

Client Information System – IT contractors contract extension

Date: 20th August 2024

Report of: Chief Officer Resources and Strategy

Report to: Director of Adults and Health

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Adults and Health employ two IT specialist contractors to maintain and develop the in-house Client Information System (CIS). The contractor's contract ended at the end of March 2024. This paper requests a 12-month extension to 31st March 2025 to ensure this critical system is maintained and developed in line with the directorates strategy.

The anticipated cost of this extension will be circa £250k and funding is available to meet this cost.

This paper requests backdated approval following additional queries re future proofing the CIS system determined in February 2024.

Recommendations: the Director of Adults and Health is asked to:

- a) Approve the extension of contracts for two IT Contractors at a cost of circa £250k.

What is this report about?

- 1 The directorate operates an in-house Client Information System (CIS). Because it is in-house the system requires a level of specialist technical support. That level of specialism is not available within the Council's resources.
- 2 The system is supported by several IDS employed staff and two specialist IT contractors. The two contractors have been utilised for several years now and have delivered several significant developments including system changes to support Strengths Based Social Work and the automated billing system.
- 3 Continued maintenance, support and development are needed over the following twelve months, significant elements of which require specialist report. These include further development to the automated billing process and addressing the backlog of developments identified by users of the system. Maintenance includes at least one system upgrade per annum.
- 4 It is noted that IDS have initiated an options appraisal on the future of CIS. Though it is highly unlikely that any significant progress will be made on this over the next twelve months it should be noted that the two contractors would play an essential role in any system change.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 5 The proposal will ensure a consistency of maintenance, support and development from two individuals who have been responsible for much of the developments since the system was procured and made live in 2015.
- 6 The two contractors have been responsible for identifying opportunities for efficiencies and income generation through evidenced based data; they are both proactive to system development.
- 7 Through recent national work, CIS has been promoted as a very good social care client record system, with several authorities approaching the Council to discuss buying our system as it performed better than off the shelf systems. The commercial development of the system is to be a part of the options appraisal.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 8 This proposal is linked to the Health and Wellbeing Pillar in that the development of the system enables better recording of the people who use our services and what services they receive. Historically this has helped us identify the groups of people who access or don't access our social care services and help us target underrepresented groups where we feel this is appropriate.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: N/A

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

The Portfolio holder was briefed.

What are the resource implications?

- 9 The combine cost is calculated at £250k for the 12 months. This is based upon £500 per day for five days per week for 50 weeks. Funding exists for this commitment within the revenue budget.

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

- 10 The key risks surrounding this proposal include that the two individuals may not wish to continue in these roles. In mitigation both have confirmed their willingness to stay for the duration of the extension.
- 11 It is a risk that one or both individuals may wish to exit the contract period prior to its end; in such an instance the workplan would be reworked to a level of prioritisation and seek to identify additional support via the IDS framework.

What are the legal implications?

- 12 As the value of this decision does not exceed £500,000, this is a Publishable Admin Decision and is not subject to call in. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 13 Three other options were considered; firstly, to not extend the contracts; this was discounted because the system would be at high risk of failure as the necessary skill set does not exist within the Council.
- 14 It was considered to only extend the contracts of one contractor; this was discounted because of both the workload and the different skill sets the individuals have.
- 15 It was considered to utilise the IDS framework, but conversations with IDS colleagues suggest that the lack of knowledge of the system would necessitate a long lead in time, stagnate development and increase the risk of a lengthy delay to any system failure.

How will success be measured?

- 16 Success will be measured via having a stable CIS and developments delivered within planned timescales.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 17 It is planned that there will be no break in service and the two individuals will be in situ until 31st March 2025.
- 18 The implementation of this decision will be the responsibility of the Chief Officer Resources and Strategy.

Appendices

- Equality Assessment

Background papers

- None.