



Report of Senior Project Officer

Report to Chief Digital and Information Officer

Date: 2nd October 2020

Subject: Approval to award a contract for £127,560 to SCTS Ltd commencing 3rd October 2020.

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number: 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- The Funding for Inclusion (FFI) team are responsible for delegating funding from central government to all schools and settings for children and young people who require additional support for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- The team currently use a bespoke web application called InfoBase - Key Stage Data Collector to manage this process.
- This is an internally developed application that was created by Leeds City Council between 2000 and 2010.
- This application is over 10 years old and is becoming increasingly difficult and costly to support and maintain.
- It has become clear that the current application is not meeting the service's needs and that over time, Key Stage Data Collector will become more expensive to maintain and will not be able to keep pace with the changing landscape of SEND funding.
- The current internally developed application, InfoBase Key Stage Data Collector, is costly to support and maintain and is a legacy system that no longer meets the needs of the users.
- The re-development of the system will also support the Council in meeting its responsibilities with regards to cyber security and compliance.

- As part of internal due diligence, a Business Case for the replacement system was developed. Following internal governance, it was deemed that due to the continual rising support costs for the IT service to maintain the InfoBase solution, the most cost-effective option over the next five years would be a replacement solution. As there are limited commercial off the shelf offerings for the solution, a bespoke redevelopment will be required.
- To this end, a procurement exercise has been undertaken through the Digital Outcomes framework in order to find a supplier who will be responsible for providing professional services to develop a replacement SEND funding system.
- Following evaluation, the decision has been made to award the contract for the redevelopment to STCS Ltd.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (see the [latest version of the Best Council Plan](#))

The proposed new system will support and contribute to the delivery of the following Council policies and priorities:

- Enable the FFI team to contribute to the Best Council Plan's objective of a Child-friendly city and the aim to 'improve achievement and attainment for all' through the accurate allocation of SEND funding;
- Enable the FFI team to contribute to the Best Council Plan's objective of a Child-friendly city and the aim to 'improve social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing' through the accurate allocation of SEND funding to schools and settings;
- Contribute to the objective of 'spending money wisely' by avoiding costly and increasing maintenance of the current system.

3. Resource Implications

- There are no resource implications arising from this decision.
- Council teams impacted on by the decision have been involved in the project.

Recommendations

- a) The Chief Digital and Information Officer is requested to approve the award of the contract to STCS Ltd for the supply of software development professional services to develop the replacement SEND funding solution and spend of £127,560.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To advise the Chief Digital and Information Officer that a procurement process has been undertaken for a replacement SEND funding allocation system and to seek approval to award an appropriate contract to STCS Ltd commencing on 3rd October 2020 or as soon as practical thereafter, until the 31st July 2021. There are no contract extensions available.
- 1.2 The breakdown of the tenderers score are detailed in Confidential Appendix A.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Leeds City Council (LCC) has a Department for Education mandated responsibility to fairly and equitably distribute Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding.
- 2.2 Since 2002, LCC has operated a brokering, application, assessment and funding allocation process known as FFI (Funding for Inclusion) to administer the distribution of top-up funds fairly and equitably.
- 2.3 Between 2000 and 2010, a bespoke web application, the 'Key Stage Data Collector', was developed to support FFI assessments on the Schools Extranet Platform, 'InfoBase'. This legacy system is supported and maintained by LCC's IT department and results in a significant maintenance overhead.
- 2.4 The SEND budget administered by the Council is £18 million per annum (and rising). This significant budget therefore carries substantial financial accuracy and reputational risks if there are any errors in allocations so the need for a system to allocate this funding is essential.
- 2.5 The procurement and redevelopment of the SEND funding solution is being managed as a project under the DIS Digital Development Scheme 2020/21.
- 2.6 A mini completion was published through the Digital Outcomes and Specialist framework on the 5th May 2020 with a deadline for receipt of applications the 19th May 2020. Applications were received from 27 suppliers.

3. Main considerations and reasons for contract award

- 3.1 The full tender scoring breakdown for each lot can be found at Confidential Appendix A. The following provides a summary of the outcome.
- 3.2 We received responses from 26 suppliers these were:

Park Square Consulting Ltd	Alscient Limited	Analytics Engines
Tarmac.io	Nous Infosystems (UK) Ltd	Talk Think Do Ltd
Ballard Chambers Ltd	Objectivity Ltd	DCSL Software Ltd
QMTech Limited	STCS Limited	DataArt
Gate One	Keytree Limited	Codec DSS LTD
Synetec Ltd	Agile World Associates	cloudThing Limited
Softwire Technology Limited	JMAN Group Limited	Adaptive QA
CDS	Nemetos UK Ltd	Expression Labs Limited
IJYI Ltd	Audacia Consulting	

3.3 After an initial assessment 6 were shortlisted. These were:

- Alscient Limited
- Objectivity Ltd
- STCS Limited
- Keytree Limited
- Adaptive QA
- Software Technology Limited

3.4 Objectivity Ltd, STCS Limited and Keytree Limited provided further responses which were assessed by the evaluation panel consisting of members of the Digital and Information Service.

3.5 The remaining tender submissions were assessed on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender, using a most cost effective approach to price and quality evaluation with the following weightings available:

- Technical Competence – 60%
- Cultural Fit – 10%
- Price – 30%

3.6 The most economically advantageous tender was submitted by STCS Limited.

3.7 A detailed breakdown of scores awarded to each tenderer can be found in confidential appendix A.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Consultation with the users of the current InfoBase solution within the Funding for Inclusion team and Finance has taken place throughout the project and staff will continue to have input.

4.1.2 Representatives from IT have also been involved throughout the project and staff will continue to have input.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening report was considered for the replacement solution and a further Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this request.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The award of a new contract will support and contribute to the delivery of the following Council policies and priorities:

4.3.1.1 Application Rationalisation (DIS);

4.3.1.2 Spending Money Wisely;

4.3.1.3 The Best Council Plan has an ambition for Leeds to be a 'child-friendly city' and includes objectives around 'improving educational attainment' and improving

children's 'social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing'. As the FFI team are responsible for allocating SEND funding to schools and settings, the work of the team supports and contributes to these objectives.

4.4 Climate Emergency

4.5 This report relates to the provision of a software system, its impact on climate change initiatives is mainly through the support it gives those services using it. The system directly contributes by facilitating digital working e.g. electronic communications and enquiries with schools and settings, removing the need for paper based communications.

4.6 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.6.1 The successful tenderer provided the most economically advantageous tender.

4.6.2 The costs submitted by the successful tenderer are in line with expectations.

4.7 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.7.1 The Chief Digital and Information Officer gave approval to commence a procurement as an administrative decision on the 17th February 2020.

4.7.2 The procurement was conducted in accordance with the Councils Contract procedure Rules.

4.7.3 This contract award is not subject to call in.

4.8 Risk management

4.8.1 The procurement of a contract for professional services to redevelop the current InfoBase solution will mitigate against the on-going risk of system failure that would persist if no change were made.

4.8.2 Project management will be in place from both the supplier and Leeds City Council throughout the duration of the contract. Risk will be managed as part of the project.

5. Recommendations

5.1.1 The Chief Digital and Information Officer is requested to approve the award of the contract to STCS Ltd for the supply of software development professional services to develop the replacement SEND funding solution and spend of £127,560.

6. Background documents¹

6.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.