

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	2 June, 2021
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	SWiSPlus Replacement
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1. Purpose of report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Committee of proposals to replace the Social Work and Social Care information system SWiSplus
- ◆ give background to the current system and its now limited shelf life and options for the purchase and funding of a new system

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the report be noted;
- (2) that the timescales as identified at section 5.3 of the report are noted;
- (3) that the capital costs of the project will be included as part of the Capital programme report to the Executive Committee in June, be noted;
- (4) that the Project Team posts as detailed at section 5.6 are established, subject to the capital funding being approved by the Executive Committee in June; and
- (5) that the proposal around reducing posts as identified in section 9 to support the re-payment of capital costs and ongoing revenue costs are approved.

3. Background

- 3.1. Currently, the system which supports social care case recording in South Lanarkshire is SWiSplus. This system has been in situ since 1994 and was carried over from Strathclyde Region to the inception of South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) in 1996.
- 3.2. The system has been continually developed over the last 20+ years to take account of legislative changes and operational requirements through IT support from South SLCs IT Service.
- 3.3. It is noted that the system is now outdated and in relation to a modern electronic information system its effectiveness to support practice and reporting requirements are now limited.
- 3.4. A similar version of this report has already been presented to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) at its meeting on 29 March 2021 and will also be noted within the capital update to Executive Committee in June, 2021.

4. SWiSplus

- 4.1. From a current system perspective, SWiSplus has been utilised in social care since the early 1990s and is now very dated when compared with the technological advances other products on the market offer. This creates a level of inefficiency as it is not straightforward to access a quick overview of the service users' journey in terms of their care and support. Modern systems by comparison are predominantly cloud hosted as opposed to the on-premises servers which SWiSplus operates on which provides efficiency.
- 4.2. From a care management and worker efficiency perspective, a key success factor in managing risk is predicated on social care staff having regular contact with service users and carers to build up a better understanding of the individual circumstances and personal outcomes. Frontline staff have provided feedback through a staff survey that over 40% of their day is spent on case recording and navigating the system. With services already stretched, clawing back this time to undertake more direct work and see more cases would support the current and growing demand on the service.
- 4.3. Building on the above points and recognising frontline staff feedback, 'the importance of modern and efficient I.T systems as an enabler to supporting frontline practice cannot be overstated'. The workforce, which is being recruited today and, in the future, has been shaped by advances in IT over the last 20 years which are unrecognisable when compared with what was available prior to the millennium. Recent studies, for example, one undertaken by Dell in 2016 points to staff highlighting the importance of having good information systems to support their practice and is a factor in whether they choose to remain with an employer or for that matter elect to go and work with a particular organisation. A staff survey was undertaken in October 2020 across South Lanarkshire Social Care Services and from the 347 responses received, a majority of frontline staff reported that they were spending up to 40% of their time on a daily basis inputting to SWiSplus. Within many of the comments and feedback, staff cited the current system being an inhibitor to overall job satisfaction levels. If a modest 10% of this time could be re-directed to frontline delivery, this could have benefits with regards to recruitment and retention of staff.
- 4.4. Staff benefits; A new system will mean that the existing workforce will be more productive in terms of direct service user contact and thereby mitigating against the need to over invest in frontline resources, as may be the case with an inefficient system.
- 4.5. Extracting and analysing performance information from SWiSplus can be very time consuming, requiring complex queries to be developed. New systems have the flexibility to interface with strategic performance reporting tools and allow future demand profiles and performance to be more easily analysed. This should ensure resources are targeted more effectively on the basis of easier access to management information.

5. System Replacement Costs

- 5.1. The costs to procure a replacement for SWiSplus can be broadly categorised into two main areas as follows:
 - ◆ the capital and revenue funding to purchase, develop and maintain a new system; and
 - ◆ the project management costs associated with procurement and implementation of a new system, inclusive of retiring the current system.

- 5.2. Taking each of the two elements in turn, a cost profile has been worked up through engagement with other Councils and discussions with providers who are in the market to supply new social care systems. In summary the estimates to purchase the system a cost of up to £1.2 million would be anticipated, depending on the level of specification required with ongoing annual revenue costs in the region of £150,000 per annum. Over and above this and given the size and scale of change involved in this project, a Project Implementation Team is recommended to be in place for up to three years at a cost of £428,000 per annum. The details of the skill – mix and composition of this team is outlined in section 5.6 of this report
- 5.3. The phasing of these capital and revenue costs across the life cycle of this project would be as outlined in the table below:

Category of Cost	Area of Spend	Year				2025/26	2026/27
		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25		
Capital	Purchase of the system	-	£1.2m	-	-		
	Project Team	£0.428m	£0.428m	£0.428m	-		
Revenue	Support Costs	-	-	£0.150m	£0.150m	£0.150m	£0.150m
	Social Care Efficiency (SWiSPlus Team)	-	-	-	(£0.150m)	(£0.150m)	(£0.150m)

