contract with a call off from the CCS framework RM3821, which allows for direct awards, is the best value option to deliver continuity of service delivery, avoid costs of change and is underpinned by the framework terms and conditions.

Exit

The current CRM solution was developed in house using Microsoft Dynamics CRM and is hosted on the Council's Microsoft Azure cloud platform. The CRM licences can be ceased in July 2021 when the annual renewal is due, the mechanisms of the licensing agreement allow for that. The hosting on Azure can also be ended (again this is part of the council's Microsoft licensing, which has flexible mechanisms built in to allow increases or decreases in hosting volumes).

When this arrangement ends there are two options:

If we no longer require a platform – (unlikely)

OR If we require another platform –

Data to be extracted and provided back to the Council for archiving or migration to any different platform – new platform to rebuild any existing applications as part of requirements.

As the platform is cloud hosted there are no hardware decommissioning or disposal implications.

EQUALITIES:

Please indicate how the proposed contract will support the requirements of the Equality Analysis undertaken.

“It is not anticipated that the procurement of a new system will have a detrimental impact on any of the groups that share protected characteristics, as there are no changes to current Council policies or procedures planned.”

The Equalities Assessment has been submitted to the council's Equalities Officer, who has approved it. (attached below).

A digital platform could potentially exclude residents unable to use online services.

A mitigation however, while making our digital services so good that people prefer to use them, including meeting accessibility guidelines ensuring they are WCAG compliant, at the same time always provide a non-digital route to help, through the contact centre.

The platform provides support for translation services, compliance with AA rating of WCAG2.1, using the government theme as a basis for any webforms, which has been thoroughly tested to ensure the system is accessible as possible

SOCIAL VALUE:

The supplier offered an outreach training offer that will create skills and training opportunities in the locality. It is free for up to 20 individuals that the council can nominate from within the 3rd sector to be trained on the platform.

A suggested eight-month program:

1. Croydon select a group of business minded administrators from the partners. This group should be no more than 20 participants.
 - a. Selection criteria and participant commitment to be agreed with Croydon.
 - b. Croydon to administer any HR, IT or information security requirements.
2. Netcall will oversee a program to jumpstart local change as follows:
 - a. Induction day: a one-day introduction to Low-code, its principles and the eLearning. This will be held at premises provided by Croydon.
 - b. Each participant to have free access to the Netcall eLearning modules. They are able to learn at their own pace.
 - c. A mentor day at 90 days. The participants will be invited to attend a session (date tbc) to review any challenges and have a Q&A clinic session with a low-code professional.
 - d. Accreditation day at month seven or eight: where the participant's will wrap-up their learning success, and receive their certificates.

London Living Wage:

The supplier has confirmed they pay the London living wage.

DPIA

The DPIA is currently being reviewed by the council's Information Management Team, a meeting scheduled with them for January 18th to review their feedback. No major issues were found with the platform. Individual DPIAs will be needed from each service for each application developed which will process personal data.

Personal data is captured and used by the platform.

The Liberty Create platform is compliant with ISO270001 Which set out standards for keeping data safe and secure whilst in storage and during transmission. Data is held securely in UK and EU based Amazon Web Services Servers. The servers are encrypted, as are the Databases, and we can apply field level encryption where appropriate. All connections are made via https with SSL certification throughout. All staff have received training and certification so they know how to create applications which are secure.

Data retention complies with all current data protection legislation and guidelines. Where records need to be retained permanently, hard copies are stored securely off-site at LBC's archivists; Iron Mountain

Summary of key Risks

Key risks include the ability to continue use of the COVID 19 apps

The ability to roll out the latest planned developments such as Housing bookings which cannot be provided by CRM

Delays in getting approval. Vendor may not be willing to extend "trial" period, and or withdraws current offer

IM reject code sharing policy with other LAs

No collaboration possible. May lose out on future developments and have to start from scratch each time

Vendor blocks any further "live" code releases until full procurement completed No further development or releases to services available. Delay in providing key services to residents

There may be risk around the volume of transactions to be processed. The agreement allows for unlimited users and unlimited applications to be developed at no additional cost. The license and infrastructure being purchased is also the enterprise level, aimed for use by the largest councils. The possible risk around transaction volumes is related to the processing and memory requirements of the cloud infrastructure. There is a mechanism to increase memory and processors in the agreement although note this would incur additional cost to the contract price (and, if required, the Tender's and Contracts Regulations and Framework agreement would be followed in relation to modifications).

