
Subject: NEW CLOUD-BASED SYSTEM FOR REGULATORY SERVICES, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Date: 7 July 2022

Decision to be taken by: Brinley Hill, Head of Community and Digital Services

Report of: Abi Robinson, Digital Services Manager

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris Vinson, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change

Decision Type: Executive Key Decision

Call-in to be Suspended: No

Classification: Unrestricted

Delegated Authority: Authority delegated by Cabinet at its meeting held on 28 February 2022 to the Head of Community and Digital Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change, for the approval of projects included in Annex 6D of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (CAB 87)

Purpose of the report: To implement a new Cloud-based system within the Council's Regulatory Services, Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour teams.

Recommendation: To approve the purchase of a new Cloud-based system for use within the Council's Regulatory Services, Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour teams, and to take all necessary actions to deliver the project, including awarding the contract.

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides an overview and business case for the procurement of a new Cloud-based system (Software as a Service) for use within Regulatory Services, Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour.

1.2 The recommendation is being made because the system that the departments use is no longer fit for purpose and is out of support.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The purpose of this report is to make the business case to ensure that the departments can deliver a modern, effective, fit for purpose, fully integrated system to enable them to be more flexible, innovative and creative, and give greater confidence in the service that they deliver. The new Cloud-based system will provide a better and efficient customer journey for members of the public.

2.2 The Regulatory Services Department is responsible for Environmental Crime, Environmental Protection, Licensing, Private Sector Housing and Planning

Enforcement (which will be out of scope for this project). The service areas deal with a vast range of complaints and proactive activities relating to licensed premises, pollution to air, land and water, noise, smoke, fly-tipping, littering, dog-fouling, and problem landlords.

- 2.3 The Public Protection Team which sits within the Port Health and Public Protection Department deals with food safety, health and safety and infectious diseases activities.
- 2.4 The Anti-Social Team sits within the Community Department dealing with complaints relating to anti-social behaviour.
- 2.5 The departments currently use M3 (Northgate) for their case management system. The system has been in the Council for approximately 15 years, and it is deemed that it is no longer fit for purpose. The server that the system sits on is nearly out of support and cannot be upgraded due to the age of the system, as such we are also out of support with the supplier.
- 2.6 The system was last upgraded over 5 years ago and upgrades are no longer available as the provider has moved to a new system. This therefore means that it is not in line with digital developments, is holding the departments back from implementing new ways of working e.g. mobile working, and cannot provide a better experience for the customer.
- 2.7 A key opportunity of procuring a new system is that the services can embrace innovative technical and mobile working practices to enhance service delivery. The department have made some progress with this; however, the system is now holding them back from making significant changes in innovation, implementing new administrative processes (creating efficiencies) and improving the customer experience.
- 2.8 Through soft-market testing there are several benefits that are anticipated to be delivered from a new system including:
 - Automated document production and storage
 - Integration with GIS and map layers
 - Workload Management which gives managers the opportunity to deal with their officer workloads and reassign if necessary.
 - Integration with payment systems.
 - Online portal for customers to log service requests and apply for Council Services.
 - Mobile working enabling officers to work on site with customers on or offline, updating the system in real time, remove reliance on Citrix or Pulse.
 - Deliver improvements in effectiveness by removing manual processes and offline data storage e.g., storing information on the network.
 - Deliver savings from efficient working practices and further automation of processes.
 - Support staff flexibility and new ways of working – cloud based and mobile workings
 - Ensure that the system procured is compatible with the Council's digital agenda of being Cloud based, thus ensuring that there are fewer servers on premise and based at Thanet Council.
 - No requirement for 3rd party solutions – no reliance on 3rd party systems. Interfaces which can connect to any further systems e.g., payments systems
 - Information security management system
 - Agile methodologies – a system that continuously evolves. Allowing smaller enhancements with greater frequency rather than traditional methods of applying large upgrades infrequently.

- 2.9 The departments recognise that their day-to-day operations need to be delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible in terms of supporting businesses, residents, and visitors within the district, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.10 Efficiency Benefits – at present admin processes are fragmented, with tasks being repeated with no automation. One of the key goals of this project will be to transform current working practices by reducing processing times for customers. For example, DDC received 1574 licensing applications in 2020/21 which are processed by the admin team. If each application took 2 hours to input and validate at £13 an hour (based on an admin assistant earning £24,000) this costs DDC £40,924 to complete these processes yearly. An online customer portal would allow customers to apply online which would directly integrate into the back-office system. Only when the customer has a completed application would it be submitted to the team. This will remove the need for manual rekeying. If the whole process were to be costed out, there would likely be further time savings in post collection. In addition, there would be no printing of forms and posting them out to customers. Software development could give further savings with the introduction of a booking module to allow taxi drivers to book and take their knowledge test online.
- 2.11 Customer Satisfaction – With modern systems, inspections and site visits can be process more quickly and accurately. Whilst the officer is onsite, they will be able to conduct inspections and then email the paperwork rather than typing up notes in the office. This would then speed up the process for customers. The new system will enable the Council to take advantage of any future changes in working practices or technological changes due to the flexible nature of a more modern system design and cloud based.
- 2.12 Compliance Benefits – the recent changes in GDPR and data protection have highlighted some of the inefficiencies in the current system with both data maintenance and data extraction. There are also large amounts of manual intervention in processes and paperwork which exists outside of the system. Most modern, cloud-based systems have integrated GDPR tools, to ensure any personal data is deleted in line with retention policies.
- 2.13 Future Benefits – the new system would put the Council in a position where it is able to respond to changes in legislation, redesign services quickly (due to it being cloud based). The system will be designed in such a way that it could be expanded to other departments, such as Planning and Building Control.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1 – Do Nothing
- 3.2 Option 2 – Purchase a new solution and implement new ways of working. This option is recommended.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Option 1 is not recommended. The system is no longer supported by the supplier and is on a server that needs to be replaced, which has its own security implications. It also does not align with the Council's policy to move to cloud-based systems.
- 4.2 Option 2 is the recommended option. This option will allow the Council to have access to a new system, which will bring more efficient working practises, and give the users a better experience. It will provide a cloud hosted system, reducing the support required from EKS ICT and supporting the Council's digital transformation agenda. The Digital Services Team have attended all of the demos to support the Heads of Service and to ensure the systems are in line with DDC's digital aspirations.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 DDC currently pays annual and periodic costs for M3.
- 5.2 Based on a review of procurement framework prices and indicative costs received from suppliers, it is estimated that the new system would be as follows:
- (a) An initial implementation cost in the region of £122k (including the annual hosting cost). This includes 9.5 days of training which consists of 9 days service specific training and half a day report writing training to be provided by the software supplier.
 - (b) Annual costs in the region of £45k. This includes the cost of upgrades. The contract term will be 5 years. Number of licences per DDC Service Area

Private Sector Housing	8
Community Safety Unit	7
Environmental Crime	5
Environmental Protection	4
Public Protection	9
Licensing	4
Head of Service and Management	2
Digital	1
Customer Service (Civica)	35
Total	75

- 5.3 There is budget included within the ICT reserve (under line 'Digital Projects') for this project. This is to cover the purchase of the new system, its implementation and the first year of annual hosting.
- 5.4 All service areas have agreed to allocate an officer to assist in the implementation of the project, train staff and exploit opportunities that this software will bring. They will work alongside officers from within the Digital Services Team. The Digital Services Manager will oversee the entire implementation of the project.

6. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 No comments received.

7. **Corporate Implications**

- 7.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Accountancy has been consulted on the report and have no further comments to add. (LS)
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

Contact Officers: Abi Robinson, Digital Services Manager