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City Council

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FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Children's and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

13th December 2006

Integrated Children's System/Electronic Social Care Records

Report of the Service Director (Family Support and Safeguarding Division) C&YPS

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform Scrutiny of the progress in implementing the Integrated Children's System and the Electronic Social Care Records.

2. Summary

2.1 The Department of Health (DoH) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) have jointly established policy requirements for Councils with Social Service Responsibilities to introduce Electronic Social Care Records (ESCR), and the DfES also have established the requirement for the Integrated Children's System (ICS).

2.2 There are staged milestones for the introduction of the ICS and the ESCR:

- October 2005: All information on all new referrals to be stored electronically
- December 2005: Introduction of the Integrated Children's System for all new referrals of children and families.
- October 2006: All new information on all cases to be stored electronically
- December 2006: Completion of the Integrated Children's System for all cases of children and families. The DfES have stated that they will accept completion in full by the end of March 2007. Failure to achieve this target will cause the authority to lose £80,000 of DfES capital funding.

2.3 The requirements of the ICS demand a significant change of operational practice utilising electronic systems to deliver elements of these changes. These systems are new, and all the systems providers have struggled nationally to deliver these to match the timescales set by the DfES. The systems are largely complete but there are still ongoing developments to complete the compliance with the requirements.

2.4 The primary purpose of the ICS is to improve the outcomes for children and young people, by ensuring their individual needs are considered and addressed, and by increasing the appropriate sharing of their information to ensure those necessary have access to the full relevant facts and can make the best decisions regarding the care of those children and young people. Leicester is committed to delivering ICS to achieve these improvements and not to "tick boxes".

- 2.5 The Social Care and Health Department had determined that to comply with the requirements for recording all information held by the Department on citizens electronically will require a move towards paperless working if the costs of storing information are not to increase substantially, both the Adults and Community Services and the Children's and Young Peoples Services departments have continued this strategy with regard to social care records. A move towards holding two separate types of records will also significantly increase the risks to citizens and run counter to the findings of public enquiries such as Climbie and Bichard.
- 2.6 The ICS implementation has been devised to minimise the disruption to services whilst implementing new methods of working underpinned by IT systems that enable improved outcomes, compliance with national requirements and to enable the further development to improve efficiency and to support appropriate and integrated information sharing for children and young people services in Leicester.
- 2.4 Significant progress has been made in moving towards completion of the project, including:
- i. Information on all new social care referrals is recorded on CareFirst, although this is not currently sufficiently detailed to fully comply with the ESCR requirements.
 - ii. CareFirst is currently utilised to provide case management, statutory reporting of activity involving young people, the child protection register and provision of performance management for the CYPS social care services.
 - iii. A new module of CareFirst has been purchased to enable the recording of electronic forms, and this has been successfully implemented, although as this is still relatively new, there are ongoing issues over elements of the functionality and how this is applied to ICS.
 - iv. A new module of CareFirst has been purchased to enable the electronic documents to be attached to the social care records, including documents that have been scanned.
 - v. The ICT Infrastructure improvement and provision of additional equipment for front line workers has been completed, included the recabling and modernising of the networking at 1-3 Greyfriars and improvements made to 5 Greyfriars. Significant work by Corporate ICT, the Leicestershire Health Informatics Service and the University Hospitals of Leicester has been undertaken to deliver this.
 - vi. A PC is now provided for every social worker or other front line worker who needs regular access to the ICS and social care records. The PCs are of modern specification and good performance. Basic ICT skills have been assessed on all such workers, and training provided to those that needed improvement.
 - vii. The ICT Infrastructure is currently being developed to ensure that business continuity of social care records are available in the event of failures of ICT equipment. Corporate ICT will complete this work early in 2007.
 - viii. The Integrated Children's System has been piloted and is being rolled out in 3-4 tranches to all fieldwork CYPS teams by the end of March 2007, meeting the DfES requirements. Feedback on the rollout of ICS to date has been positive from fieldwork teams.
 - ix. The tender to scan all social care records has progressed through all evaluation stages, and all risks and concerns have been considered. The contract will be

awarded to the preferred supplier in November. Care is being taken to ensure the scanned records will be admissible during court proceedings.

- x. Significant development work to develop electronic case recording (meeting the legislative requirements of case recording electronically), develop an electronic file structure, and development of new business processes has been started.

