

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No

meeting date: 7 JUNE 2011  
title: REVIEW OF CONTACT CENTRE IT SYSTEMS  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES  
principal author: MARK EDMONDSON

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Committee on the review of the Contact Centre IT Systems that is required by November 2011.

### 2 RELEVANCE TO THE COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The implementation of the Contact Centre initiative has improved the way that the Council is able to serve the public. As such, it is key to the achievement of the Council's core values of striving to achieve service excellence and ensuring that services are accessible to all. It also contributes to our underlying aim to be a well managed Council.

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Shared Service Contact Centre (SSCC) and the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software has been in place since November 2004. The Lancashire Partnership was created as collaboration between Lancashire County Council (LCC), Burnley, Chorley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Rossendale Borough Councils.
- 3.2 Contracts were entered into with Northgate (CRM) and Macfarlane (Contact Centre Telephony) for the provision of IT systems for the period of the partnership which is due to expire in November 2011.
- 3.3 The Northgate CRM system has been hosted by LCC on behalf of the partners with access provided to the individual contact centres via a dedicated connection between the local authorities and LCC.

### 4 ISSUES

- 4.1 As the original contract is coming to an end discussions have been taking place as to how to take this project forward.
- 4.2 The original intention of the SSCC, where each authority was able to deal with queries on behalf of the others was never implemented, and instead each authority has used the software as a stand alone system.
- 4.3 Initial discussions have identified that it is unlikely for the partnership to continue in its present form and as a result each authority will need to identify a replacement for the current system and have it in place for November 2011.
- 4.4 As the hardware is situated at Lancashire County Council's offices and is due to be upgraded this will require the purchase of new hardware to be located at our offices, and a migration of the data will have to be undertaken.

- 4.5 As a relationship has already been developed with the current software suppliers they have proposed an extension to the current arrangement, this time with individual authorities, which will allow the transfer of the licenses purchased by the partnership at no extra costs. A charge will be made for support and maintenance of the systems based on each authority's requirements.
- 4.6 The advantages of this proposal means that we will be able to continue operating the systems in place and the migration of data can be undertaken without any additional costs.
- 4.7 The partnership has also arranged several meetings and demonstrations by other software suppliers whom are able to provide alternative solutions.
- 4.8 Discussions have also taken place with other suppliers of CRM and telephony systems directly by this authority alone.
- 4.9 A further demonstration is due to be provided in the coming weeks by a CRM provider who provides a hosted solution that is now being used by another Lancashire local authority.
- 4.10 A decision to change suppliers will result in much higher initial costs as it will be necessary to purchase new licences and arrange for the migration, if possible, of data from the current system.

## 5 RISK ASSESSMENT

### 5.1 *Resources:*

As it seems likely that each local authority will be having an individual solution after the partnership expires, the costs to the authority will be substantially reduced.

If a new system is identified as the preferred solution there will be substantial upfront costs.

The replacement of hardware will be required whichever solution is preferred which will result in some initial costs.

*Technical, Environmental and Legal:*

As the lead authority LCC will deal with the termination of the partnership.

*Equality and Diversity:*

A consistent approach to our customer contact via telephone, email and website will ensure that we deal with all members of the public in an equal manner. The provision of Contact Centre telephony systems and a CRM will enable us to record and monitor how we deal with our customers.

*Political:*

None

*Reputation:*

Continued development of the Contact Centre will provide an enhanced service to our customers and enable us to achieve efficiency savings.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Lancashire Partnership for the provision of SSCC is due to end in November 2011.
- 6.2 It will be necessary for a report to be brought to this Committee in the next cycle outlining the various proposals for a decision on the way forward.

7 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 7.1 Note that the Lancashire Partnership is ending.

HEAD OF REVENUES AND BENEFITS

PF30-11/ME/AC  
25 May 2011