

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services

Tendering Committee: 10 March 2010

Subject: Tender for the Provision of a Voice Messaging Service

1. Purpose

1.1 This report seeks Committee approval to initiate a tender process for a framework contract for the provision of voice messaging services.

2. Background

2.1 A pilot exercise was carried out during the period August to October 2009 whereby voice mail messages were sent out to council tax payers prior to the production of official reminders or final notices for their monthly council tax instalment. The aim of the exercise was to remind tax payers of the payment due dates and to seek to avoid the requirement to issue a formal reminder notice.

3. Main Issues

3.1 The drive to improve efficiency and productivity is a key focus for Corporate Services. It is essential that we further modernise our systems and processes, continuously improve the services we provide, and demonstrate best value.

3.2 The results obtained from the pilot exercise in August to October 2009 were as follows:

Results	No of Messages Sent	Number of Customers Paid	Value of Payments Received
Payment received after receipt voice mail August campaign	736	33	£3,750
Payment received after receipt voice mail September campaign	2,062	162	£15,938
Payment received after receipt voice mail October campaign	1,158	86	£6,764
Total	3,956	281	£26,452

- 3.3.1 A satisfaction survey was carried out after the voice message pilot exercise. Contact was made with 1,721 customers using the voice messaging service. Of the 1,721 calls, 708 customers responded to the first question asking them if they wished to take part in the survey. Of these 488 (69%) responded that they did not wish to take part and 220 (31%) said they did.
- 3.3.2 The 220 callers were then asked if they had received a council tax call. 17 did not respond, 120 (59%) said no and 83 (41%) said yes.
- 3.3.3 Of the customers taking part in the survey and receiving a call 61% said that they found the service helpful. From the 61% who found the service useful, 72% said that they would like to receive a similar reminder in the future.
- 3.4 The pilot exercise was conducted using stand alone technology i.e. the voice messaging service did not integrate with any of our existing technologies or collection systems and only council tax payers were targeted. However, any future mainlined service would require the functionality of the system to be compatible with the Council's Call Centre and telephony technology. In addition, other services of the Council could be considered as potential users of the service e.g. other collection services and the issue of reminders for appointments.
- 3.5 A multi disciplinary project team would be created to identify the technology requirements of the Council, the potential users of the service and contract issues.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1 This contract is of a specialist nature and, therefore, there are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The pilot exercise in council tax was funded from existing budgets whereby the issue of a voice message was cheaper than the printing and postage associated with the issue of formal reminder notices.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that the introduction and roll out of this service would be financed from existing printing and postage budgets or increased efficiencies generated from fewer missed appointments.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1 Failure to initiate a tendering exercise could impair the Council's ability to demonstrate the delivery of best value services.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact for this service.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 The tendering exercise will facilitate the delivery of best value.

8.2 The Committee is invited to approve the initiation of a tendering exercise for the provision of voice messaging services.

Joyce White
Executive Director of Corporate Services
Date: 26 February 2010

Persons to Contact: Vincent Gardiner – Manager of Exchequer,
Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton
e-mail: Vincent.Gardiner@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
telephone: 01389 737192

Appendices: Nil

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All