

 Employment Committee 21 March 2019		Agenda Item No. 6
Title	Project Manager – Financial Systems	
For further information about this report please contact	Mike Snow 01926 456800	
Wards of the District directly affected	N/A	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	N/A	
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	N/A

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	4/3/2019	Andrew Jones
Head of Service	4/3/2019	Mike Snow
CMT	4/3/2019	
Section 151 Officer	4/3/2019	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	4/3/2019	Andrew Jones
Human Resources	4/3/2019	Sue Firminger
Portfolio Holder(s)	4/3/2019	Peter Whiting
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Insert details of any consultation undertaken or proposed to be undertaken with regard to this report.		
Final Decision?		Yes/No
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 This report proposes the creation of a Project Manager post for a period of three years to lead on the procuring and implementation of new financial systems across the Council.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Employment Committee agrees to the establishment of a Project Manager – Financial Systems for a three year period.

3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Council's Financial Management System and the Income Management System have been in place since 2006. Whilst these systems do provide the basic functionality, they are not adaptable to meet the needs of users and to support flexible service requirements. In addition, the suppliers are ceasing to support these systems in the medium term.
- 3.2 Following research by the Finance, ICT and Procurement Teams a high level business case has been produced that recommends that the Council consolidates these systems with a single supplier. In addition, other systems should also be included within the overall specification so as to produce a single solution with one supplier. These other systems include:-

- Asset Register
- Direct Debits/BACS
- Debit/Credit Card payment receipts
- Payment collection

The following systems are not proposed to be included:-

- Human Resources
- Payroll
- Revenues – council tax, business rates, benefits
- Rents

- 3.3 The work to change all these financial systems should not be under-estimated. Whilst there are system owners and system managers for the respective financial systems, there is not the capacity with the current posts to lead on the procurement and implementation of the systems.

- 3.4 A Project Manager post is recommended to manage the full implementation of new financial systems. This will include the following areas of work:-

- Soft market testing
- Site visits
- Leading on specification
- Procurement
- Contract award
- Implementation
- Testing and training
- Project planning and monitoring

- 3.5 This project will impact on most officers across the Council, with most having to access the systems for various reasons. In addition, members are also users, specifically in terms of being recipients of critical information. Moving forward, residents and businesses should have access to the systems, for such things as managing payments to/from the Council. It is important that the project manager has the right skills to manage such an important project. Aside from project management skills, the postholder will need to have a knowledge/appreciation of ICT and finance/accountancy.
- 3.9 Within the Final Accounts Action plan being reported regularly to Members and CMT, there is the requirement to "To progress the feasibility stage of a new Finance IT system to report to Executive stage including project management support and training". A business case for a new Financial Management System (and related systems), has been agreed by CMT. A Project Manager is required to progress this significant project.

4. **Policy Framework**

4.1 **Fit for the Future (FFF)**

The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects.

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
The proposal should help to ensure the Council has financial systems fit to support all strands of FFF.		
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost

All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	Increase the digital provision of services	management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
The proposal should help to ensure the Council's financial systems support all strands of FFF.		

4.2 **Supporting Strategies**

The proposal should help to ensure the Council is able to meet the relevant strategies.

4.3 **Changes to Existing Policies**

No changes to existing policies are proposed.

4.4 **Impact Assessments**

Not applicable.

5. **Budgetary Framework**

- 5.1 This can be funded from the Service Transformation Reserve, for which the Chief Executive has delegated authority.

6. **Risks**

- 6.1 It is important that the Council has financial systems that are fit for purpose. As a minimum these need to comply with legal requirements such as:-

- GDPR
- HMRC requirements
- Accounting requirements

If the Council fails to have systems that can meet these requirements, it risks financial penalties. In addition, there is potentially reputational damage.

- 6.2 Poor financial systems can be inefficient to operate. This can create waste and additional costs.
- 6.3 In the information from the financial systems is not timely and accurate and fit for purpose, the Council risks being asked to make decisions on misleading or wrong information.

7. **Alternative Option(s) considered**

- 7.1 The Council could choose not to agree to the proposed Project Manager post. The main financial systems will still need to be replaced. Not resourcing the systems replacement will increase the risk of service failure, and that systems are not properly procured and implemented to meet the needs of the Council and users. This will in turn result in increased wasted costs.