

Creating Central Bedfordshire

BUSINESS CASE

Project Title:	LAMP Project for Central Bedfordshire Council	
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Start Date:	January 2009	Completion Date: July 2009

Purpose:

To deliver a unified system, underpinned by a consolidated Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) in support of the Development Control, Building Control, Land Charges and Environmental service areas for Central Bedfordshire Council. This LLPG database also supports the Electoral Registration systems and will be essential in feeding future CRM and Social Services application developments.

This encompasses two key components: Acolaid (supplied by Plantech) and Geographical Information System (GIS – supplied by Cadcorp).

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Approved by: Shadow Executive	Date Approved:	Version No: 1.0
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1. Management Summary

The creation of Central Bedfordshire Council will require a number of ICT systems and databases to be amalgamated from the two district councils and Bedfordshire County Council.

In particular, the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) datasets for both district councils, which is used as the basis for all Development Control, Building Control, Land Charges and a number of other services, including Electoral Registration, must be amalgamated.

These functions reside in the Plantech systems used by both district councils and which, unfortunately, have been built in very different ways and so amalgamation is not a simple exercise. A considerable amount of work is required to harmonise the data structures, lookup codes, numbering sequences and methods of using the data.

This also impacts on the CadCorp GIS (Geographical Information System) that is used to support a number of other services and customer information services via the internet and intranet. This is used differently between the three authorities and so will require development.

To facilitate this work a number of options were considered and the decision was taken to adopt the LAMP facility provided by MDA (MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates).

The e-Government programme that ran from 2000-2005 required all Councils to take part in a number of Government initiatives. These included the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG), Planning and Regulatory Services On-Line (PARSOL) and the National Land Information Service (NLIS). In order to deliver these initiatives and other future improvements a complete technology refresh across major land and property ICT systems including Planning, Building Control, Environmental Services and Land Charges was required. As part of winning the right to run the NLIS service MDA (MacDonald Dettwiler and Associates Ltd) had to develop a service, the Local Authority Modernisation Programme (LAMP) in conjunction with the IDeA that would allow authorities to implement this technology.

This CBC project will adopt the LAMP service and utilise MDA's considerable expertise to provide a managed service that will considerably reduce the risks in attempting to undertake this amalgamation in house. The managed service is a condition of the LAMP project.

MDA have already completed a due diligence investigation exercise that has allowed them to present a complete, fixed price, proposal to deliver an integrated Plantech system on the new CBC infrastructure. This will be achieved for a fixed cost.

The proposal also includes, as part of the LAMP framework, the Managed Support Service element for a period of 7 years at an annual cost, in that if anything happens to the supplier (Plantech) then MDA adopt full responsibility, and cost, for the provision of a replacement system.

This is a concern in that the software market is experiencing a period of consolidation and Plantech have recently been acquired by Idox who offer a competitor product to Acolaid. As yet no statement has been forthcoming about product futures or possible discontinuation.

2. Background

This project forms part of the ICT Programme stream for the creation of Central Bedfordshire Council by bringing together the functions of Mid Beds District Council, South Bedfordshire District Council, and part of Bedfordshire County Council.

At present, the two district councils use Plantech's Acolaid system to support a number of service areas. However, the two implementations are at great variance with one another: different modules are deployed in each district council supporting different service areas; different data structures exist; and different business processes are in place. Each Acolaid implementation has an embedded geographical information system (GIS) and a web interface (enabling public access to various aspects of the application).

Bedfordshire County Council (BCC) uses a separate in-house developed system on an Access database to support its planning applications and alongside this are two separate GIS systems with a manual process for publishing planning applications to the BCC website.

On completion, this project will deliver a single unified system with harmonised methods of working across the new Authority.

3. Reasons

Sustainable Communities will be unable to provide one cohesive service across its Development Control, Building Control, Land Charges and Environmental service areas without the support of a unified system. Until this is achieved, the service will be fragmented, with individual clients receiving different levels of service according to their postal address. This will be evident to the public as different information will be displayed on the CBC website, from the two different systems, and depending on which team is dealing with the application. In addition, documents produced by the different systems and provided by the teams will be in different formats, contain different authority information, including headings and signatures, and as a result of this written information it may appear that officers are offering different advice.

