

**Report of the Head of Policy, Planning, Procedures, and Information, Children's Services**

**Report to the Deputy Chief Executive**

**Date: 13 February 2014**

**Subject: Design and Cost Report - Replacement of Education Leeds Infobase Intranet site**



**Capital Scheme Number: 16943/000/000**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible 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:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. Infobase was developed and managed by the former Education Leeds. It provided a communication channel between Education Leeds and Leeds City Council.
2. Key Business Application were also developed and embedded into InfoBase which are still used by schools to report school closures, Governors Applications, and others. There are a total of 26 applications embedded.
3. Education Leeds was closed down in March 2011 and staff were transferred via a TUPE process to Children's Services and ICT Services. Since the closure of Education Leeds, a number of key staff have left the organisation and therefore, Infobase has since become unsupported and fragmented.
4. Access to Infobase is via the Leeds Learning Network, which is being decommissioned by March 2014. Therefore, a new Schools Information Exchange channel needs to be commissioned and implemented before this date to ensure effective communications with all 265 schools.

## **Recommendations**

- 4 The Deputy Chief Executive is requested to give retrospective authority to spend £355,000 to deliver a cost effective replacement of InfoBase before the end of March 2014.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To seek approval for the capital funding to support the development of a new Schools Information Exchange Channel and decommission InfoBase by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Infobase was developed by Education Leeds; it provided a communication channel between LCC and schools. Through this channel (better described as the Schools Intranet Service) secure access was provided to shared policies, guidance, news events and documents. The platform also provided access to software applications that were embedded within InfoBase and used by schools to manage activities (e.g. *School Closure system, FFI, Artemis, Governor Application etc.*).
- 2.2 Education Leeds was closed down in March 2011 and therefore, Education Leeds functions and staff were transferred, via TUPE, into Leeds City Council, within the Children's Services Directorate, Corporate ICT Services, and other Council Directorates. As a result of the transfer and a subsequent restructure of Children Services, InfoBase support has become fragmented with no clear business ownership. A number of key personnel who transferred to ICT Services have now left the authority, putting a major risk on ICT Services ability to sustain the support and maintenance of this application.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 Leeds Learning Network will be decommissioned in March 2014 which means that the ICT access and services for schools will also fundamentally alter. It is imperative that the council and schools have an efficient and effective means of two way sharing and collaboration on information and services and that the whole provision is reviewed.
- 3.2 Children's Services have continued to post content through the existing Infobase channel to try and keep schools informed of developments, and tried to maintain a number of key Schools applications that are embedded within the application. However, both the content and the applications developed within Infobase have ceased to be supported or maintained.
- 3.3 This has recently led to a number of critical applications not being available to schools or, the public in terms of key announcements (such as server weather data).
- 3.4 During this period, there have been other key developments which now need to be revisited to support the directorate to effectively communicate with schools:-
  - 4Heads Web Site – Supports communications with primary schools only
  - Leeds Learning Network (LLN) – Contract expiry 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014
- 3.5 Both of the above applications have been developed on the LLN platform. Post 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, these application will not be available to schools, and nor will Infobase as these applications rely on Leeds Learning Network being in place.

## **4 Design Proposals and Full Scheme Description.**

### **4.1 Design stage. May – July 2013**

- Confirm business requirement.
- Develop high level design for schools access, including review of existing projects.
- Develop business process for access including roles and resources required.
- Detailed application analysis.
- Business case for the development and deployment stages.
- Commission development partner resources.

### **Development stage – July – December 2013.**

- Engage development partner resources.
- Build core infrastructure.
- Develop applications.
- Develop implementation plan and training approach.

### **Deployment stage – January – March 2014**

- Train
- Deploy solutions.
- Decommission.

### **4.3 Other options were considered and ruled out by the ICT Senior Leadership Team and the ICT Commissioning Board.**

- i. Internal delivery – due to pressures on other priority programmes of work for ICT there was a lack of technical project management and technical resource to deliver this urgent requirement alongside other work.
- ii. Agency / Contractor recruitment – we could have built a team of contractors to grow the additional capacity required but this was viewed as high risk in terms of timescale to recruit and build a team. Also we would not have had the management capacity to oversee this team at a detailed level. Given there were unclear requirements we may have recruited capacity we did not fully need.
- iii. OJEC procurement of a supplier – excluded as the timescales to undertake this level of procurement would not allow us to meet the deadlines required and again it would not offer the flexibility of resourcing with unclear / evolving requirements.

In summary ICT SLT recommended the best fit option to deliver the requirement placing the accountability for overall delivery of the end to end project with a

supplier that had the capability and capacity to respond to our requirements. This was achieved using the already agreed government framework that assesses both the quality and cost elements of the respective suppliers. This provides the ability to compare the price of all suppliers and ensure we can demonstrate value for money and that the project can be delivered within the funding envelope available.

