



Delegated Officer Report
(Non Key and Contracts up to a value of £100k)

Decision Maker: Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Date of Decision: 13th November 2019

Subject: Children's and Early Years Digital Improvement Programme

Report Author: Richard Holt and Andrew Sutherland

Ward (s): Affects all wards, consultation not required

Reason for the decision: To invest £80k to progress work to apply digital technology to improve the Children's and Early Years Services

Summary: Oldham Council's Children's and Early Years Services are under significant pressure. Increasing demand and net reductions in budgets are causing a perfect storm in operating conditions that are affecting the life chances of young people in our borough. This business case seeks funding to automate tasks that are current administratively intense, to free up resources to undertake higher value activity in helping to address the growing demands.

Recommendation(s): To release £80,000 from the ICT Business Systems capital fund and allocate resource from the service to work on creating digital processes.

Consultation : Richard Holt, Chief Technology Officer, Oldham Council
Andrew Sutherland, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years
Jit Kara, Senior Accountant, Corporate and Commercial Services - Capital & Treasury Team

1. Background

Like many Local Authorities in the UK, the Education, Early Years and Skills directorate in Oldham is coming under sustained pressure. Increasing demand and net reductions in budgets are having an effect that makes it difficult for the service to maintain the standards necessary to adequately serve the needs of our population of young learners.

The directorate are looking for ways to apply technology to help create efficiencies through digital processes, and to unlock insights to help deliver their business plan, and in turn improve provision for young people and learners in our borough and play a vital part of delivering the Oldham Plan.

There are three discrete areas where the service is working with ICT to apply digital thinking and reuse existing digital investments to derive benefits:

1. Education Health Care Planning

Designing and implementing automated business processes for the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) assessment process.

Benefit	Direct/Indirect/Type/Value	Measure	Exp. Time to Benefit
Increased throughput of EHCPs	Reduction in time spent to conduct assessments due to smoother transitions and improved legibility of submissions/materials	Total of EHCPs processed within comparable periods before and after the implementation	Jul 2021
Increased statutory compliance	Direct – improvement in completion of annual reviews and reduction in late EHCPs and late advice from partners	The AR backlog is completed ahead of the planned schedule. 70% target of timeliness in advice from all partner is exceeded	Jan 2021 (time of DfE SEN2 Return)
Improved correspondence with parents	Direct – Customer Experience	50% reduction in 'chasing' phone calls from parents.	Dec 2020 (measurement period Nov and Dec)

2. Fixed Penalty Notices

Designing and implementing automated business processes for the management of Fixed Penalty Notices in order to support improved attendance in all schools in Oldham. This will contribute to improving attendance monitoring of some of our most vulnerable children who are missing out on education owing to poor attendance in support of the Education, Early Years and Skills Business Plan 2019/2020.

Benefit	Direct/Indirect/Type/Value	Measure	Exp. Time to Benefit
Increased revenue owing to automation of School fines process for Academic Year 19/20	Direct – Revenue target increases by £20K p/a	Income target moves to £120K	July 2021
Increased throughput of FPNs	Direct – Efficiency	Number of FPNs processed in comparable periods before and after the implementation	Dec 2020
Improving timeliness of processing school fines	Direct - Efficiency	Reduction of 25 working days to 10 working days (- 60%)	Dec 2020
Improving LA attendance figures	Indirect – Contributes to compliance	Attendance in line with national average 95.2%	Jan 2022

3. Early Years Assessment Tracking

Combining datasets to discover opportunities to target effort on improving outcomes for young people in support of DC111 (*T21 Ensure all children are school ready when they are due to start school*) from the Education, Early Years and Skills Business Plan 2019/2020.

Benefit	Type	Measure	Exp. Time to Value
Ability to plan targeted, data led interventions to achieve DC111.	Direct	Targeted improvement plan relates back to insight from data collected, approved by Andrew Sutherland.	Mar 2020
Achieve 70% of 5yo attaining	Indirect	Good Level of Development is measured by DfE.	Sep 2020

Good Level of Development Status			
Achieve national average for Good Level of Development (GLD)	Indirect	Good Level of Development is measured by DfE.	Sep 2020

- a. This paper seeks approval to release capital funding from the ICT Business System capital fund to perform the work.

Requirement	Rate	Cost
Resources for creating new services and functionality using Platform+Agile approach	-	£80,000
Total		£80,000

- 2.5 This requirement will be commissioned through existing arrangements with the Unity Partnership.

3. Options

- 3.1 **Option one** – Do nothing. This will result in additional time and effort to consider how to realise areas of the Education, Early Years and Skills Business plan aided by this business case and/or not delivering some of the business plan.
- 3.3 **Option two** – Go to market and procure systems and services to deliver the benefits. At least one of the three objectives could be fulfilled purchasing an off the shelf system. This option has several disbenefits that including increasing fragmentation of functionality, data and skills by introducing more systems across Health and Social Care and taking investment out of the borough and spending capital with 3rd parties. The time to value would be dependent on what the vendor can deliver.
- 3.4 **Option three** – Work with ICT and use a Platform + Agile approach, working in line with the ICT Strategy and the Oldham Plan. This is a new delivery approach for the council that requires and encourages the formation of collaborative open, honest and robust relationships between business and technical colleagues to derive the benefits and follow on continuous improvements, enhancing strategic investments. Whilst the functionality is not 'off the shelf' it offers the ability to digitise services in a way appropriate to our business, creating scalable reusable units of capability.

A properly governed capital budget of £80k can be used to fund resources to create reusable functionality (services) across our growing digital ecosystem with in FY19/20.

4.Recommendations

4.1 The recommended option is **option three**.

4.2 The use of the funding is be governed by the Director of Education, Skills and Economy, the Chief Technology officer along with senior delivery people from ICT and Children's Services under a Terms of Reference approved by Oldham Council's Deputy Chief Executive.

5. Financial implications

Revenue Implications

5.1 There are no additional revenue implications associated with this report.

Mike Ward, Senior Accountant

Capital Implications

5.2 Provision exists within the 2019/20 – 2023/24 capital programme to support necessary investments in ICT systems

2019/20	TOTAL
£80,000	£80,000

Jit Kara, Senior Accountant

6. ICT implications

6.1 This investment is in line with the council's strategic ICT approach.

Chris Petrie, Head of ICT, Unity Partnership

7. Procurement implications

7.1 Not applicable

Steve Boyd, Commissioning and Procurement

8. Legal implications

8.1 There are no legal issues arising from the report.

Colin Brittain, Assistant Borough Solicitor

9. Human Resources implications

9.1 Not applicable

10. Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

10.1 Not applicable

11. Property implications

11.1 Not Applicable

12. Risks

12.1 There are no specific risk comments on the report.

Mark Stenson, Head of Corporate Governance

13. Co-operative agenda

13.1 This work is in line with creating the council's digital ecosystem, helping improve customer experience.

Fran Lautman, Customer Development Manager

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? Yes

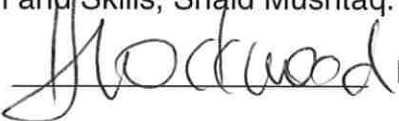
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

There are no background papers for this report

Report Author Sign-off:	
Andrew Sutherland, Director of Education, Skills & Early Years	Rich Holt, Chief Technology Officer
Date: 3 October 2019	

In consultation with Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Helen Lockwood and Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Shaid Mushtaq.

Signed :  Date: _____

