

Chief Officer Decision Notice

For non-key decisions



Notice is hereby given that the following Chief Officer Decision has been made, as delegated by the Cabinet/Cabinet Member or under their delegated authority in the Council's Constitution.

1. NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

Title of decision	Hillingdon First Card – Direct Award to Smart Citizen
Name and Title of Chief Officer(s) making the decision	Matthew Wallbridge, Chief Operating Officer
Directorate	Resident Hub - Corporate Services
Reference No.	2016/1670
Date of decision	25 March 2026
Relevant Ward	All

Details of Decision Taken

Decision	<p>The Chief Officer agrees to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Proceed with a direct one-year award to SmartCitizen from 1st April 2026 - 31 March 2027, with an optional additional year, enabling the Council to continue service delivery while evaluating digital alternatives.
Reason for decision	<p>Approval is sought for a one-year direct award to SmartCitizen, with the option to extend for a further year, to ensure continuity of the Hillingdon First Card service while the Council undertakes a review of future delivery options.</p> <p>The current contract is due to expire on 31 March 2026, and there is no provision within the existing contractual arrangements to extend beyond this date. Allowing the contract to expire without replacement would result in significant operational disruption, as the Hillingdon First Card underpins key resident benefits and is embedded across multiple Council systems and services.</p> <p>Although the initial position was reviewed by senior management in September 2025, the strategic importance of the Hillingdon First Card has required ongoing consideration by the Council.</p> <p>The proposed direct award therefore provides a pragmatic and proportionate solution to maintain service continuity, while allowing</p>

	<p>sufficient time to undertake a comprehensive assessment of longer-term options, including potential digital-first approaches, without the risks associated with an accelerated procurement exercise.</p>
<p>Alternative options considered and rejected</p>	<p>Retender or Allow the Contract to Expire This option was rejected due to the extremely limited timescales available and the high risk of significant service disruption. The Hillingdon First Card system is embedded across multiple Council services, and an unmanaged transition or lapse in provision would undermine service continuity and adversely affect residents.</p> <p>Do Nothing / Discontinue the Scheme This option was rejected as discontinuing the Hillingdon First Card would result in substantial operational challenges and pose a significant reputational risk to the Council.</p> <p>It would also have a direct and negative impact on residents by removing access to essential services and entitlements currently enabled by the card, including library and leisure services, local discounts, and parking concessions.</p>
<p>Factors considered</p>	<p>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED): Consideration has been given to the Council's duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. The continuation of the Hillingdon First Card ensures that residents—particularly vulnerable or digitally excluded groups—retain equitable access to services and benefits.</p> <p>Stakeholder Impact: The needs and expectations of key stakeholders, including residents, service areas, and partner organisations, have been considered. Maintaining continuity avoids avoidable disruption to services that many residents rely on.</p> <p>Internal Consultation: Relevant internal stakeholders, including senior managers and Cabinet Members, have been engaged throughout the process. Their feedback has informed the preferred approach and confirmed the strategic importance of sustaining the scheme during the review period.</p> <p>Human Resources Considerations: Operational impacts on staff within the Resident Hub and associated service areas have been assessed. Maintaining the current system avoids additional workloads, training requirements, or service delivery pressures that would arise from sudden changes to the system.</p> <p>Corporate and Strategic Alignment: The decision reflects the Council's broader digital transformation objectives while ensuring that changes are introduced in a controlled and risk-managed way.</p>
<p>Report Author & Directorate</p>	<p>Vicky Mills and Zeenat Kapadia, Corporate Services</p>

Legal and Finance Comments

Finance comments	The direct one-year award to SmartCitizen from 1 st April 2026 - 31 March 2027 is estimated to cost £79,500, this can be fully funded the existing budgets
Finance Officer name and Title	Hazel Greenstreet – Head of Finance, Finance
Legal Comments	<p>The Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders ordinarily require competitive tenders to be sought before a contract is awarded. However, Standing Order 4.1(c) confirms that the use of established compliant frameworks is authorised and the requirement for obtaining best value and adequate competition, competitive tenders or quotations shall therefore not be required.</p> <p>The Crown Commercial Service Frameworks comprise a list of suppliers and standardised contract terms which are fully compliant with public sector procurement legislation</p> <p>Legal Services confirms that there are no legal impediments to the Council awarding the contract directly to SmartCitizen via the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) GCloud 14 Framework Agreement and agreeing to the recommendation.</p>
Legal Officer Name and Title	Neena Sharma, Deputy Principal Lawyer, Contract Lawyer 14.03.2026

Appendices / report attached

List here any report / appendices / e.g. tender evaluations or other documentation to be included in support of this decision	<p>Exempt appendices</p> <p>Smart Citizen Quotation for Services Under G Cloud 14</p> <p>Smart Citizen Cloud Services Pricing Schedule</p>
Exempt Classification	The accompanying report and its appendices are declared as exempt from publication as they involve the disclosure of information in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), in that the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Cabinet Member & other Chief Officer consultation

<p>Name and Title of any other Chief Officer(s) you have consulted with and as per any delegation.</p>	<p>N/A, the Chief Officer has delegated authority to award contracts under £100k in value.</p>
<p>Name and Title of the Cabinet Member you have consulted, and as per any delegation</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Any conflicts of interest declared by the Chief Officer making this decision and/or Cabinet Member who is consulted by the officer which relates to the decision - or if dispensation by the CEO was granted to them.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Authority for this decision

<p>Detail authority from Cabinet or under delegated authority in the Constitution / Officer Scheme of Delegations</p>	<p>The Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders permit Corporate Directors to authorise contracts up to £100k in value, as per the Published Constitution/Officer Scheme of Delegation</p>
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2. APPROVAL (published on website)

Formal approval by Chief Officer making the decision

M.P. Wallbridge

Signed Date 25/03/26
 Chief Operating Officer