PSP

Supplier will be invited to participate following award. Note the call off from the framework catalogue does not include the ability to include the scheme as a condition of contract call off.

TUPE

TUPE Does not apply to this procurement. The service provision is offered to many different organisations and there are no dedicated resources assigned specifically to the Council. The in house team who were deployed on the CRM development (which this platform will help replace) were contractors, who are no longer retained by the Council.

Contract Management

The CDS commercial manager, Henny Acheampong, will manage the contract with the CDS subject matter expert Kevin Rowe, the Digital Business Partner who maintains the regular operational and relationship contacts with Netcall the platform provider. This is a continuation of the current arrangements. The only change will be the administration of contract documentation, payments and invoicing via Softcat which will be handled within the CDS commercial team.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

The report recommends the award of a contract to Softcat plc to supply the Netcall low code platform for a period of 5 years at a cost of £862k with a call off from the CCS framework RM3821 which allows for direct awards.

This is the preferred option as it represents the least operational risk, existing developed applications can continue to be used and limits reputational damage and other costs to replace. The award also creates a platform which will yield direct financial savings and establish the opportunity for further in house developments, which will create choice and bring future savings. The framework call off is a PCR compliant procurement route.

6. Outcome and approvals

Outcome	Date agreed	
	Service Director <i>(to confirm Executive Director has approved the report)</i>	Neil Williams 6.1.2020
	Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources	25/01/2021
	Legal Services	18.01.21
	Head of Finance	14/1/21
	Human Resources (if applicable)	n/a
	C&P Head of Service	14/1/21
	Lead Member <i>(for contract award over £500k)</i>	25/01/2021
	CCB	CCB1649/20-21 (02/02/2021)

7. Legal Comments

The legal considerations are as set out within this report.

Approved by Kiri Bailey on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

8. Chief Finance Officer comments on the financial implications

The replacement of the current customer service platform with this proposed platform will entail an ongoing revenue cost of £219k funded by an existing MyAccount hosting and Azure CRM Dynamics Licenses budget of £380k. The savings of c£160k plus further opportunities to generate additional efficiencies and savings in the region of £34.7k per annum is likely to materialise once the platform is implemented. There is a one-off capital outlay of £18k which is funded from CDS ICT capital budget. As the contract is for a period of 5 years, it is assumed that any RPI increases are contained within the revenue budget.

Approved by Geetha Blood, Interim Head of Finance, Place, Gateway, Strategy and Engagement on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Low Code – the storey so far

Appendix 2 – Timetable

Appendix 3 – Equality Analysis

Appendix 4 – Risk Assessment

Appendix 1

Low code– the story so far

Our digital strategy, and indeed the strategy of the council is to improve online services so that our residents', businesses and visitors can transact with us 24/7/365 in a way that suits them. We have an aspiration to build online services so good that the majority of our users prefer them to a telephone or face-to-face transaction. Current offerings were in the form of a My Account, built by a group of expensive contractors. This was hard to create, iterate and support, and had been put together with little user research and insight into the needs of our residents. This needed a major overhaul to allow us to meet the targets set out in our strategies.

We lacked the tools and expertise to do this so set about investigating low code solutions which would allow us to cheaply, quickly and with a very generic skillset create transactional online services, to complement the new website which was already being created. A procurement took place for a 1 to 2 year Proof of Concept (PoC) and a contract was awarded to Netcall for their Liberty Create platform.

Our Intention

To trial the platform for 1-2 years, during which we would create 4/5 apps, test the citizen hub, try to integrate with some LoB systems / Power BI / Azure single sign-on etc. We committed to training 10 staff, have no more than 400 users, and the number of transactions would be relatively low. Bearing in mind the limited scope of this, we procured a class 1 platform system at circa £50k p.a. for the trial period.

What actually happened?

