



Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	25 September 2024
Subject:	Alignment of Case Management System across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
Purpose:	To implement 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 Sandeep Ghosh, Portfolio Holder for Finance
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
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

This report brings forward a Business Case that seeks to secure the funding to align the multiple Case Management Systems in place in the Planning and Regulatory Directorates in Boston and South Holland to the Uniform system currently being deployed at East Lindsey District Council. An alignment will also benefit the Wellbeing and Community Leadership Directorate, in particular the Housing Standards Team.

As well as the revenue savings identified within the report, an alignment will unlock further significant efficiency savings by enabling teams to come together across the Partnership aligning processes and procedures.

Recommendations

That Cabinet approves:

1. The addition of £339,869 to the Council's Capital Programme to enable the project's delivery, to be financed as described in paragraph 2.8.
2. The addition of the projected savings to the Councils multi-year savings and transformation plan as overseen by the Finance Portfolio Holder.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 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.
- For the Council to procure its 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 systems across the Partnership.
- 1.3 This report brings forward a Business Case that seeks to secure the funding to align the multiple Case Management Systems in place in the Planning and Regulatory Directorates in Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council to the Uniform system currently being deployed at East Lindsey District Council.
- 1.4 Both Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council 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 – including those within the scope of this project.
- 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 report brings forward, their services can deliver more than £340,000 of efficiencies above that which is possible without system alignment.

Current systems

- 2.4 At present Boston Borough Council operates 3 Case Management systems that would be replaced by Uniform, as set out in the table below.

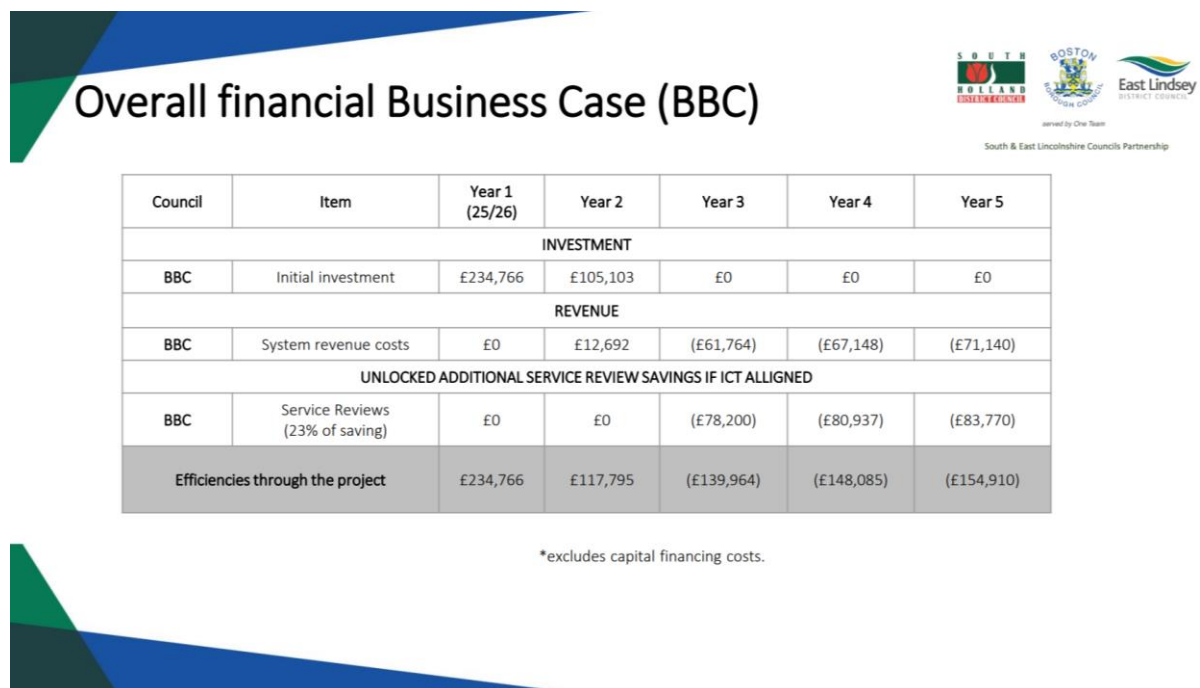
Existing system	Function	Number of user licences
Boston Borough Council		
Agile (APAS)	Building Control	6
Agile (APAS)	Development Control (inc Enforcement)	17
Agile (APAS)	Land Charges	4
Civica / APP	Housing Standards	8-10
	Disabled Facility Grants	
	Environmental Health	9
Agile (PLACIS)	Licensing	4

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 and remains a market leading product for these areas of work. 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 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. Payback for this project investment is within 2-3 years of completion of the capital investment.
- 2.7 The financial business case for Boston Borough Council is set out below, with the Councils sharing a proportion of the implementation and delivery costs and ongoing systems costs.



- 2.8 The system implementation will be financed by internal borrowing. This will incur a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge over the life of the asset. The advantages of this approach are that it does not result in reserve depletion and also makes provision for future replacement costs in revenue, also reflecting the true cost of service provision,

- 2.9 The project gives the Partnership a combined net financial savings opportunity of £514,679 over five years by taking forward this project.
- 2.10 East Lindsey District Council has sufficient user licences for Uniform for the Partnership within its existing contract, which means more licences don't need to be purchased for Boston Borough Council officers.
- 2.11 East Lindsey District Council would be the accountable body for both the migration and ongoing relationship with Idox, as this will be an extension to their current contract with Idox.
- 2.12 The financial business case factors in additional capacity to support the project's delivery. This is a significant project for the Councils and such a transformation needs dedicated project management and technical resources to support.
- 2.13 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 locked in the new contract and 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

- 2.14 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. Several Councils working in Partnership are using the Uniform system in a shared way and Officers are in touch with one of those Councils to share their learning.
- 2.15 Implementation of Uniform for Boston Borough Council 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.
- 2.16 The process to bring Boston Borough Council into Uniform can be simplified as 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.
- 2.17 East Lindsey District Council is in the process of testing a suite of Mobile Apps which come with Uniform. These provide services with a condensed version of the full Uniform product for use when on site/ with customers, enabling them to access and process some information in real-time.

Contractual arrangements and implementation

- 2.18 Boston Borough Council 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

- 3.1. Given that both Boston Borough Council has 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 within this report.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

This is a decision for Cabinet 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. System replacement as a sole authority would result in significant additional capital and revenue costs.

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 resources identified within the business case.

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 Sandeep Ghosh, Portfolio Holder for Finance