

TITLE	Procurement Business Case – Schools Management Information System
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 26 September 2019
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Children's Services - UllaKarin Clark

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

The report is to seek approval from the Executive for Children's Services to procure a Schools Management Information System for schools and academies in the Borough. Approval is required as the total value of the contract will be over £500k.

A central procurement will achieve better Value For Money for Wokingham schools and academies through aggregated purchase.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive:

- 1) agree to the commencement of the procurement for a Schools Management Information System (required as the total value of the contract will be over £500k).
- 2) agree that once a suitable system has been procured, the decision to award the contract is delegated to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children's Services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current contract for School Management Information Systems (MIS) ends in March 2020. The system supports effective school management by providing a range of functions including pupil database, assessment, Special Education Needs, personnel, financial management, etc. The current system links directly with a central Local Authority database.

Consultation with schools/academies indicated that the Local Authority should once again organise a central procurement. A procurement therefore needs to be organised for a new contract starting in April 2020. A Procurement Steering Group of school/academy representatives and Wokingham Procurement have agreed that procuring using a framework contract will meet the requirements of the majority of schools and is compliant with Contract Regulations.

A central procurement will achieve better Value For Money for schools and academies through aggregated purchase and makes it more likely that schools will use the same

system. This makes it easier to transfer educational data from schools to WBC data systems which supports Local Authority statutory and non-statutory functions.

The total value of the contract over 5 years is estimated at £970k, but the full annual cost will be met through charges to schools/academies. Therefore, no funding is required from WBC service budgets.

Children's Services approved the procurement on 11 July 2019. Since the total value of the contract is above £500k, the WBC Constitution also requires approval from the Executive.

The procurement process will be more efficient if Council Exec are requested to delegate the contract award decision to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children's Services.

BACKGROUND

A similar procurement to the one being proposed was organised in 2013 resulting in the current School Management Information Systems contract which started on 1 April 2014. The contract ends on 31 March 2020 and can't be further extended. Prior to the current contract, WBC have made central arrangements to purchase Schools MIS for at least 14 years.

A consultation with Wokingham schools and academies in Autumn 2018 indicated that the next procurement should seek to identify a single supplier for all schools/academies that wish to contract. Children's Services colleagues have worked with a Procurement Steering Group of school/academy representatives and Wokingham Procurement to review the market and identify the available procurement options. The outcome is an agreement that procuring using a framework contract will meet the requirements of the majority of schools and is compliant with Contract Regulations.

It would be possible just to procure on behalf of Local Authority maintained schools, but (as with the current contract) it is preferable to also include academies that wish to contract, as it should achieve better value for money for all. It also makes the process more straightforward when Local Authority schools convert to academies.

BUSINESS CASE

Schools MIS supports effective school management that in turn enables relevant data to be transferred from schools and academies to WBC data systems to support Local Authority statutory and non-statutory functions and help to achieve WBC and Children's Services objectives. Aggregated procurement achieves better Value For Money and aids cohesion across the wider Wokingham education community by making it more likely that education institutions will use the same system.

The option of not procuring was considered but rejected because it would put Local Authority schools in particular at a significant financial disadvantage and make it substantially more complex for WBC to transfer data from schools, with a likely reduction in the amount of educational data that WBC would be able to access easily.

No significant risks have been identified with proceeding with the procurement. WBC is not financially disadvantaged by schools that opt to leave the contract or by schools that become academies. Individual schools/academies have an annual opportunity to leave the contract as long as they give notice by 31 Dec for termination on the following 31 March and the annual contract value is adjusted accordingly. Appropriate arrangements are made for schools that become academies during the contract term.

Assuming the Executive approve to this procurement, it will start shortly and seek to identify a suitable supplier by mid November 2019. Schools/academies will then be offered the opportunity to sign up to the new contract in late November/early December 2019, prior to the start of the new contract in April 2020.

Note that the Procurement Business Case is provided at the end of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£194k	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£194k	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£194k	Yes	Revenue

Other Financial Information

The total contract value over 5 years (3 years initial contract and 2 year optional extension) is expected to be in the region of £970k (approx. £194k annually). However, this will be fully met through annual charges to schools/academies. The charges to schools include a management fee to cover the salary costs of officers administering the contract. Therefore, no funding is required from WBC service budgets.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

A consultation was carried out with schools/academies in Autumn 2018 in preparation for this procurement.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Provision of a Schools Management Information System will provide a positive benefit towards fulfilling the Public Sector Equality Duty as it allows for individual characteristics and needs of students, parents and carers to be recorded and taken account of, and for appropriate additional support to be effectively managed by schools. An equalities assessment has not been completed at this time.

List of Background Papers

Procurement Business Case

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