In Jan/Feb 2020, off the back of MTSR, a decision was made to bring forward the decommissioning of CRM / My account by 1 year to radically improve our online services, and save an additional £300k pa in licencing and £150k pa in My Account hosting. This would also have the benefit of not having to go through a major upgrade of MS Dynamics CRM, being forced upon us by Microsoft. We let go a team of My Account C# developers at this point, saving CDS £30k per week (£1.5m per year).

In March the pandemic hit and we had to significantly change tack. We needed to be able to spin up many critical applications quickly to enable us to manage the organisation, and provide assistance to vulnerable residents and local businesses.

Over the following 9 months we built 10 apps, summarised below with the benefits of each.

1. SitRep

This tool (built by 1 dev in just 8 days) has been in constant use since March to monitor the performance, resourcing and prioritisation of every service across the council.

Over 500 managers across 35 departments have reviewed and updated 50 measures daily about the impact of COVID upon their service, so issues can be flagged to SILVER and GOLD groups where appropriate. Staff could then be redeployed and updates can be made to the pan-London group, and central government. Almost 12k updates have been completed

over this period, and without that information, vital services could have been struggling and failing without the knowledge of senior management.

We integrated with power BI to create dashboards for the key stakeholders to allow the data to be easily interpreted.

We also implemented Single Sign-On to reduce the need for passwords, and ensure the system was secure and only accessible by council employees.

2. Small Business Grants for 1st lockdown

An app was created by 2 developers in under two weeks to distribute funds to businesses affected by the first lockdown. Over the following 12 weeks over £51m was paid to 3800 businesses in dire need of support to enable them to survive. The app allowed us to import details of all eligible businesses, they were sent automated emails and SMS inviting them to apply (using an integration with Notify). They applied using an e-form linked to the communication, and the app included workflow to assess and pay out the money using a light integration with the finance system (using exports and imports).

As part of this app we linked the platform to the website design system so the customer had confidence they were dealing with an official Croydon app (as there were many scams popping up) and we implemented sub domain routing to ensure public facing pages all had the x.Croydon.gov.uk URLs.

We also built a number of fraud detection tools (searching for duplicate bank accounts, references and IP addresses) which have been carried forward to all subsequent grant apps in low code.

3. Shielding wave 1

This app was used to support 23,000 vulnerable residents. A contact centre was set up to phone all residents on the NHS and Government shielding lists and ensure they were getting all the support they needed. Off the back of the calls, referrals were made for food parcels, baby supplies, prescription picks ups etc. The shielding app was used to import all the data for the vulnerable residents, record the outcome of the calls, and make referrals where required.

Food parcels, supplementing the boxes provided by central government, were delivered to those most in need, coordinated with the use of this app. The first iteration of this app went live in about 4 weeks, and we released many iterations throughout the 3-month lockdown to accommodate the changing needs of our residents and support teams.

4. Shielding mobile app

It soon became clear that some residents were not responding to the calls, and we had to step up efforts to contact them. We created a mobile app, so a team of visiting officers could go to their houses to confirm they were ok. 346 visits were conducted to the most vulnerable residents on the list using the mobile app to create visiting lists and recording the outcomes, which could be immediately reviewed by back office staff.

5. Business discretionary grant fund

Additional funding was made available for businesses who didn't qualify for the original business grants on a discretionary basis. We created an app to allow businesses to apply for this grant, and allow council officers to assess the applications and pay the money. It was used to distribute over £3m to businesses who needed it.

6. Test and trace support payments

We were required to provide support to residents who were unable to work due to being in isolation after contact with someone who had tested positive to COVID-19. We built an app to allow residents to apply for a £500 payment, upload evidence that they had suffered a loss of income, and workflow for officers to assess and pay the funds. So far the app has paid out a total of £71,000 to 2000 residents.

7. Council Tax Recovery

This year, many more people have been unable to afford their council tax payments, and the number of people eligible for support has increased dramatically. This app allows the Council Tax team to load in a file of people in arrears, send out a questionnaire, and automatically signpost them to available help depending upon the answers they provide. Its early days, but 593 residents have used this tool so far, and when it is fully implemented it is envisaged that it will allow the council to offer appropriate help to 1000s of residents in Council Tax arrears, and prevent large volumes of calls to the contact centre. It will also drive up the take-up of council tax support, and reduce bad debt.

