

Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources

Report to: Overview & Scrutiny Management Board

Date: 24 August 2023

Subject: Commissioning of the Social Care Financial Management System

Summary:

This report invites the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to consider a report on the Commissioning of The Social Care Financial Management System, that is due to be considered by the Executive on 05 September 2023. The views of the Board will be reported to the Executive as part of its consideration of this item.

Actions Required:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is invited to: -

- (1) consider the attached report and to determine whether the Board supports the recommendation(s) to the Executive as set out in the report; and,
- (2) agree any additional comments to be passed to the Executive in relation to this item.

1. Background

The Executive is due to consider a report on the Commissioning of The Social Care Financial Management System. The full report to the Executive is attached at Appendix A to this report.

2. Conclusion

Following consideration of the attached report, the Board is requested to consider whether it supports the recommendation(s) in the report and whether it wishes to make any additional comments to the Executive. The Board's views will be reported to the Executive.

3. Consultation

The Board is being consulted on the proposed decision of the Executive on 24 August 2023.

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Attached as part of the Executive report.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report			
Appendix A Report to the Executive on Commissioning of the Social Care Fir			
	Management System		

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Mark Williams, Business Change Manager - MDaS (Interim Mosaic Lead), who can be contacted at 15225 52271 or via email at mark.williams@lincolnshire.gov.uk.



Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources

Report to: Executive

Date: **05 September 2023**

Subject: Commissioning of the Social Care Financial Management

System

Decision Reference: | 1030031

Key decision? Yes

Summary:

The Council must re-commission its social care financial management system contract from January 2024.

The marketplace is extremely niche with a limited number of suppliers who can offer the full solution required.

In January 2023, the Council entered into a Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Call-Off Contract with The Access Group for the Mosaic system under the CCS Data and Application Solutions Framework. This was a key decision approved by the Executive on the 4 January 2023. The Call-Off Contract provides for additional modules to be purchased from The Access Group which will then form part of the same contract, one of which is the Abacus application.

This report recommends utilising this facility to add the Abacus module into the existing Call-Off Contract through change control. The recommended duration is a further 4 years (with further options to extend of 1 + 1) which allows us to align the duration of the financial management system contract with the duration of the Mosaic contract and benefit from a fixed price for the 4-year initial duration which manages inflation risk over that period.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive:

- 1. Approves the commissioning of Abacus as the Council's social care finance management system.
- 2. Approves contracting for the system through the addition of Abacus as a module into the Call-Off Contract between the Council and The Access Group dated 9th February 2023 via a change control process under the contract.
- 3. Approves the Council contracting for Abacus for an additional four years (until January 2028) with options to extend for two further periods of one year each.
- 4. Delegates to the Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning, authority to take all decisions necessary to commission the system including determining the final form and approving the entering into of the contract change control.

Alternatives Considered:

Other options have been considered as part of this process:

Do Nothing:

This would not be recommended as the Council would be out of contract with its existing supplier and vulnerable to uncontrollable costs and system / security issues.

Go out to tender:

This would not be recommended. As highlighted above, this is a relatively limited market, the chance of securing an enhanced solution, that also mitigates the risks related to our pre-existing financial investment and the disruption from uncoupling from the existing system is extremely unlikely. The Council has secured a contractual and commercial basis for commissioning Abacus through its existing contract for Mosaic which was entered into as a result of a compliant call-off through a government Framework. We are more likely to achieve a better commercial result securing the provision through the contract the Council already has in place. This would also save on the potentially significant cost, time and resourcing pressures involved in going out to tender.

Direct award utilising existing Mosaic Contract:

This is the preferred option as it allows the Council to build upon its extensive investment into the system and will provide the least disruption to staff and implementation costs incurred.

The alternative of a new system implementation would be resource and time intensive and would cause significant disruption to the service whilst resources had to focus on the

solution design, data mapping, data transfer and reconciliation of data as well as extensive testing and training requirements and the associated costs.

The Council is currently in the process of moving from net to gross payments and progressing further Mosaic and Abacus system integrations and improvements. Any disruption during this change would cause significant implications for the Council, providers and service users.

