
Meeting: Executive
Date: 12 July 2011
Subject: Integrated Children's System Replacement
Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones, Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: This report seeks Executive approval to a variation of the existing Capital Scheme to enable procurement processes to commence for a replacement Integrated Children's System (ICS). This will replace the existing ICT system.

Advising Officer: John Unsworth, Interim Assistant Director of Finance
Contact Officer: Clive Jones, Assistant Director of Customer & Systems
Public/Exempt: Report Public. Business Case Exempt on commercial grounds as the Council will be going out to tender.
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision No
**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

This issue relates to the Council's priority to educate, protect and provide opportunities for children and young people. The project enables the Council to improve service delivery for Children's Services and to improve efficiencies while continuing to focus on the protection of Children in Central Bedfordshire.

Financial:

A variation to the Capital Scheme will be required to accommodate the whole implementation costs. The financial details are contained in the attached Business Case. This capital variation will be funded through additional capital borrowing. The potential to deliver efficiency savings through a review of working practices at the same time as the system implementation will be explored through the tendering process via implementation partners on a risk and reward basis.

Legal:

As the value of the contact will be above the EU threshold, a full OJEU tendering process will be undertaken.

Risk Management:

This project mitigates the risks and concerns identified in the unannounced inspection of Children's Services child protection services by Ofsted earlier this year. This was not listed as a priority action but was a "development point" that should be addressed before the next inspection, which is usually within a year of the previous inspection.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Any staffing reductions as a result of compensatory efficiencies will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy and in consultation with the Trades Unions.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Under the terms of equality legislation, when developing proposals and making policy decisions public authorities must ensure that decisions are made in such a way as to minimise unfairness, and they do not have a disproportionately negative effect on people from different ethnic groups, disabled people and men and women.

Community Safety:

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Council has a duty to consider community safety issues across all of its functions. In developing and implementing the detailed business case, implications will be carefully considered to ensure compliance with the Community Safety Partnership's priorities and plans as endorsed by this Council.

Sustainability:

None.

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

- This report has not been presented to overview and scrutiny due to the tight project timescales required to meet the unannounced inspection outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. that the Executive

- (a) approve a variation to the existing capital scheme as proposed in the attached Business Case and authorise procurement processes to commence for an Integrated Children's Services replacement system;
- (b) request that the tendering process include the opportunity for implementation partners to bid for a review of work practices at the same time as the system implementation to generate additional efficiencies on a risk and reward basis; and
- (c) delegate authority to procure a replacement system for Children's Services to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Resources.

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| <i>Reason for Recommendations:</i> | <i>To enable officers to commence the procurement process for the replacement of an integrated children's system and thus ensure children's services continue to provide for the safeguarding of children in Central Bedfordshire.</i> |
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Background

1. Since its creation in 2009, the Children's Services Directorate has been inspected twice by OfSTED under its Unannounced Inspection of Intake and Assessment Teams.

In March 2010, Ofsted noted a number of practice-related issues specifically about the current ICS system, noting that:

"Case file recording too often fails to reflect the actions required by assessments and care plans to improve outcomes for children and young people."

"Recording of information relating to the timeliness of initial assessments is insufficiently robust to ensure its accuracy."
2. The 2010 inspection issues were resolved by more staff intensive procedures and workarounds for the system issues.
3. In March 2011, the Ofsted inspection outcomes noted that the practice issues identified in the 2010 report had been resolved. However Ofsted noted that the Integrated Children's System ("ICS") that underpins Children's Services work, "does not provide effective support to staff and managers. Record-keeping, data retrieval and analysis and the efficient use of social worker time are all compromised by the inadequacies of the current system".

4. The Ofsted inspection recorded their comments “as an area for development” and it is expected that such learning points are addressed within the ensuing year. Although not noted in the inspection team’s formal report, the Director of Children’s Service’s did point to the plans in the published Council Capital programme to address the inadequacies of the current system. Ofsted did not make this a priority action, which would have been a limiting judgement and accepted verbally that there were firm plans and a capital scheme in place to replace the existing ICS system. A priority action results in a limiting judgement on social care and therefore children’s safety in the council. The next unannounced inspection is likely to be in March 2012 at the latest, at which point significant progress should be demonstrated towards the implementation of a new system.
5. Work to evaluate the ongoing impact and likelihood of achieving improved outcomes and the impact upon the service delivery and outcomes for children and young people should these matters not be resolved was undertaken. In early 2011, the Council commissioned an external partner to help undertake an analysis of the ICS system provided by our current supplier.
6. The evaluation report concluded that the current system would not support the service needs without considerable re-development and that this development work was not cost effective in the light of the place of the existing system in the market. Therefore, a business case was subsequently developed for the implementation of a new system to support Children’s Services in Central Bedfordshire, to ensure professional services and good outcomes for children and young people.

Business Case Overview

7. The Business Case makes the strategic case for implementing a new ICS around the key benefits of having an efficient and appropriate case management system that can support the delivery of the strategic improvements required to support the Council’s vision. This has as a key focus on the need to deliver good outcomes for children and be compliant with inspection frameworks and outcomes.
8. The financial case and the high level implementation tasks are outlined in the attached business case. Key to this case is the principle of the new system delivering process efficiencies to enable service improvement and enhance the Council’s ability to protect children. It will also help to keep children in Central Bedfordshire safe. This will also allow the Council to demonstrate to Ofsted that their recommendations of May 2011 in the form of a development point in the published Ofsted inspection has been addressed.
9. The business case also identifies known risks at this time and includes an assumption that change management and processes will require monitoring to ensure the least impact upon performance and safe service delivery throughout the year. Ensuring the service accounts for the time, effort, resources and reduced capacity that will cause internal pressures when the new system is being implemented.

Proposed Project Governance

10. The project sponsor is the Chief Finance Officer with overall responsibility for the delivery of the project resting with the Executive Member for Corporate Resources.
11. The project will be run under Council's adopted Prince II project management process.
12. The project board will meet monthly or as required, to review implementation progress. The Project Manager (PM) via the project highlight report will keep all stakeholders updated. The PM will be available as required by the Chief Finance Officer and the Director of Children's Services/ Deputy Chief Executive to support the project.

Conclusion and Next Steps

13. A user specification for the new system has been produced. This along with an evaluation matrix will be used to assess supplier responses to the OJEU tender. The OJEU process is required because of the predicted contract value.
14. A second OJEU tender will be issued for an experienced implementation partner to help the Council to achieve the challenging implementation timescales and deliver potential efficiencies through a review of working practices at the same time as system implementation.
15. A project board will be formed immediately after Executive approval of this report and the tender responses will be evaluated by this project board.
16. Implementation is planned to commence in September and conclude by April 2012.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Exempt Item - ICS Business Case (set out in Agenda Item 16)

Background Papers:

Munro Review of Child Protection can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/>

Location of papers:

CBC network