



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Record of an Authority decision delegated to an Officer as required under Regulation 7 of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulation 2014

Subject of decision	This documents the decision award/continue a contract directly to Premier Inn (part of Whitbread PLC) for the provision of hotel accommodation services without inviting competitive tenders, pursuant to paragraph 3.1g of the Authority's Contracts Standing Orders. The Authority sets out a requirement to seek approval prior to the commitment of expenditure (capital or revenue) of in accordance with the Contract Standing Orders to ensure the following objects are adhered to: • Achieve best value for money • Be consistent with the highest standards of integrity • Ensure fairness and transparency • Comply with all legal requirements • Support the Fire Authority's corporate aims and policies A review of the arrangement was conducted to assess whether to continue with the existing supplier or explore alternatives, considering factors such as service quality, cost, and fitness for purpose; location/accessibility.
Officer name	Lee Watson
Job title	Area Commander Response
Date decision taken	26/02/2026
Reasons for the decision	The Authority have a requirement for hotel accommodation services. Background The Authority requires reliable, UK-wide hotel accommodation for staff undertaking official travel, such as attending training, meetings, conferences, or site visits. Objectives and Outcomes • The proposed Service must provide an online booking system and a helpline for phone-based support. • All payments will be charged monthly in arrears and settled 30 days following receipt of a valid invoice, by BACS • The contract will be based on the actual price of hotel rooms with no booking fee or extra charges for using a credit card. • Geographical coverage; more sustainable choices • One stop shop for accommodation and food • Minimal cancellation terms other discounts or value-added services The main reasons for the review on the existing service system are as follows:

For decisions regarding spend of £100,000 and above

To be completed by Information Governance & Committee Services
Log No

	• This review is carried out in line with PCR 2015 • A Response objective under CRMP 2025-2030 is to “develop and train our people to deliver organisational excellence”. Accommodation supports this requirement and helps the Authority to meet our Strategic Objectives and enablers. • These reasons are also underpinned by the Authorities Response-Strategy-2025-30-1.pdf Stakeholders of the Service have been part of the review and decision. Premier Inn has provided the Authority with hotel accommodation for several years and has met performance expectations and delivered high quality services that meet operational needs. By continuing with the current supplier (Premier Inn) will avoid the need for additional training as the supplier’s online system would remain the same. This would have a large impact on the team due to learning a new system alongside their day job. The advantage of the continuation of Service would be familiarity for the team reducing the implementation time and cost. Consequently, continuing with the current supplier removes the set-up costs for the Authority. The anticipated benefits are: • Increased accuracy of order information, invoice order to matching Purchase Order • It provides accurate data and information i.e accommodation at a confirmed price ‘best available rate/market price’ • More financial accountability and control within departments for their travel budgets. • Continuing the contract with the existing supplier will be the most efficient solution. • Carbon Reduction Rationale for Decision: Market research, including review of Premier Inn's business offerings and comparisons with competitors, confirms that this supplier provides superior benefits without compromising fairness or non-discrimination. • Extensive Locations and Accessibility: Premier Inn operates over 800 hotels across the UK, ensuring coverage in key urban, suburban, and rural areas relevant to our operations (e.g., near major cities, transport hubs, and regional sites). This minimises travel time and costs for staff, reducing overall expenses on mileage and subsistence. Competitors like Travelodge have fewer locations (around 600), limiting options in certain regions and potentially increasing logistical challenges. • Meal Deal Offerings: Premier Inn provides a value-added Meal
--	---

