

SUBJECT: A Replacement Social Care Case Management System

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: July 17th, 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To present the issues associated with ensuring a fit for purpose Social Care Case Management System (SCCMS) for Monmouthshire and recommend the preferred approach.

1.2 To set out the initial resources and arrangements that are required to support local implementation of a SCCMS.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Cabinet agrees to work at a regional level to purchase an 'off-the-shelf' Social Care Case Management System under the national programme (option 2).

2.2 That cabinet thereby agrees for the Chief Officer for Social Care together with Chief Officer Resources / Deputy Chief Executive to:

- Work collaboratively with the other Gwent Local Authorities and Digital Health Care Wales (DHCW) to enter into a procurement process for a SCCMS for the region.
- Work collaboratively at a national, regional and local level to develop a programme plan to ensure the successful implementation of the new system whilst minimising risk and making best use of available resources.

2.3 That cabinet notes that:

- At present, the one-off and annual revenue costs associated with procuring a replacement system are currently estimations.
- A national Business Case is being submitted to Welsh Government which will set out the rationale and resource requirements for replacing SCCMS in Wales.

- There is an urgency to press ahead with replacing the SCCMS, despite the current unknowns.

2.4 That in the event that external funding does not meet all of the one-off implementation costs, Cabinet approve the underwriting of a maximum of £291,000 from the Council's reserves, split over 2024/25 and 2025/26.

2.5 That in the event that external funding from Welsh Government does not meet all of the one-off and on-going revenue costs, a further decision report will be brought to cabinet prior to the point of contracting, in line with the procurement timetable.

3. KEY ISSUES:

What is a Social Care Management System?

3.1 A social care case management system stores all the data and personal information of people who have had contact with social care and health (where services are integrated). They are large and complex digital systems which not only store and allow speedy access to data, but also supports the workflow of practice in line with legislative requirements. A fit for purpose system is essential to ensure that people are safeguarded, and that people's care and support needs are met.

3.2 Alongside of supporting practice, a SCCMS must comply with data security requirements, data protection and information governance. The system needs to generate management and performance reports, support business functions and provide data analytics to support strategic and operational decision making. Interoperability with other systems is also a pre-requisite of a fit for purpose SCCMS.

Background & Current Position with the Current System

3.3 Currently Monmouthshire's Social Care and Health Directorate utilises a SCCMS which is one of the very few self-built systems in Wales. Following 2 years of development the system went live in July 2015 for Adults Services, and in November 2015 for Children's Services. Since that time the system has served the Local Authority well. The current system instilled a sense of pride and ownership and allowed autonomy over development with a clear focus on the user perspective with the service shaping its functionality as the system evolved. The commitment to the success of the system has continued right up to the present day.

Why we can no longer move forward with the Current System

3.4 There are a number of factors which now mean that our in-house system is not a viable option moving forward. In line with Monmouthshire's digital and data strategy we want to ensure our workforce to be equipped with the most up to date technology. Given the age of our system, to keep it on a par with current technology it would require significant upgrading and investment – something we have neither the appropriate timeframe nor the technical resource to achieve.

3.5 The current concerns over the longevity and resilience of our system have coincided with the opportunity to step-in alongside the rest of Gwent and be part of the national programme to commission a 'best of breed' replacement system. This will ensure that we aren't left behind with an out-of-date system and will allow us to build-in resilience. The social care case management market is niche, with limited specialist providers. To miss out on this opportunity could leave us working in isolation with very limited costly options should we need to commission a replacement in the near future.

Background and Current Position with WCCIS

3.6 The decision to build and remain with our own system within Monmouthshire went against the grain from a national (Welsh Government) perspective. Over the preceding 10 years or so, WG has wanted all LAs and Health Boards to enter into a contract with WCCIS (Welsh Community Care Information System). This aligned with the vision of one shared record supporting integrated services. The majority of Welsh Local Authorities entered into contracts with WCCIS, albeit at a range of different times, including the other 4 LAs within Gwent. It is uncontentious to say that WCCIS has not been wholly successful as a national system and has not achieved its original aspirations.

3.7 Similar to our current system, the Microsoft Dynamics platform on which WCCIS is built is now reaching end of life added to which the provider appears to have no appetite to remain in the market. In terms of the way forward, the National Programme has now moved away from a one system approach to encouraging Local Authorities and Health Boards to enter into a competitive tendering process to purchase 'best of breed'. To support this, LAs have grouped together with the idea that regions will procure together off a national framework.

