

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER	Cllr Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council Cllr Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Youth Services	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 17th April 2014	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2634
TITLE:	Procurement of new Client Data System for Children's (Social Care) Services.	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: There are no appendices to this report.		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The contract for the existing IT/data system currently used by Children's and Adult Care Services ends in April 2015. Since the original procurement of this system in 2003, there have been a considerable number of advances and developments in such data systems for Children's Social Care. These developments reflect the regulatory changes made by Government, the enhanced requirements placed upon local authorities by Ofsted and the need for systems which can be used flexibly to deal with the major and multiple changes that can occur for a child, young person and their family. All of these developments along with our changes in working practices and in technology over the last ten years mean that our current system no longer meeting our needs.
- 1.2 The procurement of a new IT system for Children's Social Care offers the opportunity to improve the quality of our response to children, young people and families; to respond efficiently to new Government requirements relating to performance reporting and provision of services and to focus more social work time on face to face work rather than on the recording, collecting and collating data. This in turn will mean that we are able to partly address workload pressures through making our processes more efficient. The procurement of a new system will also enable the Council to negotiate an improved contract for the on-going maintenance and development of a system that takes into account advances in technology and changes in systems and legislation that affect the way we manage our interventions with families.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Cabinet are requested to fully approve the capital funding of the procurement of a new IT/data system for Children's Social Care Services.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The total cost of purchasing and implementing a new data system for Children's Social Care Services will be £700,000. This figure is based on recent market testing carried out by the IT Transformation Service and the Commissioning Team.
- 3.2 In addition, there will be an annual maintenance and development cost of between £77,000 and £85,000, this is currently accounted for within existing budgets and therefore is not an additional cost.
- 3.3 It is proposed to fund the cost of purchasing the new data system with an application to utilise Council Earmarked Reserves.
- 3.4 The improved functionality of a new system will allow the service to produce key data and performance information more efficiently. At present extensive additional time has to be spent on manual changes to data to comply with Government Personal Social Care returns, this would be avoided. Required capabilities of any new application will mean accessible information, which provides details of key events and the contact details of other involved professionals. These will improve the maintenance of clear and safe planning for our young people and families.
- 3.5 IT developments for Adults social care and financial processing will be managed as:
 - (1) Adult social care: as part of the re-tendering of the existing Community Care and Health contract.
 - (2) financial processing: the final outcomes of the Care Bill are required to inform what technical solution would be most appropriate to meet the Council's needs

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The provision of Children's Social Care Services is covered by a number of pieces of primary legislation, the main Acts being the Children Act (1989) and the Children Act (2004). An effective and efficient data system is integral to discharging the various duties in a timely and effective manner including maintaining clear, up to date records for all of the vulnerable young people that we work with. Accessible information and details of key events and the professionals involved are integral to maintaining clear and safe plans for children in need of support, children in need of protection and those in need of formal care. In addition to these considerations, an efficient and effective data system is critical to the delivery of information to both Government (statutory returns) and Ofsted (the Single Inspection Framework covering; Assessment, Child Protection, Children In Need, Looked After Children, Fostering and Adoption).
- 4.2 The current contract needs to be re-tendered in order to comply with procurement rules. The current version of the system is also at the end of its life and is being retired by the existing provider. This means that there will be no further development of the existing version and it will soon become un-supported. The Council cannot have unsupported applications as it is part of the national Public Service Network.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Bath and North-East Somerset have used the current IT system for both Children's and Adult Social Care since 2003. The contract expires in April 2015, the current version is no longer being developed by the supplier, it is not flexible as we need it to be and is not fully meeting our 2014 practice needs. Given the increasing demands placed upon the Children's Social Care Service it is critical that a newly procured system provides maximum functionality and flexibility. Demand for Assessments has increased from 325 per month in January 2012 to 584 per

month as at November 2013. The number of CP Plans has increased from 70 to 126 in the same period. The increase in workload has been managed with a minimal increase in social work staff however the current data system is resource-intensive which impacts upon face to face time with children and families. Since the current system was purchased there have also been extensive changes to both the Child Protection and Children In Care regulations requiring additional duties and procedures to be put in place to better safeguard children this adds pressure to the data system. Government have recently overhauled the Family Justice system with a requirement that local authorities complete Care Proceedings within 26 weeks of the initial application to the court for a Care Order. These changes have major implications for our workload and workflow, the current system does not meet our current and future practice needs and will adversely affect productivity if it is not replaced. In preparation for this process we have already undertaken some soft market testing and we are now in a position to clear about what it is we want from any new data system and we have a realistic understanding of price, potential efficiencies and a process for procuring any new system.

- 5.2 Cabinet will be aware that the Children's Service is subject to regular inspections by Ofsted, this covers Children's Centre Services, Schools, School Improvement Services, Fostering Services, Adoption Services and our Services for Children in need of Protection or Care. A new Single Inspection Framework (SIF) came into force on 1 April 2014 which combines into a single month-long inspection the services provided for those in need of protection, those in need of care, Fostering and Adoption. The new framework is based predominantly on actual tracking of case work with children, young people and families. This means that Her Majesty's Inspectors will spend substantial periods of time working with our data system in order that they can understand whether our assessments are timely, of quality and that our plans are robust and current. They will also examine the outcomes and outputs that we achieve with and for children and families and will then verify this through direct conversation with children and their families. In our last two Ofsted inspections there have been discussions about technology in use and Ofsted are aware that we are looking to secure a modern solution.
- 5.3 The current contract also covers the needs of Finance and Adult Care Services which are provided by Sirona Care and Health. Within our discussions about the data system requirements of Children's Social Care Services we have worked closely with colleagues in Adult Care and Non Acute Health Services, Finance and Sirona Care and Health. Cabinet are aware of the need to re-procure Adult Social Care and Community Health Services from April 2016 and it is intended that the procurement of a new client data system will be factored into those procurement processes. Adult Services and Finance will be identifying their IT needs as part of the re-commissioning of the Community Services contract and the Care Bill requirements respectively.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The rationale is to ensure that Children's Social Care have a high-quality, modern IT system which meets our requirements and enables us to support our most vulnerable children and families effectively.
- 6.2 The current system will shortly be out of contract and the suppliers have stated that they are no longer developing the current version.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Since 2003 there have been significant changes in the requirements of Children's social care and the context in which the service operates with the Council has changed substantially with adult social care and health services now being delivered by Sirona. New legislation in the Care Bill affecting Adult Services and the forthcoming requirement to have an integrated Adult/Health system based upon the unique NHS number means that a shared system no longer, therefore, meets our divergent requirements. We need a child-centric system to support the changes in our ways of working and to deliver the best possible service to our vulnerable families.
- 7.2 Consideration was given of joining with another local authority to share their existing IT system. However this option is not possible under current contractual arrangements and we would need to adopt the processes and working practices of the other authority which would restrict our flexibility in delivering support and services in a way that is tailored to our residents' needs.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There has been professional consultation with IT Transformation, Corporate Procurement, Adult Care and Non-Acute Health Commissioning, Children's Specialist Commissioning, Corporate Finance, Sirona Care and Health and widely with staff.
- 8.2 We have also undertaken a soft market testing process jointly with IT Transformation and informed by Corporate Procurement. Finally we have also undertaken visits to two neighbouring local Authorities to look at systems that they use and to gain their feed-back on their experiences of tendering for new data systems.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 An initial risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance. The comparative risks in not investing in an improved IT system are outlined at various points in this report. A full risk appraisal would form part of the re-procurement exercise as per Council standard system for such procurement.

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Background papers	<i>There are no background papers attached to this report.</i>
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