

Public Access IT Refresh Project

File No: X039997.001

Summary

The Public Access IT (PAIT) Refresh project provides free or low-cost access to the internet, computers, software and printing services at Libraries, Community Centres and Childcare Centres across the City. PAIT was first implemented in 2017 and operates in 27 locations. There are currently 261 computers, 12 printers and 13 payment kiosks available for community use.

The current service is contracted until June 2023, when infrastructure will be at the end of its life and requires replacement.

The Public Access IT Refresh project will implement new features such as:

- (a) improved experience for the community when logging on to computers and utilising printing capabilities;
- (b) additional payment options and improved experience for the community paying for the use of computers, printing, and other peripheral devices;
- (c) providing a mix of devices (fixed and mobile) for the community to use within the various locations;
- (d) providing a network for all PAIT devices to connect to the internet (e.g. desktop computers, laptops, iPads, printers, and other peripheral devices); and
- (e) upgrading Wi-Fi service at 12 Community centres and venues for hire.

A tender was conducted to select a suitable vendor for completing and supporting the replacement of the City's Public Access IT service.

On 22 August 2022, Council resolved to reject tender responses received and enter negotiations with one or more suppliers for the provision of the Public Access IT Refresh project.

Following negotiations with suppliers, the City is ready to sign the contract for the Public Access IT Refresh project. Additional funds are required for this project due to higher than expected vendor costs. This will require an increase to the project budget, with funds to be transferred from Council's capital works contingency.

This report recommends that Council approve additional funds for this project to be transferred from Council's capital works contingency.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the outcome of the Public Access IT Refresh project tender as set out in Confidential Attachment A to the subject report, following negotiations with suppliers; and
- (B) Council approve additional funds for this project budget, to be transferred from Council's capital works contingency, as outlined in Confidential Attachment A to the subject report

Attachments

Attachment A. Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The provision of free access to computers, software and the internet supports learning and digital inclusion. It is crucial to supporting the community to stay informed and connected, particularly in the current environment (post-pandemic, severe weather conditions, and community health).
2. The Public Access IT (PAIT) Refresh project provides free or low-cost access to the internet, computers, software and printing services at Libraries, Community Centres and Childcare Centres across the City. PAIT was first implemented in 2017 and operates in 27 locations. There are 261 computers, 12 printers and 13 payment kiosks available for community use.
3. The current contracted service concludes in June 2023, when infrastructure will be at the end of its life. The City issued documentation to suitable suppliers through an open tender.
4. A tender was conducted to select a suitable vendor for completing and supporting the replacement of the City's Public Access IT service.
5. The requirements built into the tender included:
 - (a) improve the experience for the community to access computers, utilise printing capabilities and make payment for usage of these services.
 - (b) web printing to allow the community to send print jobs from their personal devices to library and Community centre printers.
 - (c) new mobile devices (laptops and iPads) in addition to current fixed devices (desktop computers and printers) for community to use within PAIT locations.
 - (d) new PAIT Wi-Fi network to community spaces, childcare and libraries to connect and manage mobile devices (e.g. laptops and iPads).
 - (e) refreshed fixed desktop computers and printers across libraries, community spaces and childcare centres.
 - (f) upgraded payment kiosks to modern standards that accommodate new purchasing features for the community.
 - (g) device refresh and device management for Makerspace & Library programs
 - (h) upgraded Wi-Fi at Community centres and venues for hire and expanding from 12 to 33 locations
6. The City proposed to enter into an initial four-year agreement with one optional four-year extension for a possible total of eight years. Based on the tender evaluations, all submissions were identified as non-conforming.
7. On 22 August 2022, Council resolved to reject both tender responses received and enter negotiations with one or more suppliers for the provision of the Public Access IT Refresh project.

8. Wi-Fi at Community Centres and Venues, was an option only to the tenderers for the Public Access IT (PAIT) Refresh project. No responses were received from the market in the tender. This feature is now the subject of a separate procurement process.

Negotiation Process

9. Under guidance from the City's Procurement unit, the project team undertook comprehensive negotiations with suppliers.
10. Workshops with suppliers included a minimum of three or more representatives from the City's project team.
11. Minutes and actions were documented and shared with the suppliers.
12. Technology options presented to the City's project team were deemed favourable to the outcomes of the project.
13. The outcome of negotiations is set out in Confidential Attachment A. Following negotiations with suppliers, the City is ready to execute the contract for Public Access IT Refresh project.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

14. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2050. This program is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive City - Public Access IT provides the opportunity for community members to utilise IT equipment and to access technology, internet, printing services, software for personal use and educational programs. Accessibility technology was also included in the tender requirements.

Organisational Impact

15. The Public Access IT (PAIT) Refresh project is being delivered by Technology and Digital Services and City Life. Budget and staffing resources have been allocated for the implementation and operation of this project.

Risks

16. The project has identified risks relating to non-delivery or gaps in the Public Access IT (PAIT) service as:
 - (a) Reputational risk: Risk of not delivering a service that is of high community value and which other Councils deliver. The mitigation plan for this risk is strong governance of the project to meet approved objectives.
 - (b) Financial risk: Risk of project delays, increased costs or failure to reach a favourable tender outcome. The mitigation plan for this risk includes review and rationalisation of project requirements, descoping where possible. These activities have been completed through the negotiation with suppliers.

Social / Cultural / Community

17. The Public Access IT (PAIT) Refresh project provides a high demand service to the community with access to hardware, software and internet. Public Access IT (PAIT) is a high-priority service for community members who do not have access to computers and the internet at home. The project scope specifically considers the needs of these community members following the pandemic with inclusions to cater to use case scenarios.

Financial Implications

18. Additional funds are required for this project due to higher than expected vendor costs and will therefore require an increase in the project budget, with funds, subject to Council approval, to be transferred from Council's capital works contingency, as detailed in Confidential Attachment A.
19. The total contingency budget for the Public Access IT Refresh project is detailed in Confidential Attachment A.

Relevant Legislation

20. The tender has been conducted in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.
21. 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.
22. Attachment A contains confidential commercial information 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.
23. 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

24. Pricing validity expires at the end of December 2022, as the pricing obtained in the reject and negotiate process will likely change if delayed beyond this calendar year.
25. The current contracted service concludes on 30 June 2023.

Options

26. Option 1: Cancel and re-advertise the tender. This option is not recommended as it is highly probable to result in the same outcome.
27. Option 2: Cancel the tender and discontinue the project. This option is not recommended because Public Access IT is a highly utilised service for the City's community, and not providing the service beyond the end of the contract period would adversely impact the community as well as the reputation of the City.

EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

SUSAN PETTIFER

Director People, Performance and Technology

Tom Gao, Chief Technology and Digital Services Officer

Brett Pozniak, Program Manager – IT Portfolio