8. Shielding2

The second wave of COVID brought with it a second lockdown, and we looked at the original Shielding app to enable us to again support the most vulnerable in the district. Things had moved on considerably though, the data from central government was far better, the support was more targeted and through lessons learned from the first lockdown, we discovered the app could be far more streamlined. With this in mind we set about creating a fresh app for shielding2. It was put together in just over a week (in contrast to the months of iteration we did on the first version). So far, the app has been used to support 250 of our most vulnerable residents.

9. LBC Grants app

It has become clear that many more pots of money are being made available as the pandemic runs its course. 3 weeks ago we were made aware of 6 new grants for business to cover the 2nd lockdown and the tiered restrictions. Instead of building 6 separate apps, we decided to create a single app that could be used to administer all these grants, and any future grants. This has just gone live and will pay out £x over the next few weeks, and likely many £millions more over the coming months.

10. Delivery tracker

In CDS we have been struggling to find adequate tools to manage a large portfolio of work. Many tools are prohibitively expensive, and other are far too complex for our needs. The CDS PMO team created a specification for an app to manage our portfolio of 160 projects. The first iteration was created in just 2 evenings by a single developer.

In addition to the pressure brought upon the council by COVID-19, we now find ourselves in a situation where we need to find large savings to meet current and future budgets. Many projects need to be managed corporately. Word was getting out about the CDS Utopia tool as it was being used to brief senior staff on CDS work. We were asked to create a copy of this to be used by the corporate PMO, with a number of alterations. It was decided that we would extend the tool to allow a number of portfolios to exist. We did a few more days work and released a major iteration allowing the tool to be used for any number of portfolios across the council, with security in place to keep them separated as some may contain sensitive information.

In the pipeline

In addition to these 10 live applications, we have been making great strides to accomplish the original objective of decommissioning CRM and My Account.

In the limited time between building, iterating and supporting the COVID-19 apps, we are about 70% complete in building the first iteration of a replacement CRM called Citizen Hub which will record in excess of 100,000 resident interactions a year. This is almost in a state to go live within the Contact Centre, enabling them to log calls against residents, and send messages to officers in the various services. It has the ability to automatically create cases from linked e-forms on the website and it can also handle incoming emails about existing cases, and new cases. It includes many features to automate the linking of cases to residents to prevent bad and duplicate data. It also includes the ability to flag a resident as a potential threat to staff, to enable risk assessments to be done before engaging with the public.

We have also successfully prototyped tools to enable customers to upload documents to the platform for any service, the ability to create bookings for any service, and other specific functions such as providing a bulky waste service.

The problem

We have achieved far more than we, or our supplier, imagined we would in the last 10 months. And it is clear that this success has brought us beyond the scope of a PoC. We are therefore in breach of our current contract with the supplier. Furthermore, the infrastructure we have in place to host the platform is not adequate for our current use of it, let alone future growth.

We have trained 15 people (the contract allowed for 10). We have over 600 users (the contract allowed for 400) we have had to upgrade to a class 2 environment (the contract allowed only for class 1, and we need a class 4 ideally).

If we are to meet our objectives around providing digital services, finding savings, decommissioning My Account and CRM we must ensure we can continue to use a low code platform.

Considering the investment and benefit we have already got from the existing PoC, it would be prudent to procure the same solution, otherwise we will no longer have the user of the 10 live apps, we would have to retrain all staff in a new solution, and we would be unable to make the £450k pa saving from decommissioning My Account and Dynamics CRM.

The future

This platform brings with it an almost limitless opportunity to improve services for our residents and businesses, driving down the cost of providing services, reducing expenditure on existing systems and reducing demand on staff.

