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**Report to Clackmannanshire Council**

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**Date of Meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

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**Subject: Be the Future Update - Replacement Social Work Management Information System**

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**Report by: Lorraine Sanda, Strategic Director - People**

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**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. This report provides a progress report on the procurement of a replacement Social Work IT system and seeks approval for the necessary next steps.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1. It is recommended that Council approves:**

- 2.2. An additional £324,246 from the Transformation Fund (para 3.11) for the purpose of enabling the Council to move forward and progress to the invitation to tender (ITT) stage which will thereafter inform procurement of a replacement Social Work IT system.

**2.3. It is recommended that Council notes:**

- 2.3.1 The detailed preparatory analysis work undertaken by officers over previous years (para 3.6 and 3.7),
- 2.3.2 That a business case will be brought back to Council setting out additional financial implications for the procurement, implementation and maintenance of the replacement system. Funding would require to be approved by Council prior to the procurement proceeding (para 3.10).

**3.0 Considerations**

- 3.1. Digital and Data Transformation is one of the agreed Council themes for the BtF programme.
- 3.2. The procurement of a new Social Work IT system is a key priority area within this workstream.
- 3.3. It has been recognised for some time that a replacement Social Work Management Information System is business critical and required for Clackmannanshire Council. The current system, in use since 1998 by

children, adult and justice services, is outdated and poses significant support and maintenance challenges. Numerous external reports have also highlighted the considerable risk due to a lack of connectivity between different systems.

3.4. Procuring and implementing a new fit for purpose system would lead to improvements for Clackmannanshire residents, suppliers and staff, be more efficient and cost effective, enabling high quality care packages to be put in place more quickly, supporting potential savings and improvements in care packages. This will lead to more efficient invoicing, and a better managed service all round. This will be a spend to save solution. Whilst there are varying levels of complexity involved in integrating existing systems with any new system, including with the Finance system, the key services which will benefit from a new system are:

- Children Services
- Adult Care
- Integrated Mental Health
- Education
- Justice Services
- Finance

### 3.5. Business Analysis

Over the past few years, officers have conducted extensive work to explore options and gather information to inform a Business Case. The key actions undertaken from this work included:

- 3.5.1. Action to stabilise the existing system, maximising the opportunities from the implementation of MS365.
- 3.5.2. Process improvements to tackle the most difficult challenges within current systems (reporting, access via mobile devices, data integrity, finance).
- 3.5.3. Analysis of needs of each service area.
- 3.5.4. Exploring sharing joint procurement with Stirling and/or Falkirk, or any other authority.
- 3.5.5. Consideration of procurement options, including whether funding could be capitalised.
- 3.5.6. Preparatory work on cleansing of existing system information in preparation for a new system.

### 3.6. Conclusion from preparatory work:

- 3.6.1. The majority of other local authorities have either progressed, or are in the process of progressing, new Social Work Management Information Systems. Joint procurement was considered but discounted due to the complexity of different legacy systems and requirements to progress to a new system.
  - 3.6.2. There is no one standard, off the shelf system that meets the requirements of all local authorities. Each authority has its own complexities and interrelated issues to address, which require bespoke solutions.
  - 3.6.3. Most local authorities have taken 3 – 4 years to progress from scoping to procurement, and typically a further 3 years or more of implementation.
  - 3.6.4. Advice has been sought from the Digital Office Scotland and Scotland Excel and no solution can be offered which would support the Council to move forward at pace and without incurring significant cost.
  - 3.6.5. Based on feedback and intelligence, the costs of implementing and maintaining a new system are considerable, likely to be in excess of £2.5million. This figure is based upon previous scoping work that was undertaken.
  - 3.6.6. The development of a national system, to support a potential National Care Service, has made little progress.
- 3.7. It is clear from the extensive work undertaken so far that a new system is now urgently required and that risks should be addressed. A move from this preparatory work to fully scoping a Business Case which sets out the requirements of a new system, including costs, potential savings, and identifying a procurement route is needed. The increasing risks can be summarised as follows:
- 3.7.1 The lack of data integration and the increasing inability to meet government legislative requirements and policy changes further exacerbate the issue.- Although some efforts have been made to stabilise the current operating environment, cleanse data, and improve practices within Children's, Adults, and Justice Services, these efforts are severely constrained by the outdated processes and systems.
  - 3.7.2 "single point of failure"—one system expert is responsible for developing, supporting, and maintaining an unsustainable and unfit system. This necessitates multiple manual checking processes, resulting in significant loss of staff time. Consequently, staff morale is negatively affected, and recruitment and retention are challenging due to reluctance to work with such an outdated system.
  - 3.7.3 Service delivery failure. - It has been identified in numerous external reports as creating considerable risk to vulnerable persons as a

result of the different current systems not connecting which could result in essential and life saving services not being delivered.

- 3.8. Internal resources are already extremely stretched and there is little opportunity to allocate existing staff to work on a new system. Most recently funding was identified through the Transformation Fund to recruit a Project Manager. However this approach was unsuccessful, as was an attempt made to procure agency support. It has become clear that a single Project Manager post will not be sufficient to move the project forward. Based on previous work undertaken to progress, and from the Council's Digital Transformation Journey over the past two years, the Council will require a full team of subject matter experts to move the whole project forward to a stage where we could prepare a full Business Case to procure a new system.
- 3.9. Securing this resource would be undertaken in line with Council Governance and following procurement rules.
- 3.10. There is a previously agreed budget of £191,514 approved from the Transformation Fund to progress a replacement SW IT System. To enable the Council to progress through to ITT stage it is estimated £515,760 is required. It is proposed that a further £324,246 is required from the Transformation Fund. This will enable the Council to progress work to undertake a full scoping of requirements for a new system to then take us through to the procurement of a new system. A business case will be brought back to Council prior to full procurement setting out additional financial implications. It is likely that the costs of the system would be Revenue however, there would be a continuing look to review what costs could be capitalised. Either way funding would have to be identified and approved by Council.

#### **4.0 Sustainability Implications**

- 4.1. No sustainability implications are identified.

#### **5.0 Resource Implications**

##### *5.1. Financial Details*

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes X

- 5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes X

##### *5.4. Staffing*

## 6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No **X**

## 7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box )

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all   
Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life   
Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential   
Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

(2) **Council Policies**

Complies with relevant Council Policies

## 8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?  
Yes **X** No

## 9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes **X**

## 10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

None

## 11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)  
Yes  (please list the documents below) No **X**

**Author(s)**

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**Approved by**

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