3.8 The Gwent Local Authorities have come together as a cluster and have worked collaboratively so that we are in a favourable position to procure the best system for the region via a single instance.

The opportunity to align with the national programme.

3.9 It is within this context, both in respect of our own in-house solution reaching a natural end and the developments within the national programme, that we have considered our options for the future. Our ultimate objective is to achieve a fit for purpose SCCMS which will grow with us over the medium term (up to circa 12 years) supporting our on-going practice development and interface with people as well as our wider service reform, particularly around digital and interoperability with other systems. It is a critical decision for the department and the council as a whole.

3.10 The timing of events has presented a strong option for Monmouthshire to move forward as part of the national programme through collaboration with our Gwent partners. This should present some opportunities for economies of scale and shared

developments as well as additional resilience from a technical and workforce perspective. This is put forward as our preferred approach.

3.11 The alternatives - rebuilding the current system or splitting away from either Gwent or the National Programme and entering a stand-alone procurement process, both create additional potential risks and issues that would be hard to mitigate. A full options appraisal is carried out in Section 5.

Implementing a new system

3.12 As well as making the best decision about a replacement system, the service is also preparing to undertake the task of moving from the old system to a new one. The scale of this task is difficult to understate and will affect almost every individual member of the workforce as well as all aspects of the service in terms of time, effort and resource. It is a significant undertaking necessitating strong elements of change management; not only the task of 'learning a new system' but reorientating from a local to a regional perspective in terms of ownership and governance.

3.13 Implementing and transferring to a new SCCMS will require a programme approach over an 18/24-month timeframe. Tasks will fall into both technical and practice orientated activities over 3 main workstreams: adults, children's and finance, and will include:

- Contracting
- Data validation (preparedness for migration)
- Workshops to process map for new business processes and procedures
- Data migration / extraction
- Workforce training
- Configuration, including form building
- Report functionality
- Testing
- Inter-operability with other systems
- Legacy system development
- Communication and engagement.

3.14 The resource required to procure and implement the new system is tiered over national, regional and local levels.

National Level

3.15 At a national level, the DHCW delivers the Welsh digital strategy of which Connecting Care (which the delivery of a new SCCMS is now known) is a central part. To this end DHCW sets out and manages the overarching programme and coordination across LAs and Health Boards. DHCW has developed a national procurement approach and national framework using a minimum specification. It advises and provides an interface with WG and has developed a business case setting

out the resources required to support implementation. In the longer term, DHCW are looking to develop a shared care record through system interoperability.

3.16 There have been some concerns about how well DHCW is able to meet the needs of social care (as opposed to health); respond to specific issues within Local Authorities and manage the interface between Local Authorities and the national programme. WLGA have recently joined with the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru) to try to facilitate relationships between DHCW and ensure that there is a strong LA voice and representation within the National Programme.

Regional level

3.17 There is a regional team in place which is hosted by ABuHB comprising four (4) permanent employees: - Regional System Lead, System Manager and x2 Data Quality Officers. The annual revenue cost of the team is £148,000.

3.18 The regional team supports the current system for the other Gwent LAs and more latterly has been turned to supporting the Gwent cluster develop its regional specification, evaluation process and implementation plans for a new system. The regional team bring significant technical expertise and are in the best position to support and coordinate critical tasks across the 5 Gwent LAs such as data migration, information governance, data sharing, testing and reported. They will provide a key interface with the supplier during the implementation phase and beyond.

3.19 As part of developing the Connecting Care Business Case for WG, the regional team, alongside other such teams across Wales, has undertaken an analysis of what additional, temporary, regional resource is required to support implementation. This identified a further 3 posts: - Regional Programme Manager, Programme Officer and Information Officer are needed for approximately 18 months. The cost of this would be £233,764 (over 18 months).

3.20 It is said, though not confirmed, that the existing regional team costs will continue to be funded through the DHCW up until March 2025 (as a backstop). At the same time the costs of the existing regional team and the additional temporary posts have been represented within the national Business Case. It is not known what the WG response to the Business Case will be. In an attempt to de-risk the situation, Gwent Directors have put a case forward to the RPB to divert partnership money into Connecting Care at a regional level to support implementation, should all else fail.

