

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 28 th March 2016	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2847
TITLE:	Agresso Planner Module and Supporting Systems Development	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
None		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 To seek approval for the development of the Councils Financial Management System Planner module and associated systems development.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That approval is given for commencement of this project and its status within the capital programme moved from 'provisional' status to 'approved'.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The provisionally approved capital cost of the project is £143,000, including installation, configuration, system build, associated systems development, and training. Revenue costs are restricted to Service Supported borrowing of £21,000 per annum, which will be funded by the resulting restructure of the finance service.
- 3.2 As part of the project, work streams will be set up to review Council budgeting and monitoring, engaging with services across the Council as appropriate.
- 3.3 No changes in the quantum of the budgetary approval are requested. What is recommended is that the scheme now moves from being provisional to fully approved.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Planner module will enhance the forecasting, budgeting and modelling of Council budgets and associated transactions, covering both statutory and non-statutory income and expenditure.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council upgraded its core finance system Agresso Financials to version 5.63 in February 2015. This provided the platform for future development, in particular the implementation of the Agresso Budget Planner Module, which the Council is now seeking to develop via a phased implementation.

- 5.2 It is essential that the implementation of the Planner module is undertaken in accordance with the direction of travel for the finance service, and consequently there are two underlying principles that Planner must be based around:

- a) The future operating model for management accounting
- b) Supporting budget managers to ensure full engagement in budget ownership, effective communication and accurate reporting.

- 5.3 The management accounting function needs to focus on added value and operational efficiency based on financial pressures. In view of this it is recommended that any new model will need to:

- Standardise the budgeting process
- Rationalise the chart of accounts
- Create ownership and transparency of process and information
- Hold a repository for budget working papers and a dashboard for the various financial and procurement reports that are currently produced
- Improve reporting to support managers
- Automate and timetable processes where possible
- Maximise the use of non Agresso management information

- 5.4 A considerable cultural shift will be required, to enable managers to own their budgets, empower them to effectively engage in monitoring, and in moving management accountants towards analytical use of information to support budget managers. Work streams will initially need to be set up to develop standards for monitoring and budgeting, in particular focussing on:

- Income
- Employee costs
- Contracts
- Miscellaneous costs

- 5.5 Considerable Agresso system development will be required in order to support the above, including:

- Development of enhanced budgetary control functionality

- Introduction of workflow and self-service for managers
- The implementation of the Agresso contracts register module, to interface with existing Corporate Procurement systems. This would allow the Council to be able to make contract payments through procurement systems whilst ensuring all contracts information is held on Agresso to aid the contracts budget monitoring process.
- Transfer Agresso functionality to the Web, enhancing accessibility for managers and also adhere to latest security requirements impacting on the IT infrastructure whilst supporting the Council's direction of travel for flexible and home working.

5.6 In addition, the Finance Systems Team will need to upgrade Agresso to ensure the Council is on the latest milestone release. This will ensure that, in future the Agresso upgrade process will be much easier and undertaken as small low profile upgrades. The upgraded milestones also provide major enhancements such as ability to use the system on mobile devices & tablets, as well as providing more web functionality.

5.7 Roll out of all functionality will be fully supported by training programmes for both the Finance service and for service managers.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 As a result of the project it is anticipated that the benefits will bring a more consistent and standardised approach to budgeting within the Council

6.2 The development will facilitate enhanced ownership of the budgeting process from managers through greater transparency, supported by an evidence based approach resulting in a reduction in underspends and overspends

6.3 The additional system developments will allow for enhanced information and reports to allow managers to manage their businesses.

6.4 The Council will be fully supported by the software provider as it will not be using obsolete modules.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Divisional Directors Group, Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and the Finance Management team.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

Contact person	<i>Gary Adams tel 01225 477107</i>
Background papers	<i>Papers to Divisional Directors Group.</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	