Future opportunities for savings include:

- replacing Blue Badge system (saving of £10k pa)
- replacing e-base (saving x pa)
- replacing Form.IO (saving x pa)
- replacing Love Clean Streets (saving x pa)
- replacing About your Area (joint with Drupal directories)
- A new system to manage community grants applications
- Using the built-in AI tools for text, image and speech recognition, sentiment tracking, translation and more (using Google AI suite)
- integrating with a new telephony provider to improve efficiency in the contact centre
- Using the on premise adapter to allow easy integration with Line of Business systems, allowing us to extend the functionality of them ourselves, rather than paying suppliers to do this
- Users can photo and send in evidence to any service (saves 1FTE from Access Croydon plus 1FTE from the scanning team)
- Integrating with a webchat tool to reduce calls, and encourage cheaper forms of engagement for those who can't self-serve
- Using the internet of things to automatically create cases for teams (think overflowing litter bins, broken streetlamps, monitoring of council property installations such as boilers and fire alarm systems)
- Creating registers of data which can be used to simplify systems and the way they interact; in the same way we have a register of addresses (LLPG), and staff (Active directory) for example, community spaces and buildings, council assets, voluntary and charity sector services etc.
- Creating a bulk communications tool
- Managing GDPR data about our users
- Managing equalities data about our users

All of these ideas will generate both cashable and efficiency savings by improving processes for our customers, officers and managers.

Who	actions	Start	End
	start	01/12/2020	
Gerard	negotiate with Netcall	01/12/2020	11/12/2020
Gerard	establish if we need CCB strategy or just Award report	01/12/2020	03/12/2020
	Approval and award (RP3 ONLY)		
RWJ leading - team inputting	Draft award or strategy report (ASSUMPTION)	01/12/2020	
Gerard?	draft RP for Cat Mgr sign off	04/12/2020	04/12/2020
RWJ leading - team inputting	EQIA	01/12/2020	14/12/2020
RWJ leading - team inputting	DPIA	01/12/2020	14/12/2020
Jane	Executive Director approval	07/12/2020	14/12/2020
	Obtain Stage 2 Corporate approvals	07/12/2020	14/12/2020
	Head of Resources C&P pre meet	10/12/2020	10/12/2020
	legal and finance pre meet	14/12/2020	14/12/2020
	last day to Submit report to CCB	14/12/2020	14/12/2020
	Present award report to CCB for consideration and recommendation (if £100-£500k)	17/12/2020	17/12/2020
	Approval and award (RP2 + RP3)		
	Draft award report (ASSUMPTION)	11/12/2020	
	draft RP for Cat Mgr sign off	11/12/2020	11/12/2020
	EQIA		
	DPIA		
	Obtain Stage 2 Corporate approvals	18/12/2020	18/01/2021
	Head of Resources C&P pre meet	14/01/2021	14/01/2021
	legal and finance pre meet	18/01/2021	18/01/2021
	last day to Submit report to CCB	18/01/2021	18/01/2021
	Present award report to CCB for consideration and recommendation (if £100-£500k)	21/01/2021	21/01/2021
	housing go live	08/01/2021	08/01/2021
	Contract ends	31/01/2021	31/01/2021

best case date estimates

assumes I win the argument to just do RP3 award

CCB

if we have to take a Strategy then steps above remain

no need to repeat

no need to repeat

start after CCB meets

xmas, new year will delay

CCB

firm in place by now - or arrangement with netcall agr

actual new or varied contract finalisation could take r

Equality Analysis Form Netcall Liberty Create Procurement

Version: 0.2
14th December 2020

Delivering for Croydon

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term '**proposed change**' broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria).

2. Proposed change

Directorate	Resources
Title of proposed change	Netcall Liberty Create Low Code Application Procurement
Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis	Richard Wyatt-Jones CDS Business Analyst

2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

Briefly summarise the proposed change and why it is being considered/anticipated outcomes. What is meant to achieve and how is it seeking to achieve this? Please also state if it is an amendment to an existing arrangement or a new proposal.

As part of the LBC Digital Strategy, we are decommissioning the CRM and My Account system. The software is getting old and increasingly difficult and expensive to maintain. The current user journey is lagging behind what people have come to expect in this digital by default era.

Adding new digital services and functionality to My Account is similarly difficult and costly. -In addition to this, Microsoft have also announced a number of changes to how they manage and license the underpinning application (Dynamics) that My Account operates on, which will require the council- to commit to some very costly and time-consuming work in order to keep it fit for purpose.