Local level resource requirements

3.21 During the implementation, whilst the overall coordination and technical expertise will be managed via the regional team, a significant amount of our own resource will need to be turned to the programme. To varying degrees, some people will be required to incorporate the work generated by the implementation programme into their existing roles. This will have an impact on the wider operations of the service at particular points and will take careful planning.

3.22 There will need to be an effective interface between the regional resource and our local resource. Wherever possible, we will be looking for synergy and opportunities to do things only once within the region; however, there will be certain activities and tasks that will need to be carried out locally. This is because the 5 Local Authorities have different structures, roles, forms, sign off arrangements and workflow processes.

3.23 Existing job roles that will be utilised to support the implementation programme will include:

- Current system leads (1.6 FTEs)
- Data and performance officers (2 FTEs)
- Business Support Managers
- Business Support Teams
- Social Care Practitioners and Managers
- Finance leads
- Workforce development officers

3.24 We anticipate that to ensure safe and timely implementation, in accordance with our responsibilities towards the supplier and our Gwent partners, we will require additional resource during the implementation phase.

3.25 Having the right resources and support in place to deliver the programme at this point is critical because once the contract is deployed system implementation will commence immediately and to a tightly coordinated timetable across the 5 Local Authorities. Monmouthshire needs to be as best placed as possible to ensure proper preparedness particularly as our process (of transferring from our current system to the new one) will not be the same as our Gwent counterparts.

3.26 The additional resource required is based on our understanding of the size of task; previous experience within MCC of implementing systems; workforce analysis of the required resources for the purposes of the WG Connecting Care Business Case and knowledge of available resources within other Local Authorities.

3.27 Our analysis shows that our capacity and skills gap could be addressed through:

A Programme Manager – to oversee and co-ordinate the programme, manage and take accountability for the delivery of each workstream and act as the prime interface with the regional programme and the supplier.

A Project support officer – to support the project manager on all day-to-day project administration and activities including reports, data, workshop support, process mapping, meeting management and progress chasing.

Additional system admin resource - to ensure that we are as well prepared as possible prior to programme commencement (early preparedness and data validation / cleansing).

Strategic Oversight

3.28 Achieving the objective of ensuring a functioning SCCMS is critical to the Council's core business. To support the Social Care & Health Directorate during the implementation phase, skills and expertise will be required from other Directorates specifically (though not exclusively) legal, digital, performance, workforce development and information governance. To prioritise and allocate resources, and to ensure that there is proper oversight and governance across directorates, it is proposed that a steering group is established. This would support shared ownership, decision making and problem-solving as well as providing oversight and risk monitoring.

Business as Usual

3.29 Following the implementation of a new system, on-going support is required to ensure it remains working properly. This will include dealing with bugs and glitches, overseeing the contract and managing risks, as well as on-going development and liaison with the suppliers and the national programme including the development of a shared care record. Given our intention to proceed on a regional basis, our Business-as-Usual support mechanism will look differently from how it does at the moment. The implementation phase will give us time and greater understanding so that we can decide on the best configuration for on-going support, aligning and adjusting our local resource with the potential for shared services at a regional level.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 The proposal to seek a replacement Social Care Management System will ensure that the Council keeps pace with the latest changes in digital technology and has access to a system that is fit for purpose with the capacity for further development and growth. The key objective is to harness the benefits of digital technology within social care and health so that we can better safeguard, protect and meet the care and support needs of hundreds of vulnerable residents within our communities, many of whom are older people, people with disabilities, children or those with physical or mental illnesses. At the heart of the proposal is collaborative working with partners and ensuring that the Council has the capacity to support connected and integrated services into the future.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option 1 – Remain with Current System

The current system has supported the transformation of practice over the last 9 years and over time has recouped initial investment costs. However, there are

significant concerns in the governance and contractual arrangements of the application.