## **5 Corporate Considerations**

### **5.1 Consultation and Engagement**

5.1.1 Stakeholders across the council have been identified and been consulted in regard to the priority and level of activity this project will generate in order to deliver the desired outcomes for schools and Children's Services by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

### **5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

5.2.1 This implementation and will ensure that access to core council information and services that are currently offered by the Infobase will be maintained across all groups identified and impacted by the cessation of the current Infobase service in April 2014. An EDCI Screening Assessment has been carried out, and the screening document has been sent to the Equality Team to be approved and published.

### **5.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

5.3.1 Children Services have the statutory responsibility to ensure all children within Leeds receive and education. Therefore, for information to flow seamlessly between schools and Leeds City Council, we must have the ability to share information securely, both directly with schools and the public.

- The Children and Young People Plan 2011-2015
- Obsessions
- Nine Point Plan
- Child Friendly City

### **5.4 Resources and value for money**

5.4.1 It is anticipated that business case development costs will be £40k. The overall project costs requiring capital funding are estimated at £355k (including business case development). This is a mix of £315 external development and £40k ICT internal costs.

5.4.2 The proposal is to fund the £355k capital costs through unsupported borrowing over 5 financial years. The £81k per annum revenue impact will be incorporated into the Directorate's 2013/14 budget projections and the 2014/15 and medium-term budget strategy.

5.4.3 It is currently unknown at this point if there are any additional business or ICT support costs required to manage and run any of the technical solutions. It is envisaged these may be covered by existing resources but this will be validated during the design phase of the project. Similarly, it is unknown if there will be any revenue impact of licences for equipment to be incurred. The project manager will advise the Head of Finance for Children's Services of any additional revenue implications that may be identified throughout the course of the development of the project.

## 5.5 Capital Funding and Cash Flow.

Previous total Authority to Spend on this scheme	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2013 £000's	FORECAST				
			2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's	2016/17 £000's	2017 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	0.0						
FURN & EQPT (5)	0.0						
DESIGN FEES (6)	0.0						
OTHER COSTS (7)	0.0						
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2013 £000's	FORECAST				
			2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's	2016/17 £000's	2017 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	0.0						
FURN & EQPT (5)	0.0						
DESIGN FEES (6)	0.0						
OTHER COSTS (7)	355.0		155.0	200.0			
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>355.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>155.0</b>	<b>200.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme)	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2013 £000's	FORECAST				
			2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's	2016/17 £000's	2017 on £000's
Departmental USB	355.0		155.0	200.0			
Total Funding	355.0	0.0	155.0	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Balance / Shortfall =</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Parent Scheme Number: 16943/000/000  
 Title: Infobase Replacement

### Revenue Effects

The following table illustrates the alterations which will be necessary to the Directorate's revenue budget:

REVENUE EFFECTS	2013/14 £000's	2013/14 and SUBSEQUENT YEARS £000'S
EMPLOYEES		
PREMISES COSTS		
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	81.0	81.0
EXTERNAL INCOME GENERATED		

## 5.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.6.1 The approval of this report is classified as a Key Decision under the City Council's constitution, and will be subject to call-in.

## 5.7 Risk Management

- Partner required to develop applications due to ICT resource commitment – a secure a partner needs to be secured at an affordable cost.
- Dependencies on multiple projects - a clear plan is required around all components and communication channels within Children's services and schools.
- Business input to design and development vital to achieve the right outcome.
- Leeds Learning Network will be decommissioned on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, therefore, removing access to Infobase and its contents for schools.
- The scoping work within ICT Service's has already started and identified all the stakeholder who will support the development of the new platform
- A Schools Information Exchange Project Board has been established, and is chaired by the business to ensure commitment and buy-in from all stakeholders, which include seconded head teachers
- A Sub board, has been established to gather and develop all the content that needs to be shared with schools
- An external partner has been identified to support with the development and project management of this new platform, due to resource and priority constraints within ICT Services.

## 6 Conclusions

6.1 This report seeks the approval of capital expenditure for the replacement of Infobase. The objective is to develop a high level design for the required infrastructure to support schools access to the new Schools Information Exchange Service by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. The project will include, reviewing all the required

applications and business processes which will allow effective communications between Leeds City Council and schools.

## **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Deputy Chief Executive is requested to give retrospective authority to spend £355,000 from capital scheme number 16943/000/000 to deliver a cost effective replacement of InfoBase before the end of March 2014.

## **8 Background Documents<sup>1</sup>**

None.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.