For decisions regarding spend of £100,000 and above

To be completed by Information Governance & Committee Services
Log No

	Deal, saving up to 30% on combined breakfast and dinner packages. This includes an all-you-can-eat Premier Inn Breakfast plus a two-course evening meal (main plus starter or dessert) and a selected drink, with prices starting from £18.99 at select restaurants (e.g., Thyme) up to £29.99 at others (e.g., Bar + Block). An optional third course is available for £2 extra. These deals are available at on-site or adjacent restaurants (e.g., Beefeater, Brewers Fayre), promoting convenience and cost control for staff on overnight stays. This feature supports employee wellbeing by ensuring nutritious, hassle-free meals, and it outperforms similar offerings from competitors in terms of variety and savings. • Consistent Standard of Service: As a national chain, Premier Inn maintains a uniform quality across all locations, including comfortable rooms, reliable Wi-Fi, and a "Good Night Guarantee" for customer satisfaction. This consistency reduces risks associated with variable standards from independent or smaller providers, ensuring staff productivity and safety. Feedback from previous usage indicates high satisfaction rates, with minimal complaints compared to alternatives. • Corporate Discounts and Flexibility: Through the Premier Inn Business Booker programme, we access a guaranteed 5% discount, up to 15% off Flex rates, with no minimum spend, contracts, or hidden fees. Flex rates allow free amendments or cancellations until 1pm on the day of arrival, providing operational flexibility for unpredictable travel needs. Additional perks include consolidated invoicing, employee allowance settings (e.g., for breakfast or Meal Deals), and the option for a Business Pay Card with up to 6 weeks interest-free credit. Market comparisons show this discount structure is competitive, offering better terms than standard rates from other chains (e.g., 10% off-peak discounts elsewhere), delivering estimated savings of up to 15% on annual spend. • Training admin team identified the following benefits and efficiencies with Premier Inn as compared to alternatives: ○ Bookings are cheaper when made in advance ○ Business Flex - allows us to cancel room up until 1300 hours day of arrival (full refund) ○ Time of Year (holiday season/local events increases cost) ○ Discount of 5%-15% applied at time of booking - variable (since June 2025) ○ Monthly Invoicing ○ Excellent availability ○ Dinner/Bed/Breakfast offered at most locations ○ Ease of booking – through Online Account ○ Dispute resolution - One contact centre
--	---

For decisions regarding spend of £100,000 and above

To be completed by Information Governance & Committee Services
Log No

	- Value for Money Assessment: The combination of discounts, meal savings, and reduced administrative burden results in an overall cost saving of approximately 15-20% compared to market alternatives. This was benchmarked against quotes from other suppliers such as Travelodge and Holiday Inn Express, confirming Premier Inn's superior pricing without sacrificing quality. Public benefit is maximised through efficient use of public funds and support for staff welfare. Risks and Mitigations - Potential perception of favouritism. Mitigation: Decision based on documented evidence; open to internal review. - Market changes affecting value. Mitigation: Annual review clause in the arrangement to reassess options. - Supplier performance decline. Mitigation: Include KPIs and termination options.
Details of decision	The decision to continue with Premier Inn delivers optimal value for money, operational efficiency, minimal disruption to the service and alignment with organisational needs. This rationale will be retained for audit purposes. Currently, annual spend is approximately £30,000. However, the actual value will be dependent on accommodation requirements each month. The accommodation costs are included within the revenue budget and will be reviewed each year as part of the budget process. The feasibility of using corporate credit card system will be explored in the future. The contract will continue on the same arrangements and will be reviewed on an annual basis each March ensuring value for money. Which will then be automatically renewed in 12 month increments unless terminated before.
Details of alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	To run an open tender process for a Hotel Accommodation. This has been discounted due to its unlikelihood that alternative providers would provide the service for less than the amount we are currently paying and there is no guarantee that the ongoing costs would remain as-is. This would also involve time and resources (estimated 3-6 months), with risks of disruption during transition. Not undertaking a competitive tender increases the risk of not achieving value for money.

For decisions regarding spend of £100,000 and above

To be completed by Information Governance & Committee Services
Log No

	For example, Holiday Inn last used 2022-2023, discontinued due to: • Availability • Frequent Invoice Errors • Invoiced per room (time consuming) • Food Quality frequently reported as poor and complaints received The Authority have chosen to wavier the Contract Standing orders instead of Direct Awarding via RM6342 Lot 1 Travel, Transport, Accommodation and Venue Solutions to Corporate Travel Management North Ltd due to the administrative burden we would incur. However the Authority will publish a contract modification notice in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which does carry the risk of a supplier challenging the justification for the contract modification. Officers believe this to be low risk and in the event a challenge were made, the early publication of the intention to modify the contracts does allow the Authority adequate time to reconsider a competitive process.
Any interests declared by a Member or Officer	No interests known or declared.
Links to relevant background documents or information	

Signed



Date 18/03/26

For decisions regarding spend of £100,000 and above

To be completed by Information Governance & Committee Services
Log No