OPTION 1 Remain with the current system and invest in re-writing and new servers to update the technology	
RECOMMENDED: NO	
Benefits	Dis-benefits
<p>Teams feel committed to the current systems due to their involvement and ownership of the design and development.</p> <p>Autonomy over development priorities and design.</p> <p>Co-production in design.</p> <p>No licence Costs – the current system is built on Open Source technology and as such have no licence costs.</p> <p>Reduced disruption and less training required for the workforce.</p> <p>Potentially less costly, at least in the short term.</p>	<p>Lack of connectivity across Gwent region and shared services (interoperability is part of the national specification)</p> <p>There is no formal contract arrangement to support new development or changes in service delivery. Current developer accessibility is unsustainable which could result in escalating development costs.</p> <p>The current system is not part of the national framework. Remaining with our own system would mean that we were not aligned with the national programme or with the rest of Gwent. This would mean loss of access to potentially available resources.</p> <p>The technology would require significant investment to remain up to date. The costs of this are unknown, and it is currently not feasible (in terms of technical availability).</p>
Option 1 COST	<p>No licence costs</p> <p>Annual revenue support and development costs including data security and replacement server costs – £125,000</p> <p>New Build Costs – unknown (potentially significant) / not feasible</p>

Option 2 – Procure a replacement SCCMS with the Gwent cluster (as part of the Connecting Care national programme).

OPTION 2	
Replacement system via a Gwent Procurement Model	
RECOMMENDED: YES	
Benefits	Dis-benefits
<p>Collaborative Approach – will allow Monmouthshire and Gwent partners to benefit from shared knowledge and from ‘doing things once’ across Gwent. This option would align Monmouthshire with the National Programme and allow access to potential available resources.</p> <p>Working as a regional cluster will bring purchasing power to achieve best value (through scaled licensing costs).</p> <p>There is a national and regional team in place to support implementation. This builds in resilience for technical support with the potential for additional shared services on Gwent footprint moving forward.</p> <p>Supports mobility of workforce across Gwent.</p>	<p>Implementation costs, licencing costs and potential ‘hidden’ costs depending on the specification and contract.</p> <p>Potential funding from WG remains unknown but is unlikely to cover entire costs. [Some assistance might be forthcoming from regional funds.]</p> <p>Dealing with an external supplier and contract monitoring (which is not part of MCC’s recent experience).</p> <p>Lack of autonomy around design priorities and development time, which would need to be negotiated with other partners.</p> <p>Practice change and significant training requirement of workforce.</p> <p>Service disruption through the implementation phase.</p>
Option 2 COST	<p>Implementation Support Costs £291,000 over an 18-month period.</p> <p>Annual revenue licensing costs best case £250,000, worst case £600,000.</p> <p>One off implementation costs of data migration are not known.</p> <p>Business as usual support costs - unknown at this point, estimated between £70,000 and £100,000 annually.</p>

OPTION 3	
Do not move with Gwent, delay acting, and enter a stand alone procurement at a later point	
RECOMMENDED: NO	

Benefits		Dis-benefits
<p>Least disruptive in the short-term</p> <p>Will allow knowledge about 'best of breeds' to emerge with the potential to learn lessons from other areas.</p> <p>Freedom of choice [albeit SCCMS market is very limited]</p>		<p>May not attract any suppliers, and lack of purchase power may make this more costly. This could result in having no functioning SCCMS, which would pose serious risks to people and the council.</p> <p>MCC would be outside of the national programme and may have little or no access to any available resource.</p>
Option COST	3	UNKNOWN

6. Evaluation criteria

- Replacement SCCMS procured
- Contract established
- System implemented in a safe and timely way
- Workforce training and using the system effectively to support all practice and management arrangements
- Business as usual system support established aligned with a Gwent footprint
- On-going governance and system development in place.

7. REASONS

7.1 It is essential that Monmouthshire County Council keeps pace with digital changes so that we can realise the benefits technology brings within social care and health. Crucial to this is the deployment of a fit for purpose system that supports the service to safeguard people and meet their care and support needs in accordance with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.

7.2 The current context represents an opportunity for Monmouthshire to move away from its in-house system and join forces with Gwent to procure a modern replacement system in keeping with the national programme. Whilst this represents a significant change for Monmouthshire and an immediate increase in costs, the benefits of increasing system resilience and collaborating with others outweigh these disadvantages.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

One-off implementation costs and annual revenue costs

8.1 At this stage, just prior to entering into a procurement process, it is not possible to provide accurate information about any one off-costs associated with the new system, particularly the cost of data migration. The method and potential cost of data migration is yet to be determined between the national programme and regional teams and will in part depend on the supplier; a number of options are being explored.

