

CABINET

DATE	20 th July 2022
REPORT OF	Councillor Margaret Cracknell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Joanne Hewson, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for People, Health and Care
SUBJECT	Procurement of an Education Management Platform
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 07/22/06

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

A core requirement for the Council's Education function is the ability to rely on a fit for purpose service and case management application that can deliver intuitive guidance to business processes and hold critical information that helps the workforce make informed decisions.

This proposal is also fundamental to the delivery of the Council Plan, such as, joining up our data and insights capabilities, implementing different ways of working that better engages, and enable transformation and innovation through the optimal use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and digital.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council's current contract for its Education Management System is due to end in March 2024 and there are no more extensions available. In order for the Council to remain compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and ensure continuity of service, a replacement contract needs to be procured and implemented before this date.

The Education Management system is used for managing statutory Education functions for the Council, for example, Early Years, School Admissions and Transfers, Education Welfare and Alternative Provision.

The replacement arrangement will comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, and ensure that the Council achieves its duty of Best Value.

The Council's estimated whole life spend of the replacement arrangement is c£1.2m.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the commencement of a procurement exercise for the Education Management System.
2. Delegates authority to the Executive Director for People, Health and Care in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education to deal with all matters leading to and including the award of the contract for the Education

Management System.

3. Authorises the Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets (Monitoring Officer) to complete and execute all legal documentation in connection with the award.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The decision allows the Council to commence a procurement exercise for the Education Management System and allows the Council to award the contract.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1. The Council's current methods of sustaining the existing ICT platforms for Education services are laborious and no longer practical. The existing applications also lack service wide adoption, due to their fragmented connectivity with other applications, which contributes to us being unable to retire historic ways of working.
- 1.2. Technology continues to change at pace and there is a pressing need to procure and develop a service and case management application that will drive service specific improvement plans that underpin the Council Plan.
- 1.3. Reprocuring the contract allows the Council to remain compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and achieve its duty of Best Value.
- 1.4. This proposal also supports our ICT strategy, moving away from legacy applications and introducing software architecture that is flexible enough to allow us to accommodate improved ways of working.
- 1.5. Preliminary Market Consultation was undertaken in November 2021 to test the Council's ideas for the replacement system out on the market and gauge interest in tendering for the contract. The feedback gathered during this consultation indicated that there is interest in tendering for the contract, and the Council's ideas for the system can be delivered.
- 1.6. The market for software solutions has expanded considerably in recent years and the opportunity to amalgamate different services within one application platform is now feasible. There are also more possibilities to improve integration between separate applications where it is not practical to combine into a single application platform. The Council intend to replace four separate applications into 1 following this tender exercise, which will effectively develop more immediate and seamless links between teams to truly understand the journey of our children and young people.
- 1.7. A project team has been established in readiness to undertake the procurement which consists of officers from the service area, the ICT team and the Procurement team. Advice will be sought from Legal Services in relation to development of the terms and conditions and formation of the contract.
- 1.8. The Council's estimated whole life spend of the replacement arrangement is

c£1.2m.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1.** There is a risk of disruption to service during the transition from the incumbent solution to newly procured solution. Appropriate change management will take place to ensure that disruption is avoided or reduced, and relevant communications will take place using the agreed ICT Change Management Protocol and Project Management change approvals.
- 2.2.** The Councils current contract is due to expire in March 2024, so a replacement solution needs to be procured and implemented before this date to ensure continuity in service delivery.
- 2.3.** An integrated platform would give the Council the capability to integrate business activity across teams in a profound way. It would allow the Council to effectively develop links between teams to truly understand the needs of its young people and the subsequent impacts to social care.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1. Option 2: Procure individual applications

This option would mean continuing with our current approach to procuring and implementing applications and we would hinder the chance to integrate working practices and consolidate information in a single place.

3.2. Option 3: Retain the current systems and migrate to the Cloud.

This option would mean entering into a new contract with the current provider, which would leave the Council non-compliant with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

3.3. Option 4: Do nothing.

This option would leave the Council non-compliant with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. It would also mean that the Council would not achieve the aims for improved service delivery.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

There is a risk of disruption to service during the transition from the incumbent solution to newly procured solution. Appropriate change management will take place to ensure that disruption is avoided or reduced, and relevant communications will take place using the agreed communication channels.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1.** The purchase and implementation of the Education Management Platform will be funded through a mixture of capital and revenue budgets.
- 5.2.** The ongoing yearly licencing, hosting and support costs will be funded through existing Council revenue budgets.

5.3. The proposal will deliver improved value for money through an overall reduction in the number of systems and as a consequence reduce time spent on system maintenance and administration.

5.4. Further assurance of value for money will come from the market exercise we undertake to procure a new platform.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

There is a vast amount of business activity ongoing across Children's Services, that if joined in a more automated manner, could provide analytics that would be invaluable in such a crucial area. Improved visibility of interactions with children and families will enable better collaboration between services involved and increase opportunities for early interventions.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

This proposal expects to procure a cloud hosted platform that can help rationalise on-premise applications and the eventual decommission of hardware that is no longer as energy efficient.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

None

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The estimated cost of the capital investment is £1.2m, which will result in additional borrowing costs of around £158k per annum in the year after full implementation of the system (2025/26).

9.2 These costs are expected to be partially offset through the rationalisation of related systems, with these system efficiencies estimated to save around £48k per annum.

9.3 The procurement process helps ensure the Council achieves best value for money from its contractual arrangements.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The procurement of an Education Management System appears consistent with the stated aims and objectives of the Council underpinning its strategic objectives of Stronger Economy, Stronger Communities.

10.2 The procurement exercise will be conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations, specifically in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and supported by relevant officers.

10.3 The delegations sought are consistent with an exercise of this nature.

10.4 Officers should note that an award constitutes a further decision and will be

subject to completion of an Officer Decision Record. Where key decision criteria are met such Officer Decision Record will be subject to call in. Award and implementation timelines should accommodate this.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

This is a back-office platform, no wards will be directly impacted.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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