- 5.4. Considering all of the above, a total cost across five years for this project would be approximately £1.2m for the system purchase and development. A further £1.284m for the project team costs brings the total costs to totalling £2.484m. Support Costs re licences are estimated at £0.150m per annum however this can be offset with the loss of the SWiSPlus Support Team. A new system would negate the need for this team. These costs can then be transferred to the support costs of the new system. The overall budget would then be £2.484m plus a transition year of the support team at £0.150m giving and overall total of £2.634m.
- 5.5. The note of caution around this is that the full and exact costs of this will not be fully known until a full specification for system replacement is worked up and bids come back from suppliers in the market in response to this specification. This will be the initial task of the Project Manager in 2021 to scope and start the tender process for confirmation of the capital costs for purchase as well as recruitment to the project team. The costs therefore will only be part year cost as part of the preparation tasks.
- 5.6. Taking account of the above points this is an area of work that goes beyond merely procuring and implementing a new system to one which also impacts significantly on operational practice change. It stands to reason that a multi-disciplinary project team is required to lead and implement this to secure maximum efficiency. From this viewpoint, the £0.428m project costs would comprise of a team with the following skill – mix:

Post	Detail
1 x Project Manager	Will lead the project on a day-to-day basis from the operational/service requirements perspective in relation to children and justice, adults and older people and performance and support, including data transfer
3 X Project Officers	One officer to scope each area of service's requirements for children and justice, adult and older people and performance and support
1 x I.T Team Leader and up to 3 I.T Business Systems Engineers (BSE's)	IT BSE's to support the IT Project Manager to compile the specification of requirements, run the tender process and finally implement the solution (data migration, system set up etc).
0.5 x Finance Officer	To specifically scope out the finance requirements, both from a transaction and also care planning perspective. The council currently commission circa £104M for care packages. A new system that this is aligned to Case Management systems and ledger authorisations and payments will support efficiencies.
Training and System Testing Support	Will be coordinated through the existing SWiSplus training team resource
Staff and workforce testing and user acceptance	Staff/practitioner time freed up to test new system to validate that each phase supports operational practice

- 5.7. Over and above this, consideration should also be given to releasing or ring-fencing protected time for a member of Senior Management Team (SMT) to oversee this project.
- 5.8. From a timescale perspective, it is estimated, that this resource will be required for 24 - 36 months; it will be a team that is phased in and then phased out as the programme is established and then concluded. It will need to take account of the following phases of activity:
- ◆ creation of a Project Initiation Document
 - ◆ Project Governance Infrastructure including a Project Review Board and Steering Group
 - ◆ assimilation of a service specification that will be used to support the procurement process
 - ◆ procurement process – although indications suggest that there will be a Scotland Excel Framework available from February 2021, which will have already undertaken much of the groundwork with regards to recognised market providers
 - ◆ data migration – by all accounts this is potentially the most complex and time-consuming aspect of the project
 - ◆ testing and validation
 - ◆ securing buy – in for what will be a major cultural shift and change management process from a practice perspective.
 - ◆ training, implementation, and wider roll – out
 - ◆ embedding as a core service

6. Demand Management Considerations

- 6.1. A more modern system and infrastructure will bring the service into the 21st century and result in the Social Care Service being able to direct more time to face to face frontline delivery and manage demand which has significantly increased in recent years. This re-direction of worker time will increase the quality and performance of the service, whilst providing the opportunity to recruit and retain staff.
- 6.2. All of this is extremely important as public sector finances will face significant challenges in the years ahead. If the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) continues with the current system, the downtime created through the inefficiencies in the current system will continue to increase. Moreover, current demand trends continue to outstrip financial growth as evidenced by the data below over the last 10 years:
- ◆ referrals to adult social care have risen by 57%
 - ◆ Adult Support and Protection inquiries have risen by 337%
 - ◆ demands around Adults with Incapacity have seen the number of visits being required to be undertaken by Council Offices increase by 58%
 - ◆ the number of service users who have a welfare guardian has equally risen steeply by 121%
 - ◆ referrals to child and family teams has grown by 309%
 - ◆ the numbers of looked after children has grown by 60%
 - ◆ child protection referrals have fluctuated year on year, but average growth of the period has been 4%
 - ◆ the number of referrals for justice services has increased by 67%
- 6.3. The reinvestment of social worker time accrued from a new system should therefore be directed to managing these significant increases in demand, given that demographic forecasts also point to a continuation of increased demand.
- 6.4. On top of this, and whilst harder to accurately predict, there will be a legacy from the COVID pandemic, particularly with regards to increased demand for mental health support and levels of poverty. There is also the impact of people who already had a long-term condition not receiving the same levels of support as they otherwise would have if there was not a pandemic. The impact of this is harder to fully define, but it is safe to conclude that there will be a larger number of people with increased levels of dependency.