8.2 In terms of annual costs, the new system will be significantly more than the cost of our current system – the prime reason for this is that we do not currently pay license fees. Based on published GCloud pricing the best-case scenario for the annual license fees is £250,000 and the worst case £600,000. The actual annual revenue costs will be ascertained through the specification and procurement process.

8.3 It is not known to what extent, if at all, Welsh Government will assist Monmouthshire with the additional cost pressures associated with a replacement system. Once we have ascertained the costs, and the extent of any available financial support, we will bring forward a subsequent cabinet decision, prior to contracting. This will set out the costs and a proposed approach to how those costs will be met through the revenue budget for the Social Care & Health Directorate (MTFP). Based on the current timetable, it is likely that this subsequent decision will be needed early to mid-September.

Workforce Implementation Costs

8.4 The resource costs for implementing the new system over an 18-month programme have been identified as:

Cost of existing regional team	£44,452 Apportioned for MCC
Cost of additional regional posts	£46,752 Apportioned for MCC
Costs of additional temporary resource for MCC: Prog Manager £75,000 PA Prog Officer £45,000 PA System Admin £20,000	£200,000
	£291,204

8.5 It is anticipated that some external (WG) funding will be available to assist in meeting the one-off implementation costs.

8.6 To the extent that this is not fully funded, the Council will need to underwrite this from its own funding through revenue reserves or capital receipts. The timing and quantum of this funding remains uncertain, and therefore Cabinet are asked to approve the underwriting of a maximum of £291,000 from the Council's reserves, split over 2024/25 and 2025/26.

On-going Support Costs

8.7 At the moment it is too early to specify what the cost will be of on-going system support and development. The implementation phase will provide the opportunity to decide on the best configuration for on-going support pursuing every opportunity for shared services where these are beneficial. An initial estimate of the annual support costs is between £70,000 to £100,000. This is based on our current annual support (local and regional).

Potential Cost Mitigation

8.8 We are actively pursuing all opportunities to mitigate the potential cost burden on the Local Authority for one-off implementation costs, licensing costs and on-going support costs including:

- Funding of the existing regional team through the DHCW
- Welsh government funding for implementation costs arising from the national Business Case
- Procuring on a regional basis to achieve purchasing power
- Regional partnership funding.

Timeline and Criticality of Decision Making

8.9 The recommendation to make funds available at this point, prior to the confirmation of any outside funding being available, will allow us to ensure we are as well prepared as we can be ready for contract deployment. Once the contract is deployed, there will be little room for delay or manoeuvre as every stage will need to be coordinated with the supplier and with other Local Authorities. Good preparation and planning will enable us risk assess and mitigate critical aspects of the programme as safely and with as minimal service disruption as possible.

9.CONSULTEES

- Peter Davies – Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources
- Cllr Ian Chandler – Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services
- Social Care and Health Directorate Management Team (DMT)
- Shared Resource Services

- Information Security and Governance
- Digital, Design and Innovation Team

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

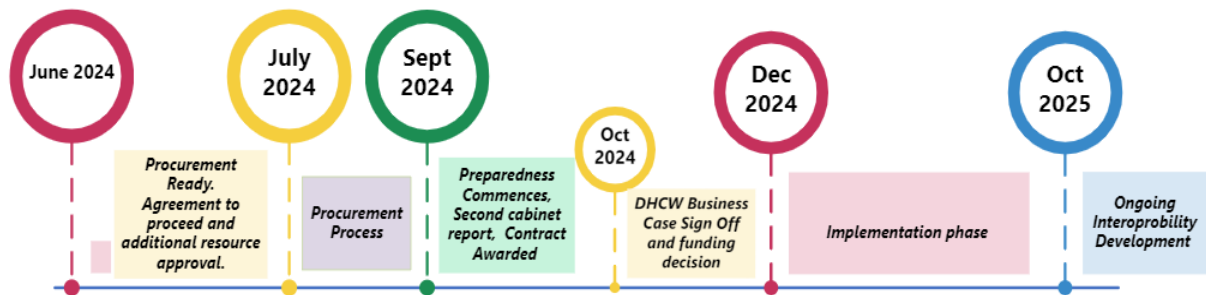
None

11. AUTHOR

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Appendix 1 Time-Line



Appendix 2 Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 Risk Analysis