

Item 9.

Contract Variation - Wi-Fi in Community Centres and Venues for Hire

File No: X039997

Summary

This report seeks a contract variation for Wi-Fi services to City community centres and venues for hire. The current service agreement concludes in November 2022 and this report requests Council approve an 18-month contract extension for the services delivered by Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd (ABN # 79 145 583 099) for these facilities.

Wi-Fi in our community centres and venues for hire provides digital access and inclusion for community, and in particular vulnerable community members, and is a core element of the City's digital strategy as well as the Social Inclusion strategy. In addition, there is a community expectation that free Wi-Fi will be available in these facilities.

The provision of Wi-Fi services to community centres and venues for hire was initially contracted through a procurement process in 2013 and a three-year contract was awarded to Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd. This included the initial design, installation and three years of support and maintenance.

Over the last six years, the City has been working to integrate the provision of public Wi-Fi services to community centres and venues for hire into the broader roll-out of public Wi-Fi across the city. Annual approvals under delegation have been sought to continue to extend the current contract whilst working towards a longer-term solution.

A Wi-Fi service to replace the existing contract with Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd for these facilities was included as an option in the Tender for Public Access IT (PAIT). At the 22 August 2022 Council meeting, Council endorsed entering into a Reject and Negotiate process for the Public Access IT tender, and it was noted that Wi-Fi services at community centres and venues for hire would undergo a separate procurement process.

This report recommends that Council approve an 18-month extension of the current contract with Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd, to maintain services at community centres and venues for hire, as an interim arrangement to enable completion of a tender process, which includes the expanding of Wi-Fi services at community centres and venues for hire from 12 community centre and venue for hire locations to 30 community centre and venue for hire locations.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the contract variation to extend the term of the existing contract for the provision of Wi-Fi services to the City of Sydney community centres and venues for hire by 18 months;
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute, and administer the variation to the contract with Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd for an 18-month term; and
- (C) Council note the total contract sum is detailed in Confidential Attachment A to the subject report.

Attachments

Attachment A. Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The provision of Wi-Fi services to community centres and venues for hire was initially contracted through RFT 5313 in 2013 and a three-year contract was awarded to Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd.
2. Between November 2016 and November 2022, the City sought annual approval under delegation to continue to extend the current contract whilst working towards a longer-term solution.
3. In April 2022, the City released an open Tender for the Public Access Information Technology (PAIT) project and Wi-Fi for community centres and venues for hire was included as an optional item.
4. The Public Access Information Technology (PAIT) Tender responses were evaluated in May 2022 and none of the suppliers responded to the Wi-Fi option.
5. At the 22 August 2022 Council meeting, Council endorsed entering into a Reject and Negotiate process for the Public Access IT tender.
6. Wi-Fi for community centres and venues for hire was an optional part of the Public Access IT tender and will be now tendered separately in line with the Council approval.
7. A Tender in market is expected to commence from October 2022 for providing Wi-Fi services to community centres and venues for hire that align with the longer-term solution, which expands Wi-Fi service at community centres and venues for hire from 12 locations to 30 locations.
8. It is recommended that the current contract is extended by 18 months with Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd to enable continuity of service to the community for the existing 12 locations only. The 18-month extension period will ensure sufficient time is allowed for any specific building works needed to deliver both internet carriage and local network connectivity at the current 12 locations and expansion to 30 locations that will allow for the Wi-Fi delivery.

Financial Implications

9. The Wi-Fi services to community centres and venues for hire are funded through the City Life divisional operating budget.
10. There are sufficient funds allocated for this contract extension within the current and future year's operating budget.

Relevant Legislation

11. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion of information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.

12. Attachment A contains confidential commercial information of the service provider which, if disclosed, would:
 - (a) confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business; and
 - (b) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.
13. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

14. The existing contract with Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd concludes on 30 November 2022.
15. Negotiation with Easyweb Digital will be undertaken and completed prior to November 2022 whilst drafting of the new Tender documentation will commence.

Options

16. Another option is to end the current Wi-Fi service with Easyweb Digital Pty Ltd after the current contract period. This option is not recommended because the service provides digital access and inclusion for vulnerable community members, which aligns with the City's Social Inclusion strategy. In addition, there is a community expectation that free Wi-Fi is provided in the City's community centres and venues for hire.

Public Consultation

17. No public consultation has been undertaken.

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