It will also take longer to respond to enquiries from members of the public, with front-line Customer Service staff having to consult three separate systems and hand-off virtually all enquiries to specialist teams. There will be an impact on staff time, both within the service areas and ICT and both customer and user satisfaction will be affected.

Plantech's Acolaid system has been used by Mid Beds District Council (MBDC) since 2002 and by South Bedfordshire District Council (SBDC) since 2003.

Acolaid is a 'tried and tested' solution that is fit for CBC purpose, staff are familiar with its operation and there is minimal risk in transferring existing data.

BCC's in-house system is not fit for CBC purpose and BCC raised a Business Case in 2008 for replacement of the in-house system. This case was approved but put on hold pending LGR.

Cadcorp's GIS system has been the corporate GIS tool used by MBDC since 2004 and by SBDC since 2005. BCC are currently in the process of migrating from their Wings GIS system to Cadcorp.

Cadcorp is a 'tried and tested' solution that is fit for CBC purpose, staff are familiar with its operation, and there is minimal risk in transferring data.

4. Options

In developing this business case, a number of options were considered. Only three of the options were considered as viable and they are summarised below.

1. **Continue as now:-**

This would involve maintaining three separate systems. The result would be that the service areas effectively continue to function as separate entities with separate databases. All three systems would need to be supported and maintained on the current ICT infrastructures indefinitely. It should be noted that this option will not provide a single CBC version of the LLPG.

Staff numbers would have to be maintained at current levels to fully support and operate the three systems and no cashable or non-cashable savings would accrue. Users would have to expend considerable effort across the three systems to respond to customer queries and, as a result, customers would probably form a poor perception of Central Bedfordshire Council.

This option could only be sustained by CBC for a short period as it is almost certain that customer and user satisfaction would be affected by this method of working.

Considerable internal and supplier effort would be required to implement identical content and to re-brand all the legal documents produced by the three systems so that consistent CBC branded documents are provided to customers. There are costs involved in re-branding these documents, the risk around trying to keep three systems and legal document formats in step indefinitely, and the cost of maintaining legacy ICT infrastructures.

This option will not work for the essential continuing maintenance of the LLPG. Intelligent Addressing (who manage the National Land and Property Gazetteer - NLPG) have instructed all new unitaries that from 1/4/09 they will have to use a new series of Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) and Unique Street Reference Numbers (USRN). This cannot be managed across 3 separate systems. Under the Mapping Services Agreement we are required to maintain the LPG for the CBC area and submit a single daily update to the NLPG.

This option is not viable.

2. **Use one of the existing systems and archive the others:-**

This would involve archiving one of the district systems and the county system, and all staff would then use the one remaining, live, district system.

No data would be migrated from the archived systems to the live system and the archived systems would have to be supported and maintained, on the old ICT infrastructures, indefinitely. This system could support a single CBC LLPG.

Customer Services staff from the various CBC locations would need access to both archived systems as well as the current, live, system in order to access historic information and staff would require training in all the systems.

Clearly this approach, whilst offering what appears to be a low cost option, is neither practical or supportable in terms of business efficiency as staff would have to expend considerable effort in trying to find data to respond to customer queries.

In real terms, considerable costs would accrue in:- lost efficiencies, maintaining multiple systems, maintaining legacy networks to support them and the probability of incompatible processes developing between service locations.

3. Create one new CBC system and migrate all data to that system:-

This is the recommended option in that it maximises the opportunity to develop savings over the medium and long term and to provide a single point of access which enhances the high quality service that customers currently enjoy.

It will involve the creation of a new database and the transfer of all the data from the two district systems and the county system to one clean database. In the process, data structures, naming conventions, lookup code lists and other choice fields will be standardised. The two LLPG databases will also be merged to the format requested by Intelligent Addressing for the NLPG.

On completion, staff will have access to all current and historic information in one place and will be able to respond quickly and efficiently to enquiries. Internet enquiries would also be simplified by offering the data in one location under one CBC brand. This system would be fully supported and maintained by ICT on the new CBC infrastructure in one location.

This single system will fully support the legal obligations with a single set of document formats and a single LLPG to feed CBC data to the government NLPG hub.

Costs involved in achieving this system will initially be substantial using external contractors but service to customers will be maintained during the work and the objective can be achieved more rapidly and effectively.