In February 2020, CDS agreed the procurement of a two-year trial (1 year +1 year) with Netcall for a “Low code” rapid application development platform called Liberty Create. (“Low code” systems enable apps to be developed with far less manual programming and less reliance upon specific programming languages.)

The system is currently being used for:

- COVID19 services for residents (Revs & Bens, Gateway services, Economic Development): – Shielding database, Test and Trace Support Payments & multiple business hardship grant applications.
- COVID19/emergency response daily data-gathering and situation reporting for Silver and Gold command structures.
- Project & Resource tracking (CDS and LBC PMO)

Other apps are in development, one of which could replace the existing CRM system, making it more user-friendly and cheaper to run.

The full procurement of this platform will enable LBC to extract further value for money, from being less reliant on purchasing “off the shelf” solutions, as we will have the ability to develop more bespoke applications in-house.

Once the tender is completed and a new provider(s) identified, service specific DPIAs will be required from each of the business areas that will be using the system.

It is not anticipated that the procurement of a new system will have a detrimental impact on any of the groups that share protected characteristics, as there are no changes to current Council policies or procedures planned. This will be stipulated as a condition of the tender process.

The Equalities Assessment will be re-visited once the tender process is completed

3. Impact of the proposed change

Important Note: It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. Who benefits and how (and who, therefore doesn't and why?) Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic.

Where an impact is unknown, state so. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments <http://www.croydonobservatory.org/> Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

3.1 Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

Table 1 – Positive/Negative impact

For each protected characteristic group show whether the impact of the proposed change on service users and/or staff is positive or negative by briefly outlining the nature of the impact in the appropriate column. . If it is decided that analysis is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained. In all circumstances you should list the source of the evidence used to make this judgement where possible.

Protected characteristic group(s)	Positive impact	Negative impact	Source of evidence
Age	Relevant to all groups, in that protection from unlawful discrimination is built into prevailing Council policies and procedures, along with any legislation applicable to those business units involved in using the application	There is no reason to believe that groups that share protected characteristics will be at any greater risk than the rest of the population. We have taken steps to show how we will mitigate any impact on residents who might be unable to use online services (see section 5 for details)	Requirements gathering exercises with CDS and end users. Use of the application to develop online forms for COVID 19 support initiatives such as shielding and business grants
Disability			
Gender			
Gender Reassignment			
Marriage or Civil Partnership			
Religion or belief			
Race			
Sexual Orientation			
Pregnancy or Maternity			

Important note: You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.

When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics. **Please use table 4 to record actions that will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact**

3.2 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

Table 2 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table. Please use the table below to describe any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposed change. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:		
Additional information needed and or Consultation Findings	Information source	Date for completion
N/A		
N/A		

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit <https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-and-engagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation>

3.3 Impact scores

Example

If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)
2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact)
3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula **Likelihood x Severity** and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example - **Likelihood (2) x Severity (2) = 4**

Table 4 – Equality Impact Score

Severity of Impact	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
	Likelihood of Impact			

Key

Risk Index	Risk Magnitude
6 – 9	High
3 – 5	Medium
1 – 3	Low

Equality Analysis

Table 3 – Impact scores

<p>Column 1</p> <p>PROTECTED GROUP</p>	<p>Column 2</p> <p>LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE</p> <p>Use the key below to score the likelihood of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group.</p> <p>1 = Unlikely to impact 2 = Likely to impact 3 = Certain to impact</p>	<p>Column 3</p> <p>SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE</p> <p>Use the key below to score the severity of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group.</p> <p>1 = Unlikely to impact 2 = Likely to impact 3 = Certain to impact</p>	<p>Column 4</p> <p>EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE</p> <p>Calculate the equality impact score for each protected group by multiplying scores in column 2 by scores in column 3. Enter the results below against each protected group.</p> <p>Equality impact score = likelihood of impact score x severity of impact score.</p>
Age	1	1	1
Disability			
Gender			
Gender reassignment			
Marriage / Civil Partnership			
Race			
Religion or belief			
Sexual Orientation			
Pregnancy or Maternity			

4. Statutory duties

4.1 Public Sector Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council’s ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010 set out below.

- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups

Important note: If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council’s ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below.

