



Report To:	Executive Board
Date:	18 September 2024
Subject:	Accountable body for alignment of Case Management Systems across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
Purpose:	To agree to be the financially accountable body for the implementation of a common Case Management System across the Partnership to realise efficiency savings through the alignment of teams and technology.
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Graham Marsh, Deputy Leader of the Council
Report Of:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Corporate Christian Allen, Assistant Director – Regulatory Phil Norman, Assistant Director - Planning
Report Author:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Corporate
Ward(s) Affected:	N/a

Summary

This report seeks to move forward the alignment of multiple Case Management Systems across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership to the Uniform system currently being deployed at East Lindsey District Council. This will release efficiency savings to the Partnership by reducing systems and facilitating the alignment of teams.

As the alignment would be under East Lindsey District Council's existing contract, this report seeks approval for East Lindsey District Council to be the financially accountable body for the implementation of the system, with the funding being provided by both Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council (subject to decisions at both Councils).

Recommendations

That Executive Board approve:

- The Council becoming the financially accountable body for the implementation of the Uniform system into the partner Councils subject to the necessary funding approvals at both Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council and makes the provision of £325,000 in its Capital Programme for this purpose.

Reasons for Recommendations

- To allow the existing East Lindsey District Council contract to be used for the purposes of alignment.
- To deliver efficiency savings against current system costs.
- To facilitate the alignment of Planning and Regulatory Service Directorates to enable the services to achieve greater savings in their operating costs by working as 'one' across the Partnership.

Other Options Considered

- Do nothing - this wouldn't enable savings to be realised or enable teams to be aligned.
- For the Partner Councils to procure their own standalone systems - this wouldn't enable savings to be realised.

1. Background

- 1.1 When the South & East Lincolnshire Council formed in October 2021, the Business Case approved by Council set out the ambition to achieve £42m in efficiency savings over a ten-year period. The efficiencies were to be realised through a series of actions, which included the alignment of teams and technology.
- 1.2 As service reviews start to come forward to deliver on those savings they can only go so far without the alignment of service IT systems across the Partnership.
- 1.3 In recent years, East Lindsey District Council has been on a journey to deploy Uniform - a system provided by Idox – into the Council.
- 1.4 This report seeks approval for East Lindsey District Council to become the financially accountable body – subject to both Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council agreeing the necessary funding – for the implementation of Uniform into the partner Councils. This would mean one core Case Management System (Uniform) would replace multiple Case Management Systems across the Partnership for Planning and Regulatory Services.
- 1.5 Through the alignment a revenue saving will be achieved for this Council as Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council will pick up a proportion of the £48.3k annual system costs on the following proportions respectively, 23% and 31%.
- 1.6 Both Boston and South Holland Councils are in a position where they have several systems either end of life or end of contract, so now is the opportune time for alignment.

2. Report

Service Reviews and the Digital Strategy

- 2.1 To effectively implement a service review and realise the full potential of the efficiencies possible, system and process alignment is critical. Without the underpinning technology being common in the three Councils, effective cross-Partnership working isn't achievable.
- 2.2 The Digital Strategy that has already been approved by each Council recognises the importance of technological alignment and much progress has been made for the Partnership by Public Sector Partnership Services – our ICT provider – in the systems they maintain. The systems that remain outstanding are those within the Councils' direct control.
- 2.3 Early work by the planning and regulatory services Directorates, as part of the development of their service reviews, identifies that with the system alignment this paper brings forward, their services can deliver more than £340,000 of efficiencies above what is possible without system alignment.

Current systems

- 2.4 At present Boston and South Holland Councils operate a total of 5 Case Management systems that would be replaced by Uniform.

All systems are either on rolling contracts or on contracts due to expire within the next two years.

- 2.5 The Uniform system, being deployed by East Lindsey District Council, is contracted until 2030. Idox has previously confirmed to East Lindsey District Council it has no plans to remove support for the

Uniform system at 2030, due to it being a widely used product within the sector.

