

Microsoft Access Database Replacement

Date: 09/11/2021

Report of: Access Project Manager

Report to: Director of Resources

Will the decision be open for call in? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No

What is this report about?

- This report is in relation to the key decision for the authority to commence a procurement for the provision of services to re-platform and replace the Council's Microsoft Access Databases.
- Approval to carry out a procurement via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Digital Marketplace (Digital Outcomes and Specialists) to obtain the services of approximately 4 suppliers to work in partnership with the Council's Integrated Digital Services (IDS) team to deliver Microsoft Access Databases Replacement Project.
- This is a new procurement in order to complete delivery of an existing project. The capital spend under Applications Portfolio Programme (APP) was approved in 2021 and this tender is within the agreed project budget and governance under APP 2021.

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The tender of services via the Digital Outcomes & Specialists 5 – RM1043.7 framework to work alongside the Integrated Digital Service project on the replacement of Microsoft Access databases; utilising Agile methodology and working in an accelerated manner.
- The work is being done to lower the cost of ownership of solutions, enhance business productivity through the use of Digital Workplace technologies and control legal and compliance risks to the organisation from having legacy and unsupported solutions supporting service delivery. The Council must maintain its Public Services Network (PSN) compliance and the continued use of out of support versions of Microsoft Access puts this at risk.
- In addition, use of Access databases poses many GDPR issues as they cannot be centrally controlled or audited. In order to tackle the number of databases that require replacement, the project requires external support to ensure we can replace them in an accelerated manner.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Resources is recommended to approve the procurement of the services outlined above.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 In order to accelerate delivery of the replacement of the databases, it is necessary to procure the services of an external partner with experience of delivering a similar scale and type of programme of work.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

☐ Yes

☒ No

- 2 The impact will predominantly be on the services within the organisation who will need to be engaged with in order to smoothly transition their teams on to a new application, to enable them to maintain data security and delivery of services. Some level of training may be required, which the project will identify and facilitate.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 3 It is not considered that the content of this report or the recommendations made will have a significant impact on any particular ward or community, and as such no formal consultations have taken place.
- 4 Extensive engagement has taken place with all service areas and senior leadership teams within the council over the last 3 years, to communicate the importance of the removal of Microsoft Access and the importance of their cooperation with the project team in order to maintain our compliance with security measures. The project has also had the support of the Corporate Governance and Audit committee.

What are the resource implications?

- 5 Resources as part of the project team have been considered and budgeted for, in addition to the budget for the contract resource under the Applications Portfolio Programme capital budget, which was approved in March 2021.
- 6 Service area leads and key contacts have been identified through the prior work of the project and will work alongside the project team in order to implement a replacement database at the earliest opportunity.

What are the legal implications?

- 7 This decision is taken in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rule 3.1.7 and the supplier/s will be held to contractual obligations to deliver requirements.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 8 Failure to demonstrate progress or action in replacing Microsoft Access could result in losing our PSN accreditation/certificate. The Head of PSN will inform the Information Commissioners Officer, which could culminate in the revisiting of past audits to ensure compliance against the Data Protection Act. The Head of PSN will inform the Deputy National Security advisor to the Prime Minister, who would in turn conduct an assessment based on the national risk profile.

We will mitigate for this by demonstrating rapid progress using an agile delivery method with an experienced external partner.

- 9 Service delivery interruption or complete service failure if unsupported Microsoft Access databases are not replaced in a speedy manner. Front line departments delivering services to the public rely on these databases on a day-to-day basis and so it is critical that an urgent replacement encompassing a smooth transition to a new platform is completed, which an experienced delivery partner can assist with.

IDS are currently offering limited support to these databases to mitigate the risk to service failure, which is adding pressure to existing teams. We have also implemented a freeze on any changes being made to the functionality of the databases, other than to maintain core service delivery functions through managed support.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

☐ Inclusive Growth ☐ Health and Wellbeing ☐ Climate Emergency

- 10 No – this programme of work is compliance driven, so the main driver and benefit of completing this piece of work is to reduce the risk to our data and to maintain our Public Services Network compliance in order to continue delivering key services uninterrupted and without penalty.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 11 There are limited options available to us in order to deliver replacements in a quick and efficient manner. Internally, the resource is not available to manage the number of databases which require replacement. In addition, the size of the team required to work in an accelerated manner, means individual contractors were not an option.

If we were to do nothing, we would be unable to make and demonstrate our progress towards PSN compliance and it would be much more difficult to deliver even a small percentage of replacements and therefore demonstrate an acceptable level of progress. As there are over 1000 databases, some very complex, we do not have enough resources or knowledge about them to be able to replace them ourselves. Many of the databases were designed and built over 10 years ago and as such, the staff who originally supported them are no longer with us and there is no knowledge base for Microsoft Access.

How will success be measured?

- 12 The contract management process will allow us to measure performance, as per the contract terms and by utilising performance related incentives in terms of the pricing of deliverables.
- 13 The replacement databases have been split into manageable initiatives and we plan to award the initiatives between 4 suppliers in total, to ensure they can be clearly monitored and measured within each initiative's key delivery milestones.

What is the timetable for implementation?

14 The contract is due to be awarded in December 2021 and the supplier/s are expected to start work in January 2022.

Appendices

None

Background papers

15 [Key decision](#)