

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	To award a contract for the provision of the Talk Community website with appropriate hosting, maintenance and support.
<b>Date of decision:</b>	6 March 2024
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Hilary Hall - Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	The Corporate Director Community Wellbeing is authorised to take all operational decisions associated with the procurement, development and implementation of the Talk Community website, following a <a href="#">Cabinet member decision</a> on 26 September 2022.
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>A survey was available to over 700 stakeholders, including partner organisations, Talk Community newsletter recipients, parish councils and councillors.</p> <p>Several workshops were also held, which were attended by over 70 people from a wide range of stakeholders, along with a Community Partnership event, which was attended by over 50 people from local organisations.</p>
<b>Decision made:</b>	To award a 12 month contract to People, Places, Lives (PPL), via the Government's G-Cloud 13 Framework, for the provision of the Talk Community website. This is at an annual cost of £17,500, with the option to extend for an additional 12 months (1 year + 1 year).
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>The current website contract is in its fourth and final year and ends on 31 March 2024. Therefore, a new contract is required, to ensure the Talk Community website remains available.</p> <p>The Talk Community website, originally known as WISH, was established in 2015 to enable Herefordshire Council to meet the requirements of the Care Act 2014, specifically around the provision of information, advice and support to help people improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them to their local community, services and activities.</p> <p>The Talk Community website supports the council's strategic vision, culture and aspiration to prioritise prevention, independence and wellbeing, by enabling more people to get the assistance they need, at the earliest opportunity possible. This helps to reduce demand for more specialist and expensive health and social care services.</p>
<b>Equality considerations:</b>	<p>Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:</p> <p>A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act</p>

	<p>b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it</p> <p>c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that some people may not be able to / choose not to access the internet to utilise the information on the Talk Community website. Therefore, alternative provision is available, including face to face and telephone support, through the Talk Community Hubs or the council's Customer Services Team and Advice and Referral Team (ART).</p> <p>The website will also be compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.</p>
<p><b>Highlight any associated risks / finance / legal / equality considerations:</b></p>	<p>The council carried out an open procurement process in 2023, to commission a new Talk Community website. However, due to a new and challenging financial position and the requirement to further investigate the consolidation of council websites going forward, this was subsequently cancelled and not awarded. There could be a challenge from the providers who had submitted a tender application.</p>
<p><b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p>	<p><b>Do nothing:</b> This option is not recommended as the current contract ends on 31 March 2024, with no remaining extensions. The council has a responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to provide information, advice and support to help people improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them to their local community, services and activities.</p> <p><b>Consolidate with existing council websites:</b> This option is not currently available, but by awarding a short term contract for the Talk Community website, it enables additional time to fully consider this further, to ensure better value for money.</p>
<p><b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b></p>	<p>None.</p>

Signed: Hilary Hall

Date: 6 March 2024