The Council would request to purchase Abacus from the optional drawdown elements under the call-off contract the Council has with the Access Group for Mosaic, which would allow the council to secure the Abacus system for a period of 4 years, +1, +1. This was built into the Mosaic contract as an option as part of the recent recommissioning of the Mosaic contract as the two are intrinsically linked and with the same supplier. The extensive work already undertaken by the legal and commissioning teams around service and support applies to these financial modules as well as the core Mosaic elements.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- The Council needs to ensure it operates an effective social care financial management system for efficient control of payments and receipts adhering to and fulfilling the council's statutory requirements.
- The Council needs to re-commission the system as the existing contract for Abacus runs out on 5th January 2024, with the maximum permitted number of annual contract extensions already implemented.
- Adding Abacus as a module into the call-off contract with the Access Group for the Mosaic system enables the Council to continue to build upon the significant resources invested in configuring the Abacus system to meet service needs and will minimise; operational service delivery risk, costs and time of transition to a new system and staff disruption.

1. Background

- 1.1. Abacus is the social care financial application that aligns with Mosaic, (the council's social care case management system) to control the financials and manage payments to the council's clients. Both Abacus and Mosaic are developed by the Access Group.
- 1.2. Abacus has been used within the authority since April 2002, following a full procurement and implementation project, with extensive training undertaken at that time.
- 1.3. Through its modules Abacus provides financial assessment functionality and generates client contributions towards social care services which generates income for the council, providing a clear breakdown of the financial assessment and contribution for the clients of Lincolnshire County Council.

- 1.4. Abacus manages around 4,500 payments made to the council every 4 weeks by its clients, as contributions towards their care costs. It also makes around 3,500 residential care payments every 4 weeks to care homes. Abacus also allows the Council to manage deferred payments for clients in residential care.
- 1.5. Using Abacus ensures that we are compliant with current legislation and the Care Act 2014. Access Group update the application with any elements or rules that need changing and ensure values comply with the current legislation around assessments and benefits.
- 1.6. The output from Abacus feeds into the Council's Business World system.
- 1.7. Current year contract costs for Abacus are c£0.210m per annum, (this includes Licensing, hosting, and support). The budget is currently split across IT and Adult Care.
- 1.8. Abacus is regularly developed by The Access Group to enhance the system and there are future plans for closer integration with Mosaic and improvements with the self-service portal.

Commissioning Approach

- 1.9. The marketplace for social care client financial management systems is extremely niche and is dominated by two main suppliers. The intention is to enter into a change control with Access Group to add the Abacus module into its existing contract for Mosaic. This allows the Council to build upon its extensive investment into the system and will provide the least disruption to staff and implementation costs incurred.
- 1.10. This would be achieved through exercising a right under the Council's Crown Commercial Service (CCS) DAS framework call-off contract already in place with Access Group for Mosaic to add in Abacus which is an optional element of the Mosaic call-off. This will enable the Council to add Abacus to its current contract with Access Group for four-years at a fixed price with further extensions of one year plus one year which will be subject to potential price variation.
- 1.11. The alternative of a new system implementation would be resource and time intensive and would cause significant disruption to the service whilst resources had to focus on the solution design, data mapping, data transfer and reconciliation of data as well as extensive testing and training requirements and the associated costs.
- 1.12. In particular, the Council is currently in the process of moving from a net to gross system of payments to providers of residential care. This is a complex transition involving changes to the way payments are made to providers and contributions are recovered from service users and third parties. The Abacus system is central to the smooth and secure transition between payment regimes to ensure payments are made and income received seamlessly as the change is made. Any delay or disruption to the transition will have significant implications for providers and service users and the

finances of the Council. To carry out such a change while also changing the financial system would introduce an unacceptable level of risk into the project.

1.13. In addition, further developments are progressing with Mosaic and Abacus system integrations and improvements for payments and charges which will provide efficiencies during the next six to twelve months, including the financial assessment project to assist in the automation of financial assessments. If a new system were to be introduced it would impact on the timeframes for achievement of the benefits of those changes both for the Council and for service users

Cost

1.14. Current annual contract costs for Abacus are c£0.210m per annum, this includes licensing, hosting and support. Recommissioning the system under the Council's existing CCS DAS Framework call-off contract for Mosaic would fix the cost and no increases would be incurred for the next 4 years. The call-off contract allows for removal of licences and optional functionality, (if appropriate), to further reduce cost as part of an ongoing overview of processes and procedures.