2.5 Progress with the roll-out of the other elements of the Electronic Social Care Records has been delayed slightly for the following reasons

- i. Priority has been given to the completion of the ICS due to the requirements of the capital grant, and the substantial impact on operational social work leading to a detailed examination of the corresponding risks and ensuring these don't occur.
- ii. The software supplier had indicated dissatisfaction with the third party document management software it provided during June, and during August the supplier issued notice of termination of the contract from Jan 2007, and has appointed a new third party provider. Progress on both the scanning tender and software rollout has been deferred pending confirmation of a number of issues, including timescales, reliability, and impact of the change. The supplier published its plans during September, and we are assessing the impact of this on the ESCR.

2.6 It is now envisaged that ICS phase 1 will be completed according to the DfES timescales, although these are challenging. Further work will be required thereafter to embed the ICS further into other elements of the CYPS services e.g. Fostering.

2.7 There continue to be risks to the completion of the ICS phase 1 due to the ongoing development by the software supplier of the CareAssess product.

2.8 It is now envisaged that the ESCR will be available for live and safe operation commencing at the beginning of January.

3. Bulk Scanning

3.1 During the process of considering how to bulk scan the historical records the following options were considered:

- i. Using the Housing scanners purchased under their EDMS implementation
- ii. Setting up an in-house bureau to scan the records
- iii. Tendering to the marketplace to identify a cost effective expert to undertake the scanning

3.2 The statutory duty to keep and maintain records for social care purposes is complex and enshrined in a number of acts of parliament. The most stringent duty is to maintain records for children looked after by the local authority or who are adopted through the local authority, and requires the council to maintain full records for 75 years from the child's 18th birthday. Other records regarding adults with complex needs also have stringent requirements. As there are currently approximately 22 million pages of records held on social care cases, and a significant number are of poor quality or are in poor condition, extreme care must be taken to ensure no damage occurs during the digitisation process, and that all relevant information is correctly digitised.

- 3.3 The key issues and risks considered by the Project Board in determining the way forward were:
- i. The risks of harm or damage to the records
 - ii. The risks of future litigation based on difficulties or issues with the legal admissibility of documents
 - iii. The risks of mix up, loss or other problems with the records themselves
 - iv. The risks of local persons having access to records regarding persons they know or are aware of (as every page of every record must be visually inspected)
 - v. The issues of transporting records securely to the location where they are to be digitised
 - vi. The issues of storing highly sensitive records pre- and post scanning
 - vii. The issues of recruiting staff to undertake this role
 - viii. The issues of sufficient suitable accommodation to undertake this process, which needs to be large, with appropriate fire and water protection for the records, and with substantial space for staff to process, store, scan and re-collate records.
 - ix. The expertise of the council at undertaking the above
 - x. The issue over the duration of the process for scanning the records
- 3.4 On balance, the Project Board determined that there would be significantly less risk by using an expert in this field, and that the equipment and staff an expert would allocate would be the most appropriate for the types and sensitivities of the records to be digitised.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
- i. Continue to note the continuing requirement to implement the Integrated Children's System and the Electronic Social Care Records.
 - ii. Note the substantial progress made to date.
 - iii. Endorse the plans and approach being pursued to achieve this.

5. Headline Financial and Legal Implications

- 5.1 The total capital costs of this project are expected to be in excess of £1m. Most ICT spend has been completed as the Networks, PCs and Business Continuity are now either complete or in process. The balance will involve scanning many existing service user records.
- 5.2 There is a limited capital contribution of around £0.3m from the two Government Departments involved. The Council has agreed that £500,000 of the capital program should be allocated for the scanning of existing paper files, which will result in increased efficiencies in the medium to long term from reduced paper handling, copying, transport and storage.
- 5.3 ACS Information Systems Unit has worked closely with Corporate ICT colleagues to improve the quality of the Council's network infrastructure necessary to support this project and the new ways of working.

5.4 Discussion with Internal Audit and Legal Services has taken place to ensure that electronic documents are legally admissible in court.

5.5 There are no legal implications that are not dealt with within the report (Guy Goodman, Head of Community Services Law - ext 7054).

6. Risk Assessment Analysis

6.1 A risk assessment matrix is attached at appendix 1.

7. Report Author/Officer to contact:

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