

Children's Services IT System Procurement

To: Strategy & Resources Committee

Meeting Date: 26th January 2023

From: Executive Director of Children's Services

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2023/007

Outcome: The committee is being asked to approve the procurement of the IT solution supporting Children's Social Care Services. The outcome, if agreed, is a guaranteed provision of a known and developed IT system for Children's Services in line with corporate strategies.

Recommendation: The Strategy and Resources Committee is asked to agree:

- a) the procurement of the IT solution supporting Children's Services.
- b) to delegate the decision to award the contract to the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Chair & Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee.
- c) to delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Chair & Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee to approve all necessary legal documentation relating to the contract award, any transactions, associated arrangements and their formal executions.

Officer contact:

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Member contacts:

Names: Councillors Lucy Nethsingha and Elisa Meschini

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1. Background

- 1.1 Children's Social Services, including Early Help, is a statutory service in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, delivering vital children's services to those requiring it. Supporting this service is an IT solution called LiquidLogic (including a financial management system called ContrOCC). Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have separate LiquidLogic systems but they are supported by a single IT team and are largely configured the same. LiquidLogic went live in Cambridgeshire in October 2018 after a 14 month implementation programme, in which all business processes were re-engineered.
- 1.2 The current contract expires in August 2023, with no extension options available.
- 1.3 Since going live in 2018, there have been significant further developments, including:
 - Improvements supporting the Foster Carer recruitment process
 - Implementation of Family Group Conferences
 - Changes required to support the creation of the Regional Adoption Agency
- 1.4 Over the next 2-3 years, there will be significant challenges within the service. The solution is delivered from LiquidLogics data centre (the cloud), and there are no proposals to change that.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Children's Services have a large programme of change, all supported by LiquidLogic. This includes the implementation of digital portals, allowing both professionals and service users to digitally interact with the service, reducing touch points, and improving the service delivery. Now more than ever does the service need a stable, known product to build upon these changes. The pressure on the service to move to an alternative solution during this time risks the provision of support to vulnerable service users.
- 2.2 We will work closely with colleagues in the Procurement Team and Pathfinder Legal Services to identify a framework agreement through which we can make a compliant direct award.
- 2.3 The current contract was awarded in 2017, and after a 14 month implementation period, it went live in October 2018. The cost of this implementation alone was ~£2m, requiring extensive data cleansing and migration from the old system to the new, system design and build, service re-design and staff training. In the 3-4 years since going live, there has been continuous development of the product to support the service needs and changes to legislation. If the result of going to open market were to change supplier, this would require an additional significant investment of the same magnitude (~£2m) plus destabilising a service that is currently to go through major legislative changes.

2.4 A summary of the financial and usage impacts are below

- The current annual system costs are £185k.
- It's currently proposed that RPI will increase these costs by 5% year on year (~£10k), but this is being negotiated with the supplier.
- We are seeking a 5 + 2 year contract term, and therefore total projected costs for the contract value will be ~£1.5m.

3. Procurement

3.1 We will be using the Crown Commercial DAS Framework RM3821 which enables direct award to a preferred supplier. We will build in social value and environmental requirements into our specification whichever procurement route is used to ensure that the Council maximises the value gained through the procurement process.

3.2 Due to the value of the contract, it will require Sealing.

4. Alignment with corporate priorities

4.1 Environment and Sustainability

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Continuing the increased use of digital solutions reduces the requirement for more analogue interactions, thereby reducing the production of paper and related services.
- We will be working closely with procurement to ensure the new contract aligns with the authority's climate and environmental outcomes, and related carbon reduction/reporting requirements.

4.2 Health and Care

- Work with partners to establish the Integrated Care System to provide more seamless services to users, ensuring local democratic accountability, focusing on prevention and early help, to enable children and young people to have the best start in life and people to live healthy lives independently for longer.

4.3 Places and Communities

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.4 Children and Young People

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Focus on the early years of a child's life to provide them with the best opportunities possible to give them the Best Start in Life.

- Continue the Family Safeguarding approach in our children's social care services, so that children and young people are safeguarded from harm.
- Support our children and young people in care to achieve the best possible outcomes and ensure that our care leavers are able to access the support they need as they move into adult life.

4.5 Transport

There are no significant implications for this priority

5. Significant Implications

5.1 Resource Implications

The report sets out the implications for this priority in sections 2.4 above.

5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The procurement route will be compliant with Public Contract Regulations and the Procurement Team will support the procurement.

5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Significant risk to vulnerable service users if the service does not have a fit for purpose, developed and robust IT system in place, especially whilst moving through a national reform.

5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee have been consulted and are supportive of this proposal.

5.7 Public Health Implications

Public Health commissioned services particularly Healthy Child Programme (Health Visiting, School Nursing and Family Nurse Partnership) spend a significant amount of time inputting data into LiquidLogic and as we move to an Integrated Care Systems it would be useful if the Local Authority and NHS IT systems (SystemOne) could be integrated to avoid

duplication of data entry. This would give staff more time to care for individuals, improve morale and reduce the administrative burden on front-line staff.

5.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas.

There are no significant implications within this category.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heyward

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement and Commercial? Yes

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Legal? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Linda Walker

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User? Yes

Name of Officer: Faye McCarthy

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Christine Birchall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Sharmain Lawrence

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Raj Lakshman

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

6. Source documents

6.1 None