2. Legal Issues:

Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision-making process.

An Equality Impact Analysis has been prepared for this system which identifies any potential impact on persons with a protected characteristic. Applicable mitigating factors are set out in the impact analysis, which can be found at Appendix A. The Impact Analysis will act as a live document throughout the delivery of the system and the conclusions drawn from it will be kept under review so that as issues arise, any potential for differential impact can be mitigated wherever possible.

<u>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)</u>

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

The system is critical in supporting the delivery of financial care assessments and management of payments to vulnerable adults and children which are specifically focused on improving their wellbeing.

<u>Crime and Disorder</u>

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including antisocial and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

The specific nature of the system itself is not of direct relevance to Crime and Disorder, however maintaining our existing system will result in more efficient processes for how staff engage with the system and will support their ability to maintain accurate client information, which should allow resources to be focussed on operational service delivery including those aimed at reducing crime and disorder.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Social care financial management software is a critical tool to provide financial assessment functionality in accordance with statutory requirements, managing client contribution and make payments to residential care homes. The Council must ensure it has an effective software solution in place and having been configured and continually updated, the existing Abacus system is primed to meet current and future service delivery needs. The Council has a mechanism to incorporate the Abacus system within its existing Mosaic call-off contract through the CCS framework and using this option will best mitigate against potential risks.

4. Legal Comments:

The Council has the power to make the decision proposed. Incorporation of Abacus into the existing contract awarded under a compliant Framework is a compliant procurement route.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive.

5. Resource Comments:

The cost set out within this report will be met from the budget approved by Council for this service. Any inflationary uplifts will be addressed through our budget setting process for future years.

Accepting the recommendation within the report will offer value for money, as this is more beneficial than the time and investment which would be required to move to a new social care financial management system.

6. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

N/A

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

The decision will be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board on 24 August 2023 and the comments of the Committee will be reported to the Executive.

d) Risks and Impact Analysis

Awarding the contract using the Council's current Crown Commercial Service Framework call-off contract presents a number of risks, as it is a national framework agreement and not bespoke to the Council. The contract does allow for a level of adaptation to mitigate against some of those risks, which has to be balanced against the economic advantages of a direct award to the Access Group and the ability to maintain an existing system which supports our most vulnerable citizens.

7. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report		
Appendix A	Equality Impact Analysis	

8. Background Papers

No background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

This report was written by Mark Williams, Business Change Manager - MDaS (Interim Mosaic Lead) who can be contacted at mark.williams@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Equality Impact Analysis to enable informed decisions

The purpose of this document is to:-

- I. help decision makers fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and
- II. for you to evidence the positive and adverse impacts of the proposed change on people with protected characteristics and ways to mitigate or eliminate any adverse impacts.

Using this form

This form must be updated and reviewed as your evidence on a proposal for a project/service change/policy/commissioning of a service or decommissioning of a service evolves taking into account any consultation feedback, significant changes to the proposals and data to support impacts of proposed changes. The key findings of the most up to date version of the Equality Impact Analysis must be explained in the report to the decision maker and the Equality Impact Analysis must be attached to the decision making report.

Please make sure you read the information below so that you understand what is required under the Equality Act 2010

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 applies to both our workforce and our customers. Under the Equality Act 2010, decision makers are under a personal duty, to have due (that is proportionate) regard to the need to protect and promote the interests of persons with protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics under the Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

Section 149 requires a public authority to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by/or under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share those characteristics
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The purpose of Section 149 is to get decision makers to consider the impact their decisions may or will have on those with protected characteristics and by evidencing the impacts on people with protected characteristics decision makers should be able to demonstrate 'due regard'.

Decision makers duty under the Act

Having had careful regard to the Equality Impact Analysis, and also the consultation responses, decision makers are under a personal duty to have due regard to the need to protect and promote the interests of persons with protected characteristics (see above) and to:-

- (i) consider and analyse how the decision is likely to affect those with protected characteristics, in practical terms,
- (ii) remove any unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct,
- (iii) consider whether practical steps should be taken to mitigate or avoid any adverse consequences that the decision is likely to have, for persons with protected characteristics and, indeed, to consider whether the decision should not be taken at all, in the interests of persons with protected characteristics,
- (iv) consider whether steps should be taken to advance equality, foster good relations and generally promote the interests of persons with protected characteristics, either by varying the recommended decision or by taking some other decision.

