	Bath & North East Somerset Council	
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	**Cllr Michael Evans, Cabinet Member for Children' Services & Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency**	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	**On or after 1st April 2017**	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: **E 2948**
TITLE:	**Education & Early Years Improvement Programme (EYES)**	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 In recent years the role of Council has changed; most of our secondary schools are now academies and an increasing number of our primary schools are following suit and, in response, we have reshaped some of our services. With continued pressures on Council budgets we need to identify areas where we can deliver budget savings while minimising the impact on front-line services. Our Education & Early Years IT system has been in place for many years, is the most expensive system in the Council to support and maintain and is reaching the end of its technical life. In addition we need to be able to take advantage of new developments in the IT marketplace to deliver additional business benefits and efficiencies. In addition, the current system does not provide the functionality that we now require in order to analyse data and monitor demand for services and the progress of our interventions with young people.

1.2 A different IT solution for Education & Early Years offers the opportunity to improve the quality of our service to children, young people and families. It will allow us to report efficiently with meaningful information enabling service managers to make evidence-based decisions. The current lack of this is causing particular concern in the strategic areas of school place planning for SEND, statutory reporting, strategic transport review as well as preparation for OFSTED inspections. This is turn will enable us to address workload pressures by making our processes more efficient.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Members are asked to;

2.1 Approve the utilisation of the £820k funding from the 2016/17 & 2017/18 provisionally approved Children's Education management scheme

2.2 To delegate the authority to the Divisional Director for children young people and family decision to vary the existing children's social care database contract to meet our requirements for Education & Early Years.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

3.1 The total cost of purchasing, implementing and resourcing this IT solution for Education & Early Years is estimated to be £820k; the majority of the expenditure will be in the financial years 17/18 and 18/19 and will require re-phasing from the 16/17 capital budget. This figure is based on recent market testing carried out by IT Services and People & Communities and using actual costs from the recent Social Care Improvement Programme IT procurement. This also includes 15% contingency.

3.2 In addition, there will be an annual maintenance and support cost of £72k. When compared the revenue spend on current systems of £138k this will constitute a significant annual saving.

3.3 It is proposed to fund this investment through Service Supported Borrowing, which has already been identified in the capital programme. . The Service Supported Borrowing costs are estimated at £123k per annum for an 8 year repayment plan.

3.4 The net cost of implementing the new system is estimated at £57k per annum. This is calculated as the additional costs of the new system £72k per annum maintenance plus Service supported Borrowing of £123k. Therefore the total cost being £195k less the current costs of maintenance of the current system £138k. The improved functionality will allow the service to produce key data and performance information more efficiently. At present extensive additional time and resources have to be spent on manual changes to data to comply with reporting requirements, this would be avoided.

3.5 People and Communities department management team have planned the additional costs of the system into its forward plan and has committed to funding the additional borrowing costs to implement the system.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

4.1 The provision of Education & Early Years services is covered by a number of pieces of primary legislation, the main Acts being the Education Act (1996 and 2002), School Standards and Framework Act (1998), Children Act (1989, 2004 and 2006) and Children and Young Persons Act 1963. An effective and efficient IT solution is integral to discharging the various duties in a timely and effective manner including maintaining clear, up to date records for all of children and young people.

4.2 An efficient and effective solution is critical to the delivery of information to both Government (statutory returns) and Ofsted (Early Years).

Our current system is approaching the end of its technical life and the product will not be developed further due to technical limitations. Over time, it will become increasingly inflexible and unable to meet our needs.

4.3 The intention to vary the existing Liquid Logic social care contract to include the EYES module for Education & Early Years. EYES is an extension of the children's social care system already in use by P&C and procured under a LASA framework .The contract variation is under the 50% limits specified in PCR 2015. Procurement advice has been sought from the Procurement Team and Legal teams and each are satisfied the proposed procurement falls within the PCR2015 rules

5   THE REPORT

5.1 Bath and North-East Somerset has used the current IT system for Education and Early Years since 2004. The services we deliver, the way we deliver them, and therefore the requirements of our IT systems, have changed since their implementation and continue to change as more schools become academies.

5.2 Our current solution provider has confirmed that, while the system will still be updated in line with legislative changes, it is at the end of its lifespan and cannot be developed further due to technical limitations. This means that, over time, it will become increasingly inflexible and unable to meet our future service needs. This increasing obsolescence will also adversely affect our ability to provide the statutory data returns required by the government and the expected level of detail required within the Ofsted/CQC inspection of SEND services we will be subject to at any point over the coming three years.

5.3 The current cost of system annual support and maintenance is the highest of any IT system in the Council and this is unaffordable at a time when we need to protect front-line services from budget cuts. The system no longer delivers value for money.

5.4 The ongoing struggle to get meaningful information out the system negatively impacts on the quality of reports provided to service managers and therefore on the ability to make evidence-based decisions. This is causing particular concern in the strategic areas of:

- school place planning for SEND;

- statutory reporting;

- strategic transport review;

- preparing for OFSTED inspection

5.5 A lack of functionality and poor ease of use has led to the use of supplementary software to meet our needs. The spread of data across multiple systems compounds the reporting issue, increases inefficiencies, creates additional work and leads to fragmented data in multiple locations.

5.6 We undertook a soft market test process and held solution demonstrations from suppliers to:

- Better understand the marketplace

- Refine our requirements
- Obtain indicative costs to plan and budget for a tender.

5.7 Following this process we are clear about our required outcomes and have a realistic understanding of price and the potential for efficiencies. Integration with our social care solution will support a single view of a child/family and enable holistic reporting and decision-making.

6   RATIONALE

6.1 The rationale is to ensure that Education and Early Years have a high-quality, modern, future-proof and cost effective IT solution which meets our current and future requirements, enabling us to support our children, young people and families effectively.

6.2 The current system is very expensive and the suppliers have stated that they will no longer developing the product, however it is currently up-to-date in legislative terms and is actively supported at this present time.

7   OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Retain our current system – not recommended due to the lack of on-going investment in and development of the product, its technical limitations and the high revenue costs.

8   CONSULTATION

8.1 There has been professional consultation with IT Services, Corporate Procurement, Education and Early Years Services and Corporate Finance and widely with staff.

8.2 Education and Early Years Services and IT Services undertook a joint soft market test informed by Corporate Procurement.

8.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Strategic Director for People have had the opportunity to input to this report.

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.

9.2 The comparative risks in not investing in an improved IT solution are outlined at various points in this report. A full risk appraisal will form part of implementation as per Council standards and processes.

Contact person	*Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director; Children, Young People and Families Division)*

Background papers	*There are no background papers attached to this report.*
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