

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EMERGENCY POWERS COMMITTEE – 21 DECEMBER 2006

PROCUREMENT OF ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT MODULE FOR UNIFIED BENEFITS SYSTEM

Report by Executive Head of Finance

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To seek the approval of the Committee for the negotiated purchase of an Electronic Document Management (EDM) and Workflow module for the Benefits and Revenue Collection System.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1** Civica is a well established company involved in the delivery of IT solutions to local government for more than 20 years. Over 80% of all local authorities use one or more of their products. East Ayrshire Council currently uses Civica to provide Housing and Council Tax Benefit Administration, Council Tax and Rates Collection Systems and Cash Receipting/Income Management, and has recently agreed to purchase their Financials suite incorporating General Ledger, Creditor Payments, Sundry Debt and Legal Recovery Module.
- 2.2** During 2006 Civica acquired the Comino Group who are a leading supplier of front and back office systems to public sector organisations. Products include modern workflow, and electronic document management, used to improve service performance and efficiency in core areas such as Revenues & Benefits, Housing & Planning.
- 2.3** The Council uses the existing Civica Document Imaging Process (DIP)/Workflow module in Revenues and the intention was to extend this to Benefits during 2006/07.
- 2.4** On purchasing Comino, Civica acquired the leading corporate DIP/Workflow product in the local government marketplace with approximately 50% of Scottish local authorities using it in some capacity. As a result of this acquisition Civica have advised that the existing Civica DIP/Workflow system will not be developed any further, although a minimum level of support will be available for a period.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1** As detailed in 2.4 above the current DIP/Workflow module provided by Civica will no longer be developed. Civica have however, as a result of the merger with Comino proposed that this is replaced with their Universal Government Module (UGM).

3.2 The advantages of upgrading to the Comino UGM include:

- Process maps can be created that stipulate the actions and events that Benefits staff must follow when processing applications/documents. This provides for a consistent approach to processing and by including the appropriate level of detail can assist in improving accuracy levels.
- As the process maps include instructions and guidance on how to deal with each process it can reduce the length of time taken to train new staff members.
- Detailed management Information can be drawn from the process maps that will allow reporting on specific stages in the overall process. By incorporating the process maps with Reporting Technologies trends can be established which can assist in future re-design/modification of the process.
- The system operates on a case basis (as against document basis with the existing Civica module) which will enable the staff to have a full picture of the case when performing actions and ensures that all documents are considered when processing a claim.
- Incoming and outgoing emails can be attached. This enables a full case history of a claimant to be held within the application.
- Case files can be downloaded onto laptops which will enable Visiting Officers to have the full document history with them when visiting claimants. This will reduce the administrative burden of manually retrieving files prior to visits, and will reduce the amount of additional printing associated with this process.
- The system includes functionality to support the Council in meeting E-government targets, including:-
 - Remote access for possible home working
 - Web access to integrate with the Councils other web sites
 - Mobile working with use of handheld units for flexible working
 - More flexible system security to allow the Council to restrict access where appropriate in much more detail, in Fraud cases for example.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The estimated cost of implementation of the proposal is summarised in the following table.

Comino Universal Government Upgrade	Initial Licence Charge & Services - £'M	Annual Revenue Costs - £'M
Upgrade from Civica DIP/Workflow	98,626	8,059
Deduction for Civica DIP/Workflow in Benefits System – Not Implemented	(23,050)	
Total Software Costs	75,576	8,059

- 4.2 The initial net licence charge and Services cost of £75,576 can be met from sums available within existing departmental resources for the upgrade of financial systems. The annual revenue costs identified of £8,089 relate to annual support of the software and will be met from within existing Finance Service revenue budgets.

5. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council's Standing Orders paragraph 9(2) requires formal committee approval where it is proposed to negotiate a contract with one party.
- 5.2 The proposals set out in this report will contribute towards delivery of the Finance Service Best Value Service Improvement Plan.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members;

- 7.1 approve the negotiation of the contract terms in respect of the procurement of the new electronic document management module for the Unified Benefits System and related services with Civica Financial Systems Ltd in terms of paragraph 9(2) of the Council's Standing Orders relating to contracts;
- 7.2 otherwise note the contents of the report.

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RB/AMCP/JP
13 December 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS NIL

Members wishing further information should contact Alex McPhee, Executive Head of Finance, Telephone (01563) 576300.