

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub - Committee

DATE: 4 June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Purchase of Performance Management Software System

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

The purpose of the report is to inform the Sub-Committee of a decision to purchase of a web based Performance Management Software System for use by the Council and the Halton Strategic Partnership. The system in question was not the cheapest tendered.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report is noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

3.1 Background Information

To date the Council has operated an effective performance monitoring system, largely based upon internally developed templates, to provide performance information to relevant Officers and Members at an organisational and partnership level.

However given a number of changes that have occurred within the operating environment it is unlikely that such arrangements would remain effective in the medium term.

Such changes include:-

- The introduction of a single National Indicator Data Set from April 2008. such measures are no longer confined to the outputs of the organisation, as were the Best Value Performance Indicators that they replaced, but are much more outcome focused and relate to information that originates from both the Council and it's partner agencies.
- The strengthening of Local Area Agreements and the introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment framework that places far greater emphasis upon the collaboration between the Council and it's partners in achieving outcomes for the local communities that they serve.

- The ongoing need to make efficiency savings in light of tighter fiscal constraint.

Taking account of such changes the Council, as have most others, has recognised the potential benefits of acquiring a web based performance software system that would deliver medium-term benefits that would include:-

- Reducing the duplication currently incurred in the reporting of progress towards objectives in the Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and Local Area Agreement.
- Improving the quality, accessibility and timeliness of information required by the Councils decision-making processes.
- Addressing issues raised in the most recent Corporate Performance Assessment concerning the need to improve partnership performance arrangements.

3.2 Selection for shortlist

In response to an invitation to tender, that was advertised through the Council's website, 30 expressions of interest were received that led to 10 tenders being submitted by vendors, the costs of which ranged from £22,000 to £188,000. These costs are the costs of buying licences and maintaining the system for 3 years. They represent the total amount spread over three years, and are not annual figures. The tenders were evaluated on the basis of following criteria,

- Business practice and financial standing - 10%.
- IT Specification - 10%.
- System Specification - 25%
- Cost - 45%.

The evaluation led to the 4 lowest cost suppliers being shortlisted to present their system to a panel that comprised of the Operational Director (Policy & Performance), relevant officers, including performance specialists, from each of the 4 Directorates and representatives from ICT Services.

As a result of this exercise the two lowest cost suppliers were identified as primary options. The performance specialists together with the Corporate Performance Team then visited relevant reference sites and user groups to gather additional intelligence in advance of a final decision.

Details of the two preferred suppliers are as follows

Supplier	Criteria Score	Total Cost (spread over 3 years)
Ten Software	74.98%	£ 21, 800
Inphase	76.84%	£ 53, 000*

* Note: the cost of the Inphase system includes an optional Geographical Information System (GIS) module at an additional aggregate cost over 3 years of £8,000. The Ten system did not offer a similar module. The Halton Data Observatory will also use this GIS module leading to a saving for that project.

3.3 Final Selection

As a result of the process a decision was taken to acquire the Performance Plus software system as although the cost of acquiring the system was higher it had the following medium term advantages in that it demonstrated superior IT and system specifications that:

- Had additional functionality around risk management, outcome based budgeting and visual and graphical capability.
- Offered greater ease of integration with local information systems.
- Offered greater potential for use within specific Directorates and Departments across the Council as well as meeting Corporate and Partnership needs.
- Unlike the system offered by Ten, which had almost exclusively been adopted by small District authorities, had a user community of over 80, principally Unitary, Metropolitan and County authorities.

3.4 Implementation

System implementation will begin during June. This will involve a series of training workshops for system use being delivered to staff both within the Council and within relevant partner agencies.

Concurrent to such workshops work will be undertaken in regards to system design and development and data transfer and it is envisaged that the system will become operational during the second quarter of the current financial year.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None identified at this stage

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the software will be shared equally between the Halton Strategic Partnership and the Borough Council. The Council's contribution over the three years can be met from within existing budgets. The system is externally hosted to facilitate access by external partners, and so there are no additional hardware costs falling to the Council.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The software allows for the effective monitoring and management of the priorities identified by both the Council and its Partners.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to address issues concerning partnership performance arrangements may negatively impact on the outcome of the CAA and partnership performance management arrangements will remain deficient.

Over 80 authorities are using the software system and there are no reliability issues that would give cause for concern. In the unlikely event of system failure it

would still be practical to revert to the current method of data/information collection and reporting.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no specific Equality & Diversity issues associated with this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

N/A