Conducting an Impact Analysis

The Equality Impact Analysis is a process to identify the impact or likely impact a project, proposed service change, commissioning, decommissioning or policy will have on people with protected characteristics listed above. It should be considered at the beginning of the decision making process.

The Lead Officer responsibility

This is the person writing the report for the decision maker. It is the responsibility of the Lead Officer to make sure that the Equality Impact Analysis is robust and proportionate to the decision being taken.

Summary of findings

You must provide a clear and concise summary of the key findings of this Equality Impact Analysis in the decision making report and attach this Equality Impact Analysis to the report.

Impact - definition

An impact is an intentional or unintentional lasting consequence or significant change to people's lives brought about by an action or series of actions.

How much detail to include?

The Equality Impact Analysis should be proportionate to the impact of proposed change. In deciding this asking simple questions "Who might be affected by this decision?" "Which protected characteristics might be affected?" and "How might they be affected?" will help you consider the extent to which you already have evidence, information and data, and where there are gaps that you will need to explore. Ensure the source and date of any existing data is referenced.

You must consider both obvious and any less obvious impacts. Engaging with people with the protected characteristics will help you to identify less obvious impacts as these groups share their perspectives with you.

A given proposal may have a positive impact on one or more protected characteristics and have an adverse impact on others. You must capture these differences in this form to help decision makers to arrive at a view as to where the balance of advantage or disadvantage lies. If an adverse impact is unavoidable then it must be clearly justified and recorded as such, with an explanation as to why no steps can be taken to avoid the impact. Consequences must be included.

Proposals for more than one option If more than one option is being proposed you must ensure that the Equality Impact Analysis covers all options. Depending on the circumstances, it may be more appropriate to complete an Equality Impact Analysis for each option.

The information you provide in this form must be sufficient to allow the decision maker to fulfil their role as above. You must include the latest version of the Equality Impact Analysis with the report to the decision maker. Please be aware that the information in this form must be able to stand up to legal challenge.

Background Information

Title of the policy / project / service being considered	Re-commissioning of the Social Care Financial Management System	Person / people completing analysis	Mark Williams – Interim Head of Mosaic	
Service Area	Resources	Lead Officer	Louisa Harvey – Head of Corporate Systems	
Who is the decision maker?	LCC Executive	How was the Equality Impact Analysis undertaken?	Desktop review	
Date of meeting when decision will be made	05/09/2023	Version control	Version 1.0	
Is this proposed change to an existing policy/service/project or is it new?	Existing policy/service/project	LCC directly delivered, commissioned, re-commissioned or decommissioned?	Re-commissioned	
Describe the proposed change		al Management System by direct award throu a 4+1+1-year contract commencing on 07/01,	1	

No

Evidencing the impacts

In this section you will explain the difference that proposed changes are likely to make on people with protected characteristics. To help you do this first consider the impacts the proposed changes may have on people without protected characteristics before then considering the impacts the proposed changes may have on people with protected characteristics.

You must evidence here who will benefit and how they will benefit. If there are no benefits that you can identify please state 'No perceived benefit' under the relevant protected characteristic. You can add sub categories under the protected characteristics to make clear the impacts. For example under Age you may have considered the impact on 0-5 year olds or people aged 65 and over, under Race you may have considered Eastern European migrants, under Sex you may have considered specific impacts on men.

Data to support impacts of proposed changes

When considering the equality impact of a decision it is important to know who the people are that will be affected by any change.

Population data and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Lincolnshire Research Observatory (LRO) holds a range of population data by the protected characteristics. This can help put a decision into context. Visit the LRO website and its population theme page by following this link: http://www.research-lincs.org.uk If you cannot find what you are looking for, or need more information, please contact the LRO team. You will also find information about the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on the LRO website.

Workforce profiles

You can obtain information by many of the protected characteristics for the Council's workforce and comparisons with the labour market on the <u>Council's website</u>. As of 1st April 2015, managers can obtain workforce profile data by the protected characteristics for their specific areas using Agresso.

Positive impacts

The proposed change may have the following positive impacts on persons with protected characteristics – If no positive impact, please state *'no positive impact'*.

