Sheffield City Council

Executive Director/Director
Non-Key Executive Decision Report

Author/Lead Officer of Report: *(Eve Waite, Head of Employment and Skills*

Tel: *0114 229 6136*

Report to:

Tony Tweedy
Director of Lifelong Learning Skills and Communities

Date of Decision:
(24th April 2017)

Subject:
Procurement for replacement of Aqua Management Information system

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Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to?   *(Business and Economy)*

Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to?   *(Economic & Environmental Wellbeing)*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?   Yes [√]   No [ ]

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given?   *(1227)*

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?   Yes [ ]   No [√]

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

*"The **(report/appendix)** is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph **(insert relevant paragraph number)** of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."*

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to replace the current Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities (LLSC) Management Information system (Aqua), which is used to capture and report learning provision covered by Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Education Funding Agency (EFA) contracts, with a hosted system that can cover all of the requirements.

Whilst the system will primarily be used for Sheffield learners it would also contribute to Sheffield City Council (SCC) management and/or delivery of sub-regional, regional or even national programmes through or on behalf of partners.

The report seeks approval for the procurement of the replacement of the Aqua system, as detailed in the report.

Recommendations:

The Director of Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities is recommended to:

a)   Approve the procurement for a replacement of the Current Management Information system (Aqua) as set out in this report.

Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: *(Liz Gough)*
		Legal: *(Sarah Bennett)*
		Equalities: *(Bashir Khan)*
	Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.	
2	**Lead Officer Name:** *Eve Waite*	**Job Title:** *Head of Employment and Skills*
	Date: *(Insert date)*	

1.   PROPOSAL

1.1   Background

Sheffield City Council currently receives funding from the SFA and the EFA for the delivery of training to post 16 learners.

The range of learning provision covered by SFA and EFA contracts includes: - Apprenticeships; Classroom Learning, Workplace Learning; Study Programmes; Traineeship Programmes; Community Programmes; Family Programmes, along with other specialist projects. This is provided to both young people & adults.

Lifelong Learning Skills and Communities currently use a number of systems to record all the learner data required for reporting and SFA funding allocation. An external review has been conducted by FE Associates (FEA) to assess the current system's (Aqua) functionality. The use of Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for Management Information (MI) reporting creates multiple data sources, which results in duplicate data entry and being reliant on a small number of staff members with advanced Excel skills.

It has been concluded that SCC can move towards a more efficient database approach which would also meet the requirements of the SFA and the EFA contracts.

1.2   Proposal

It is proposed to replace the current system with a hosted system that can cover all of the requirements detailed in the recommendations in the FEA report. Whilst the system will primarily be used for Sheffield learners it would also contribute to SCC management and/or delivery of sub-regional, regional or even national programmes through or on behalf of partners.

Ideally a single supplier will provide an end to end MI system that also covers all the SFA requirements. If this is not available in the market, the exercise will identify which of the other systems are still needed.

1.3   Requirements

As a condition of the contracts with the SFA and EFA, the Service is required to submit Individual Learner Record (ILR) data on a monthly basis. This is a collection of data about learners and their learning. The data is used to ensure that public money is spent in line with government targets. It is also used to calculate funding earned. The ILR must include all learner data from all funding streams that appear in SCC's contract.

The Service is also required to be OFSTED inspected and is under increased pressure to prove that data is being interrogated on a regular basis to improve the quality of teaching and learning for the learners it engages with.

In addition to the above, the new system is expected to:
- Enable online enrolment and validation. This will speed up the process of getting learners registered with funding bodies, thus speeding up the drawing down of funding;
- Report real time enrolment of learners that will feed into performance reporting.

1.4 Benefits

The project will deliver the following benefits:
- Reduced time between learner enrolment and registration on the data system
- Faster draw down of funding for learners
- Improved real time performance and financial reporting
- Improved planning and deployment of learning resources
- Improved data quality/credibility

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

The activities and outcomes of the programme will directly contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan:

- An in-touch organisation
- Strong economy

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

The Council is not required to carry out a consultation process in respect of these proposals and a formal consultation process has not been carried out. However, the Council has commissioned FE Associates to carry out a review of the current Management Information system, and as

part of this FE Associates consulted with service users and service providers. Those responses were taken into account in regards to this report.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

4.1.1 Decisions need to take into account the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and highlights no equality impacts.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 The cost of the system will be determined through an open tender process and is expected to be within the available funding;

4.2.2 Funding for the purchase of the system has been identified from residual grant funding on the balance sheet which it has been confirmed will not be clawed back by the funder. The costs of the ongoing hosting and licences will be met through service budgets.
The Budget for procurement of this system will be £100,000 plus an additional £20,000 for hosting and licenses

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Localism Act 2011 provides local authorities with a "general power of competence" which enables them to do anything that an individual can do as long as the proposed action is not specifically prohibited. A purpose of the Act is to enable local authorities to work in innovative ways to develop services that meet local needs. The proposed procurement falls within the general power of competence. In addition, there is no specific statutory prohibition, preventing the Council from implementing the proposed procurement. The Council therefore is empowered to exercise the procurement.

5.   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1   **In house Council delivery**
       The Council is not in the position to deliver a system as described in this report.

5.2   **Not to fund the MI system**

       If the Council did not fund this MI System, the LLSC team would continue to be using a system that has been identified as not fit for purpose

6.   **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

       An external review of the current LLSC Management Information system (Aqua), which is used to capture and report learning provision covered by SFA and EFA contracts, advised that the current system is no longer fit for purpose and should be replaced with a hosted system that can cover all of the SFA and EFA requirements.

       A new hosted system will enable more efficient gathering, storage and interrogation of information.