

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF A NON-KEY OFFICER DECISION

Economy, communities and corporate

ITEM:	Support and maintenance for schools software 2017
Officer Title:	Assistant director communities
Date of Decision:	15/03/2017
Purpose:	Approval is sought to renew the annual maintenance for the council's Capita Schools Information System (SIMS) licences and the HCSS school budgeting software. The SIMS licences are held in perpetuity by the council.
Decision:	<p>a. The SIMS maintenance contract is renewed on an annual basis for a period of up to 2 years (31 March 2019) at cost of £133k for the reasons contained in this report; and complete review of service needs within 6 months to inform future options</p> <p>b. by virtue of this decision report an exemption to paragraphs 4.6.13.2 b, c and d of the council's contract procedure rules be granted to enable the direct award of the SIMS contract at a cost of £133k for the reasons set out within this report;</p> <p>c. The HCSS software licence is renewed on an annual basis for a period of up to 3 years (April 2020) at an annual cost of £26,000 subject to inflation; and</p> <p>d. By virtue of this decision report, an exemption to paragraph 4.6.13.2e of the council's contract procedure rules be granted for HCSS at a cost of £78k for the reasons set out in the report below.</p>
Reasons for the Decision:	<p>SIMS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council holds perpetual rights to SIMS licences and renewing the support ensures that the system is adequately updated, maintained and ensures availability of any system upgrades. 2. Support and maintenance for this product can only be obtained directly through Capita Business Services Ltd, the proprietor of the software. 3. Subsequent to consultation with Schools, the system continues to meet their requirements and they have requested that the annual maintenance is maintained thereby retaining SIMS as the software of choice for the management information system in

	<p>local authority controlled schools. Market research shows that the product currently holds a market share of 82%, due to the reliability of the product and ability to meet with the ever-changing needs of schools' requirements and alignment with legislation.</p> <p>HCSS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The HCSS budgeting software is purchased annually following agreement with Schools Forum to deduct funding from locally maintained schools budgets to achieve savings by purchasing a county licence. 5. Schools are currently using the HCSS software to plan options for their 2017/18 budgets. The original purchase decision for HCSS was for the 2016/17 financial year only and the waiver stipulated that the budgeting software would be retendered as part of the schools management information system (i.e. SIMS) specification. As the SIMS software will not now be retendered within the next two years, there is insufficient time to test the market, consult with schools and determine the cost of a possible alternative prior to Schools Forum making a decision on de-delegation of funding at their meeting on 13th January 2017 (as required by the Department for Education) and to avoid schools having to potentially duplicate the financial planning on a new system in April and May 2017 so that governor approved budgets can be submitted to the local authority by the statutory deadline of 1st June. It is inevitable that schools will purchase the HCSS software at the higher individual licence price.
<p>Consultation:</p>	
<p>Options Considered:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To not maintain SIMS - This is not recommended as it may lead to the system becoming unstable subsequently affecting the Accuracy, security and integrity of the data that it holds and information generated by schools for the Council. 2. Council stop providing SIMS to schools – Currently ownership of the licences resides with the Council for use by the schools. Terminating this arrangement would risk introducing a level of system complexity and cost as schools would need to buy into the product individually losing the combined buying power and preferential pricing available to the council or seek to introduce new systems independently which may force the council to integrate with various systems. This is therefore not

	<p>recommended.</p> <p>3. To not maintain HCSS – this is not recommended as it is essential in these financially difficult times that schools are able to budget ahead accurately and to ensure budget reductions are implemented as necessary.</p> <p>4. Tender for a new System for Schools- The council would take on the responsibility of developing robust requirements across the various schools in the county in order to deliver a system that meets their needs. This would introduce a significant cost of change including requirements development, new system licence costs, system transition costs as well as training costs for all applicable stakeholders. This option is therefore not recommended.</p>
Declaration of Interest:	

Officer Name: Natalia Silver

Officer Title: Assistant Director Communities

Signature: Date:2017