Ana	
Age	No positive impact
Dischility	
Disability	No positive impact
Gender reassignment	No positive impact
Conder reassignment	ino positive impact
Marriage and civil partnership	No positive impact
Pregnancy and maternity	No positive impact
Race	No positive impact
Religion or belief	No positivo impact
iveligion of belief	No positive impact

If you have identified positive impacts for other groups not specifically covered by the protected characteristics in the Equality Act
2010 you can include them here if it will help the decision maker to make an informed decision.
Nama

No positive impact

None

Sex

age 8'

Adverse/negative impacts

You must evidence how people with protected characteristics will be adversely impacted and any proposed mitigation to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts. An adverse impact causes disadvantage or exclusion. If such an impact is identified please state how, as far as possible, it is justified; eliminated; minimised or counter balanced by other measures.

If there are no adverse impacts that you can identify please state 'No perceived adverse impact' under the relevant protected characteristic.

Negative impacts of the proposed change and practical steps to mitigate or avoid any adverse consequences on people with protected characteristics are detailed below. If you have not identified any mitigating action to reduce an adverse impact please state 'No mitigating action identified'.

Age | No perceived adverse impact |

Disability | Visual impairment – continuation that visual disabilities may be impacted by screen and processes however this can be mitigated by options available for voice control, windows accessibility settings and adapted IT equipment |

Gender reassignment | No perceived adverse impact |

Marriage and civil partnership | No perceived adverse impact |

Pregnancy and maternity | No perceived adverse impact |

Stakeholders

Stake holders are people or groups who may be directly affected (primary stakeholders) and indirectly affected (secondary stakeholders)

You must evidence here who you involved in gathering your evidence about benefits, adverse impacts and practical steps to mitigate or avoid any adverse consequences. You must be confident that any engagement was meaningful. The Community engagement team can help you to do this and you can contact them at engagement@lincolnshire.gov.uk

State clearly what (if any) consultation or engagement activity took place by stating who you involved when compiling this EIA under the protected characteristics. Include organisations you invited and organisations who attended, the date(s) they were involved and method of involvement i.e. Equality Impact Analysis workshop/email/telephone conversation/meeting/consultation. State clearly the objectives of the EIA consultation and findings from the EIA consultation under each of the protected characteristics. If you have not covered any of the protected characteristics please state the reasons why they were not consulted/engaged.

Objective(s) of the EIA consultation/engagement activity

No new engagement or consultation has taken place, as with the Re-commissioning of Abacus, (the Social Care Financial Management System) currently being used, there would be no system usage or accessibility changes that would impact either positively or negatively. Considerations and consultation would be required if the Social Care Financial Management system was changed to an alternative application and / or processes, which would result is a different project and new EIA.

Who was involved in the EIA consultation/engagement activity? Detail any findings identified by the protected characteristic

Ag	je	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system.
Dis	sability	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system
Ge	ender reassignment	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system
Ma Ma	arriage and civil partnership	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system
Pro	egnancy and maternity	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system
Ra	ice	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system
Re	eligion or belief	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system

Sex	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system			
Sexual orientation	None as not applicable due to proposed continuation of the same system			
Are you confident that everyone who should have been involved in producing this version of the Equality Impact Analysis has been involved in a meaningful way? The purpose is to make sure you have got the perspective of all the protected characteristics.	As it is a continuation of the same system and processes there will be no potential impacts. However, engagement exercises will be undertaken at the appropriate stage if the outcome was not to re-commission and continue usage of Abacus, (under a new EIA).			
Once the changes have been implemented how will you undertake evaluation of the benefits and how effective the actions to reduce adverse impacts have been?	As it is a continuation of the same system and processes there will be no Equality benefits or adverse impacts caused by the Re-commissioning project.			

Further Details

Are you handling personal data?	Yes
	If yes, please give details.
	Specific Social Care Financial management data as per the existing system – No change to scope or data held.

Actions required	Action	Lead officer	Timescale
Include any actions identified in this analysis for on-going monitoring of impacts.	None identified		

Version	Description	Created/amended by	Date created/amended	Approved by	Date approved
[V1.0]	Initial draft	Mark Williams	26.07.2023	Louisa Harvey	08.08.2023
	,				

Examples of a Description:

'Version issued as part of procurement documentation'
'Issued following discussion with community groups'
'Issued following requirement for a service change; Issued following discussion with supplier'

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