7. Leadership and Management

- 7.1. As referred to above, this piece of work lends itself to a project management approach and this will be led by a Project Board and Project Steering Group.
- 7.2. It is proposed the Project Sponsors for this will be the Chief Officer/Director of Health and Social Care and Executive Director of Finance and Corporate, with the Chief Social Work Officer and Head of Health and Social Care and Head of Information Technology Services leading the programme.
- 7.3. There have also been early discussions with colleagues in North Lanarkshire HSCP as they too are at a similar stage of scoping out replacement of their system. They are supportive of any future tender to be noted as an interested party to the tender and vice versa in order to progress as a possible pan Lanarkshire Social Work and Social care system. This could present an opportunity to look at shared procurement going forward.

8. Employee Implications

- 8.1. The employee implications are as outlined below; in that it is proposed the dedicated Project Team posts are added to the Social Work Resources establishment for a 3-year period. This is subject to the project's capital funding being approved (as discussed at Section 9.3. In addition to this, staff time will be drawn upon to provide the necessary operational expertise regarding the future system requirements.

Post	Proposed Number of Posts (FTE)	Grade	SCP Range	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary	Gross Cost inc on costs 30.3%	Total Costs
Project Manager	1	Grade 4 Level 2-5	82 - 88	£23.92 - £26.18	£43,651 - £47,775	£56,878 - £62,251	£56,878 - £62,251
Project Officers	3	Grade 3 Level 4	72 - 74	£20.61 - £21.25	£37,611 - £38,779	£49,007 - £50,529	£147,021 - £151,587
I.T Team Leader	1	Grade 3 Level 8	79 - 80	£22.89 - £23.24	£43,651 - £44,345	£56,878 - £57,781	£56,878 - £57,781
I.T Business Systems Engineers (BSE's)	3	Grade 3 Level 4	72 - 74	£20.61 - £21.25	£37,611 - £38,779	£49,007 - £50,529	£147,021 - £151,587
Finance Officer	0.5	Grade 3 Level 4	72 - 74	£20.61 - £21.25	£37,611 - £38,779	£49,007 - £50,529	£24,503 - £25,264

- 8.2. Perhaps more importantly, is the business gain to be accrued in terms of staff time from the implementation of a new system. This will help to re-balance the split of face-to-face practice time/contact with service users and carers vis a vis time spent navigating an ageing IT system to undertake case recording activity.
- 8.3. A new system will still require a level of training support. Currently, there is a small training team which supports current systems training requirements with regards to teaching staff how to orientate the current system and also any new developments. A new system should provide the opportunity to look at how this resource is configured in the future, given that modern systems are generally more intuitive and do not require the same level of face-to-face intensive training, coupled with the fact that many come with in-built online training solutions.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. The overall capital cost of the project is estimated at around £2.634m (see sections 5.3 and 5.4). This will need to be added to the Council's General Services Capital Programme in the following financial years: 2021/2022: £0.428m, 2022/2023: £1.628m and 2023/2024 £0.578m.
- 9.2. As detailed at section 4.3 it is expected that there are a significant number of hours of staff time that can be released through moving to a new, modern system. It would be for Social Work Resources to consider how that efficiency realised from staff time is best reinvested.
- 9.3. It is intended that the council borrows £2.6m to fund these capital costs. This borrowing is subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. The capital costs of the project, as well as the funding, will be included as part of the Capital Programme report to the Executive Committee in June. The costs of borrowing to meet the costs of the project would be approximately £0.250m per annum. It is proposed that these costs could be met through diverting some of the efficiencies detailed above (approximately 5 social worker posts in total which would equate to

£0.250m pa). This reduction in staffing would be required from 2023/24 when it is expected the system would be nearing full implementation.

- 9.4. No further funds would be required from the capital programme going forward under this funding solution.
- 9.5. In relation to future running costs the SWiSPlus Support team (£0.150m); would then transfer as a funding solution for support costs of a new system estimated at £0.150m pa as identified at Section 5.3.
- 9.6. Given the potential for some of the £0.250m to impact on the IJB delegated budget, this report has already been presented to the March IJB and was approved.

10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 10.1. There are no implications for Climate Change, sustainability and the natural environment in terms of the content of this report.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1. There are a number of risks associated with the content of this report, including 1) failure to source a new replacement system for SWiSplus which meets the requirements of the service for the next 10 years and beyond; 2) lack of resourcing and a structured approach for this piece of work could result in delays to implementation and the quality of the overall system; and 3) reputational risks to the Council with a system that is not fit for purpose for a modern workforce.
- 11.2. From a sustainable development perspective, a new system has the potential to offer more efficient and effective ways of working, thus ensuring that the time and resource of frontline staff is better balanced towards service/carer direct work.

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 12.1. There is no requirement to carry out an impact assessment as this does not introduce a new policy or strategy.
- 12.2. From a consultation perspective, frontline staff and end users will be fully involved in the sourcing, specification, and functionality of any future social care information system.

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20 April 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- Accountable, Effective, Efficient and Transparent
- Improve Later Life
- Deliver Better Health and Social Care Outcomes for All
- Protect Vulnerable Children, Young People and Adults

Previous References

♦ none

List of Background Papers

♦ none

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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