

<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Agenda Item:</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	17 March 2022
<b>Report Title</b>	Review of Revenues and Benefits Document Management System
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
<b>Head of Service</b>	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Zoe Kent, Revenues and Benefits Manager
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Classification</b>	Open
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. To approve the Revenues and Benefits service moving from the Civica Document Management System to Information@Work hosted through Maidstone Borough Council.

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 As part of the review of the Revenues and Benefits Service and the consideration to go into a shared service with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils as a tri-way service, the Document Management System (DMS) used by the Swale Revenues and Benefits team is being reviewed.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to consider whether the service should move to using Northgate's Information@Work, the system used by the Mid Kent Revenues and Benefits Team and corporately by Maidstone Borough Council.
- 1.3 This key decision has not been subject to the 28 days' notice usually provided through the corporate plan. The chairman of the scrutiny committee has been notified of this, in accordance with Rule 20 of the access to information procedure rules. This is due to information being provided at late notice to the Revenues and Benefits Manager from Civica, informing the council of a price increase to the quote for this project from 1 March 2022 and again on 1 April 2022.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The Revenues and Benefits Service have used the Civica DMS since 1990. It is mainly used as a filing system for the documents provided for Business Rates accounts, Council Tax accounts and Housing Benefit claims. The workflow system provided as part of the system is not used.

- 2.2 This section has been redacted.
- 2.3 The shared service project team have reviewed the DMS provided for both Swale and Mid Kent. The software used by Mid Kent is Information@Work (I@W) which is used by a number of services at Maidstone. This reduces the cost for each service as the total number of users is significantly higher. The team have looked at whether it is a better option for Mid Kent Revenues and Benefits to move to Civica or Swale to move to I@W. As Maidstone uses their system corporately it is not viable for them to move to Civica.
- 2.4 The costs of moving to I@W can be found in the table below.\* There will be a cost to Swale moving to I@W however this will be returned after a four-year period. \*This table has been redacted.
- 2.5 There will also be an additional cost of staying with Civica because they will not be supporting the current system after August 2022. Users are being moved onto their cloud system.

### **3 Proposal**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Swale Revenues and Benefits service moves to I@W. Although the implementation costs are high there will be savings after a four-year period. The costs will be met from the Revenues and Benefits reserve.
- 3.2 If Swale does not join the shared service, the DMS can still be hosted through Maidstone and savings will be made in the long-term.
- 3.3 The benefits of changing systems are:
- A cost saving in the long-term.
  - If Swale joins the shared service, it will be simpler for staff to only have one DMS.
  - At present the Civica DMS does not link to Academy the system that is used to assess Housing Benefit claims and set up Council Tax accounts. With I@W the systems can be linked leading to a time saving and a possible reduction in errors being made.
  - There will be one less system for ICT to manage so a time saving.

## 4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Do nothing, this is the simplest option. This is not recommended because the cost of the Civica system will continue to rise, and savings will not be made. If we stay on this system, we will need to move to the cloud by August 2022 or the system will no longer be supported.
- 4.2 Consideration could be given to finding another company that could move the images to I@W for a lesser cost. ICT are aware that there is at least one company that provide this service. This is not recommended because there could be a higher risk of problems occurring with the transfer of personal data to I@W.
- 4.3 Any change could be delayed and reconsidered if the shared service goes ahead in 18 – 24 months' time. This is not recommended because costs will increase during this time.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation has been carried out with Mid Kent ICT and the Mid Kent Procurement teams.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supporting the Council in achieving its priorities. The aim with this project is to make long-term savings, whilst providing a continued service for Swale residents.
Financial, Resource and Property	This cost will be met from the Revenues and Benefits reserves.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Local Government Finance Act 1992 – Council Tax, Local Government Finance Act 1988 – NNDR, Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 we are required to provide a system to store customers' information. We are consulting with the Mid Kent shared procurement team for the procurement requirements for Swale joining the I@W contract.

Crime and Disorder	Not directly applicable.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Not directly applicable.
Health and Wellbeing	Not directly applicable.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Not directly applicable.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Any risks from transferring the data will be reviewed with MKS Audit.
Equality and Diversity	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.
Privacy and Data Protection	Any changes will be discussed with the Data Protection team and Civica and Northgate.

## 7 Appendices

This section has been redacted.