This option can also be supported using the LAMP framework put in place by Government to support this activity. LAMP is explained in Annex 1 and will reduce the risks that could be experienced by

remaining “as is”.

5. Benefits

The benefits of creating a single CBC system are considerable and some of the key benefits are listed below:-

- a. Data will be “cleaned” in the process of loading to the new database thereby removing data incompatibilities
- b. A single CBC LLPG will be created that will underpin all CBC customer focussed systems
- c. Legal documentation required under the Town and Country Planning Act will be standardised
- d. Efficient use of staff resources will ensure consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of approach
- e. Customers will experience a more professional, efficient, and effective service via all points of contact
- f. A single set of business processes can be implemented to provide a consistent approach to customers and the business
- g. On-going maintenance and support costs will be reduced and known in advance
- h. Investment in technology will be maximised to provide effective automation and improved “easy to use” interfaces e.g. maps
- i. A new and better “Central Bedfordshire” experience will be developed
- j. Enhanced public access of documentation / functionality via the CBC web site will comply with e-Government requirements
- k. Level 3 integration (automated electronic enquiries and answers) from / to the Government NLIS hub for data exchange will be achieved. This will speed up the handling of electronic enquiries and considerably reduce the cost of processing with no human intervention.
- l. This single LLPG fully supports the Creating Central Bedfordshire strategy.

6. Risks

With any project a number of risks arise and the key risks in adopting the recommended approach are documented below:-

- a. Costs may over-run.
This risk is being managed by obtaining a fixed price cost from the contractors involved and using the LAMP framework for the project.
- b. Contractor fails to deliver project to time and budget.
This is being managed by staging payments such that a failure to deliver results in no payment. Full and final payment will not be made until the project is completed to CBC satisfaction.
- c. Poor decision support by the business.
This will be managed by ensuring the relevant service areas are heavily engaged in the creation of the new system and clear ownership of timely decisions is understood.
- d. Staff fail to adopt the new systems.
This risk will be managed by ensuring staff are engaged and trained in the new business processes and systems.
- e. Poor Governance.
A Project Board consisting of ICT staff and representatives from the business will be established to manage the overall project using PRINCE2 methodology to ensure this risk does not materialise.

7. Costs

a. The costs for this LAMP project have been assembled by MDA where MDA will act as Prime Contractor for the project, supervising Plantech, CadCorp, and other sub-contractors to deliver specific work packages.

b. The costs are broken down into

- MDA labour £200,000
This covers the cost of MDA staff on site supporting the CBC team in the work they have to complete and the project management / administration work that will be involved
- Plantech £460,000
These are Plantech's costs in providing services to create the new system, provide additional licences, transfer data and re-create documents and reports for the new system
- Data clean / conversion £240,000
These are the costs of additional staff to clean and process data from the disparate systems
- CadCorp £110,000
To assist in transfer of data and to develop 2 web sites (intranet and internet) for GIS. Admin and Super user training, implementation and acceptance testing.
- Financing £50,000
This is the cost of financing the project in that no payment will be made until the final working system is installed and operational.
- 7 year maintenance £750,000
This cost allows CBC to take advantage of the LAMP Managed Support proposal whereby the system is underwritten and supported by MDA for a 7 year period from date of go live.
- Total Project Cost
 - One off costs £1,060,000
 - Annual Maintenance Contract – for 7 years £ 107,000 pa
 - Total Cost for 7 years £1,810,000

- c. The annual running costs of £107,000 pa are offset by the current licensing costs for existing systems which total at least £ 80,000 per annum.

In addition employee numbers and costs have been reduced in the proposed Central Bedfordshire structures reflecting the effectiveness of the unified system.

These savings amount to a total of £ 243,000 per annum.

- d. As identified in the table, Effects and Risks of NOT adopting the LAMP Project, at Section 9, the costs of NOT proceeding with the LAMP Project could be in the order of £ 295,000 per annum.

Therefore the one-off costs are paid for in 4 years.

8. Timescales

- a. Due to the amount of work that has been required to determine the most appropriate way forward it will not be possible to provide a single system for the 1st April and the service areas will require some additional resource to allow them to manage the business over the period between April 1 and the system Go Live date.
- b. Considerable discussion and investigative work has been undertaken by the service areas, MDA and Plantech and this has produced a project plan indicating a project duration with a minimum of 4 months.