Financial business case

- 2.6 The project would be an 'Invest to save', with an initial capital outlay by Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council to realise savings in system costs and through it creating the ability for the alignment of service provision across the Partnership to achieve further revenue savings.
- 2.7 The financial business case is in the process of being presented to Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council for decision making.
- 2.8 The Business Case for East Lindsey District Council and the savings the Council will achieve are below:



Council	Item	Year 1 (25/26)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
INVESTMENT						
ELDC	Initial investment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
REVENUE						
ELDC	System revenue costs	£0	(£24,718)	(£24,718)	(£24,718)	(£24,718)
UNLOCKED ADDITIONAL SERVICE REVIEW SAVINGS IF ICT ALLIGNED						
ELDC	Service Reviews (46% of saving)	£0	£0	(£156,400)	(£161,874)	(£167,540)
Efficiencies through the project		£0	(£24,718)	(£181,118)	(£186,592)	(£192,258)

- 2.9 This project gives the Partnership the potential for net financial savings of circa £515,000 from a combination of revenue savings through aligned technology and the unlocked service review efficiencies.
- 2.10 Whilst still subject to approval at those two Councils, if it were to be approved, and if it is approved for East Lindsey District Council to be the financially accountable body, the exposure to this Council would be £325,000 for the project – however, no contract will be made with Idox until both partner Councils have agreed the necessary funding, meaning the risk is minimal to this Council.
- 2.11 East Lindsey District Council would also be the accountable body for both the implementation and ongoing relationship with Idox.
- 2.12 At the end of October, Idox, the owner of Uniform, will reach the end of their exiting agreement with Oracle – a company that provides the database that underpins Uniform - for Value Based Pricing licences. As such, the Councils need to have contracted and have purchased the licences via Idox by that date. Not doing so is likely to result in significant additional costs to the project.

System set up and implementation

- 2.13 In setting up the system to be used between multiple Councils, this would be done in such a way that data can still be interrogated at a Council level. We have reached out to several Councils working in Partnership who are also using the Uniform system in a shared way and Officers are in touch with one of those Councils to share their learning.

- 2.14 Implementation of Uniform for Boston and South Holland Councils will be undertaken as additional phases to the deployment of the system into East Lindsey, with completion likely to take two years from the signing of contracts.
- 2.15 The process to bring Boston and South Holland Councils into Uniform can be simplified through extracting data from existing systems and migrating that data into Uniform. Thereafter, services may, as part of the service review process, chose to amend/improve processes within the system to meet their future operating requirements.

Contractual arrangements

- 2.16 The partner Councils would be accessing the Idox Uniform system via a compliant contract modification to the existing East Lindsey District Council contract that runs to 2030. The implementation / data migration / one-off costs shall be procured via the G-Cloud, a central government framework that the Council are able to compliantly utilise. These contracts will also be directly with East Lindsey District Council.

3. Conclusion

Given that both Boston and South Holland Councils have systems that are either end of contract or reaching the end of their contract, now is an opportune time to take this project forward and realise the benefits – both financial and operational to services.

Expected Benefits to the Partnership

The alignment of technology will facilitate teams operating as 'one' in line with the approved Partnership Business Case, releasing efficiency savings towards the Partnership's 10-year £42m savings target.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

As at 'Expected Benefits to the Partnership'.

Corporate Priorities

This delivers on the Corporate priority, which is to be 'Efficient and Effective'

Staffing

None directly resulting from this report.

Workforce Capacity Implications

There will be some capacity implications whilst the project is being delivered. This is a large transformation for the Councils. Additional capacity has been built into the financial business case presented to Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

This is a decision for Council due to the financial thresholds.

Boston and South Holland District Councils will use the Uniform system under the East Lindsey District Council contract. The Procurement Team are supporting this work to ensure that this is done appropriately and legal advice will be sought where required.

Data Protection

The project will require the migration of personal data from existing systems to Uniform.

There is a formal agreement in place between the Councils in regard to Data Sharing and this will be complied with. The re-use of Data within and between the Councils is facilitated by this project, and this programme is a key driver to help embed the principles of Data Protection in relevant service processes.

Financial

The financial implications are set out within the report.

Risk Management

Resourcing / capacity – this has been addressed through the capacity section of this report and factored into the financial business case.

Budget – the budget is based on the requirements specified by the Councils to the system provider. A 10% contingency has been built into the project should unknown costs arise.

Delivery timescales – the most complex work has already been completed by East Lindsey during system set up as part of their deployment. The project has taken longer than anticipated at East Lindsey due to Covid and technical issues but the latter has now been largely overcome. East Lindsey District Council received a positive assurance rating from Internal Audit for its Project Management of Uniform and the same project team will work with colleagues at Boston and South Holland to support delivery, alongside the additional project resources referenced in the body of the report.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Portfolio Holders for ICT and the specific services have been consulted. Leadership Team has been consulted.

Reputation

None.

Contracts

As identified in the body of the report.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None.

Health and Wellbeing

None.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None.

Acronyms

None.

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

Report Approval

Report author:

James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate

Signed off by:

Christine Marshall, Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development
and Section 151 Officer

Approved for publication:

Councillor Graham Marsh, Deputy Leader of the Council