5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

Important note: Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact identified in Table 1. Attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc:

Table 4 – Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts

Complete this table to show any negative impacts identified for service users and/or staff from protected groups, and planned actions mitigate them.				
Protected characteristic	Negative impact	Mitigating action(s)	Action owner	Date for completion
Disability	A digital platform could potentially exclude residents unable to use online services	While making our digital services so good that people prefer to use them, including meeting accessibility guidelines ensuring they are WCAG compliant , at the same time always provide a non-digital route to help, through the contact centre.	Victoria Hunt / Kev Rowe / Dave Hampton, contact centre	Each go-live date for each app built in lowcode

Equality Analysis

		The platform provides support for translation services, compliance with AA rating of WCAG2.1, using the government theme as a basis for any webforms, which has been thoroughly tested to ensure the system is accessible as possible.		
Race	N/A	<p>While making our digital services so good that people prefer to use them, including meeting accessibility guidelines ensuring they are WCAG compliant, at the same time always provide a non-digital route to help, through the contact centre.</p> <p>The platform provides support for translation services, compliance with AA rating of WCAG2.1, using the government theme as a basis for any webforms, which has been thoroughly tested to ensure the system is accessible as possible.</p>	Victoria Hunt / Kev Rowe / Dave Hampton, contact centre	Each go-live date for each app built in lowcode
Sex (gender)	N/A			
Gender reassignment	N/A			
Sexual orientation	N/A			
Age	N/A	While making our digital services so good that people prefer to use them, including meeting accessibility guidelines ensuring they are WCAG	Victoria Hunt / Kev Rowe / Dave	Each go-live date for each app built in lowcode

Equality Analysis

		<p><u>compliant</u>, at the same time always provide a non-digital route to help, through the contact centre.</p> <p>The platform provides support for translation services, compliance with AA rating of WCAG2.1, using the government theme as a basis for any webforms, which has been thoroughly tested to ensure the system is accessible as possible.</p>	Hampton, contact centre	
Religion or belief	N/A			
Pregnancy or maternity	N/A			
Marriage/civil partnership	N/A			

6. Decision on the proposed change

Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter X in column 3 (Conclusion) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.		
Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	<p>Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision.</p> <p>All vulnerable groups will remain to be protected by existing Council policies and procedures along with any legislation applicable to those business units that will be using the low code system</p>	
Adjust the proposed change	We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to	X

Equality Analysis

	take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form	
Continue the proposed change	We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.	N/A
Stop or amend the proposed change	Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.	N/A
Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet	CCB: Date TBC (February 2021?) Spending Control Panel: TBC Cabinet: TBC – initial negotiations ongoing with vendor	

7. Sign-Off

Officers that must approve this decision			
Equalities Lead	Name	Yvonne Okiyo	Date: 15.12.20
	Position:	Equalities Manager	
Director	Name:	Neil Williams	Date: 16.12.20
	Position:	Chief Digital Officer	

Risk Assessment: Netcall Liberty Create Procurement

RISK REF	RISK SCENARIO		ASSIGNED TO	EXISTING CONTROLS	CURRENT RISK RATING			FUTURE CONTROL MEASURES	FUTURE RISK RATING		
	RISK	IMPACT			IMPACT {1-5}	LIKELIHOOD {1-5}	TOTAL		IMPACT {1-5}	LIKELIHOOD {1-5}	TOTAL
R.001	S114 Expenditure Review Panel reject funding application	Project cannot proceed	Dave Briggs		5	3	15				0
R.002	Delays in getting approval from Expenditure Review Panel	Vendor may not be willing to extend "trial" period, and or withdraws current offer	Dave Briggs		4	2	8				
R.003	IM reject code sharing policy with other LAs	No collaboration possible. May lose out on future developments and have to start from scratch each time	Kevin Rowe		2	1	2				0
R.004	Vendor blocks any further "live" code releases until full procurement completed	No further development or releases to services available. Delay in providing key services to residents	Gerard Gough		5	2	10				0
R.005	Section 114 Expenditure Review Panel reject request	Project cannot proceed	Dave Briggs		5	3	15				0

Risk CPO Document Version Control

Template Author: Tanwa Balogun

Last review: 06/02/2014

Next review: 30/04/2015