Therefore a start in January, allowing for Easter holidays etc. will lead to a “Go Live” date of mid-June at the earliest.

This will be further refined once authority is given to proceed.

9	Effects and Risks of NOT adopting the LAMP Project	
	In considering this project the factors and risks that would arise must be taken into account. These are treated as separate to the actual project risks.	
		<i>Approx Cost</i>
9.1	<p>If CBC continues to supply LLPG data to the Hub, where it is linked up to become part of the NLPG, in the form of MBDC and SBDC output files, then Intelligent Addressing who run the Hub service have advised that they will apply a charge for resolving the data of £200 per file submitted. Given these files are submitted daily then a potential charge of £1000 per week could apply. This will be the case for the first three months after April unless the datasets can be consolidated sooner. If CBC chooses to remain on the SBDC and MBDC systems as separate systems this charge will continue and we believe the penalties could become excessive after a period of 12 months.</p>	<p>In 3 months - £13,000</p> <p>In 12 months - £52,000</p> <p>In 7 years - £500,000 (est.)</p>
9.2	<p>There is a Ministry of Justice edict to have the electoral registers matched with LLPGs by 31 December 2009. If the LLPGs are not amalgamated then CBC will not be complying with that edict. Authorities who fail to match their Electoral Register with the LLPG may well be financially penalised.</p> <p>There is also a boundary review scheduled to start in June 09 it would obviously ease the whole process and save staff time if the data sets were amalgamated and provided the ability to cross reference addresses with a single LLPG.</p>	<p>Risk of penalties from MOJ</p> <p>£ Unknown</p>
9.3	<p>It will be necessary to maintain two systems, which have different business processes, contain data in differing formats and would require two separate teams to operate them. Based on the introduction of a single system, staff savings of £243,000 are reflected in the proposed budget for the service. Remaining with 2 separate systems will place considerable pressure on this figure.</p>	<p>Risk of lost staff savings. Additional staff costs per month</p> <p>£ 243,000 p.a.</p>
9.4	<p>An immediate element of work would have to be undertaken to standardise documentation across the two systems to ensure that legal requirements were being met consistently. This cost will be double that which would be experienced adopting the LAMP proposal as the report formats for each system would have to be changed. Changing the reports for one system and then copying them to the other would not work as the data is in different formats.</p>	<p>One off costs – £ 50,000</p>

9.5	<p>MDA underwrite the installation once it is complete for the duration of the contract.</p> <p>The software market place is currently subject to considerable consolidation and Plantech have recently been acquired by iDox who offer a competing product to the ACOLAID product and it is not yet certain if both products will prevail. Plantech are unable to confirm one way or the other.</p> <p>Adopting LAMP removes the risk that CBC has adopted a product that may be discontinued.</p>	<p>Cost in risk of having to replace Plantech</p> <p>£150,000 minimum</p>
9.6	<p>Street naming and numbering, a service currently residing with Amey for BCC, will start to develop new (Unique Property Reference Number) UPRNs in line with the requirements for CBC. This will mean that CBC data is not in line with data being sent to the hub.</p> <p>We are unsure of the liabilities attached to this and believe that a risk exists that further costs will accrue from Intelligent Addressing as a result.</p>	Being evaluated
9.7	<p>The current annual maintenance costs for Plantech for the two District Councils will remain nearly unchanged at £80,000 per annum.</p> <p>The net increase here at £20k per annum is a FIXED figure per year for 7 years.</p> <p>This does not reflect licence / maintenance costs for BCC and does not allow for any growth in the use of Plantech.</p>	Risk of any unexpected maintenance increases over the 7 year term is negated.
9.8	<p>Poor customer perception.</p> <p>The lack of a joined-up and consistent approach to the service areas would undermine any confidence with customers and indeed may detract from their experience. This would not reflect well on the new authority.</p>	Risk of damaged credibility
9.9	<p>Remaining as two separate systems will mean that we are in breach of our agreement with Intelligent Addressing. This identified risk has yet to be fully assessed to identify the charges that would accrue in addition to those arising from submitting district file formats as per item 1 above.</p>	Being evaluated