

**29<sup>th</sup> October 2012****Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR JOINT COMMISSIONING, QUALITY  
AND BUSINESS CHANGE****ACCESS TO GOOD INFORMATION AND WEB-BASED INFORMATION  
DIRECTORY****Purpose of the Report**

1. This committee previously considered a report on Fostering Aspirations 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in which it was agreed that £126,000 funding is required for a social care web-based information directory, this report provides further detail of the project and requests approval to progress.

**Information and Advice**

2. A project has been established jointly with corporate communications and adult social care to deliver access to good information throughout the customer journey. The group is also working with Nottingham City, as it would be of benefit to have one system across both. The project was started because citizens of Nottinghamshire, staff within the County Council and also external agencies, have consistently raised the fact that although there are a lot of services available to support people's independence, health and well-being across the County, it is very difficult to know what they are, what they do, who they are for and whether there is a cost. National examples have been considered and learning from these has informed the development of a specification for a local web based information directory.
3. The key objective is to make it easy for people to go to a single place to get the right information at the right time, to help them stay independent, healthy and actively involved in their local services wherever possible. It is important that people can find this information without even having to contact the Council. The focus is on helping people who are able, to navigate through the wide range of services available that can help them, where possible, avoid or delay the need for costly social care services. Some people will need help to access and understand the information and the directory will be used by County Council staff who are a first point of contact, for example, the Council's Customer Service Centre, as well as Health, District Councils the independent and voluntary sector. Staff will be also be able to direct people with higher eligible support needs to the directory, including when advising people who will fund their own care and if

needed, help people to use the site to make choices when planning their care and support.

4. Effective provision of joined up information is a key requirement of '[Think Local, Act Personal](#)' to deliver on personalisation and a leaner, more outcome focussed and outward facing role for the public sector. The Council's role in the provision of effective information and developing a diverse local market with a range of options for people to choose from is further reinforced in the recent White Paper, Caring for our future: reforming care and support<sup>1</sup>, July 2012.
5. A public information directory supports the development of diverse local markets. As more people start to arrange and purchase their own services, both through local authority Direct Payments as well as paying for them their selves, an up-to-date directory will be an important way that:
  - providers can tell people about what they offer
  - the Council can have an overview of the wider range of available provision
  - the Council and providers can find out what services local people want, but they can't find, as the system will include a simple way to do this
6. People choosing to receive a Direct Payment for their care and support, may now select from the same wide range of alternatives as people who fund their own care. This is more diverse in nature and of a greater volume than the range of providers contracted and monitored directly by the Council for people who want or need this. There is a need to develop new ways of sharing information about the quality of this very broad range of services to help people with their choices. Following legal advice on appropriate approaches to this, the design of the directory will therefore include:
  - a simple rating system to enable people who use the services on the site to give feedback on their experience
  - providers who have attained accreditation from a range of different agencies will be able to show this publicly on the site, alongside clear information on the type of checks that have been undertaken.
  - a simple document check that an appropriate level of any relevant requirements have been met e.g. appropriate insurance cover, will be part of registering on the site.
7. A web-based information directory will meet the need to provide universal information advice and guidance and also support more effective use of staff time. Staff will spend less time searching for information, more members of the public and people who use services will be able to search and locate support themselves and if a proportion of people are able to find what they need via the web based system, less people will contact the Customer Service Centre. Providers will be able to directly keep their information on the directory up-to-date. The Customer Service Centre will benefit from having more accurate and

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<sup>1</sup> [Caring for our Future](#): reforming care and support – July 2012.

consistent information available to relay and advise customers; with a reduction in time taken and less duplication.

8. The White Paper, Caring for our Future: reforming care and support, July 2012 sets out the Government's intention to establish a new national information website, to provide a clear and reliable source of information on care and support. This will not duplicate nor detract from the need for information about local services. There will also be a national government allocation of £32.5 million for better local online services which may help to attract funding for Nottinghamshire County Council to continue and develop the web-based information directory in the future. The Government have also committed to work with a range of organisations to develop comparison websites that make it easy for people to give feedback and compare the quality of care providers.
9. Feedback from other areas implementing similar initiatives stressed the need to have a dedicated temporary resource to establish the system successfully. The establishment of a temporary one year commissioning officer post (grade C (£41,434 - £47,106 including on-costs, per annum) is therefore requested. The post will co-ordinate the establishment of the system with the new provider and the Council's IT department and launch the web-based directory with providers, staff and members of the public. Existing public and internal social care information directories will be reviewed, with the aim of having one system.

## **Options Considered**

10. An options appraisal was presented to the Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection's Senior Leadership Team on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2012. The option of not progressing was discounted due to the benefits of a web-based directory as outlined in this report. The following approach was recommended:
  - Preference was to join the partnership contract for the already established Choose My Support directory [www.choosemysupport.org.uk](http://www.choosemysupport.org.uk), once assured that it can meet all the requirements of Nottinghamshire's specification.
  - If the above does not meet the Council's requirements, the specification will go through a competitive tender process to identify a provider to establish the system.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

11. Choose My Support was initially established with capital regional efficiency improvement money via the East Midlands Joint Improvement Partnership. Current partners are Leicester City and Leicestershire County Council. Any Council's joining the contract subsequently benefit from this investment which offset initial implementation costs. The directory has been running for one year and as such has already undergone a number of improvements to the system and process, settling in problems have been resolved and the consortium has already made any changes that they did not foresee when they designed the specification.

12. Choose My Support is a system that is demonstrated to work and has already established credibility in the East Midlands. Initially providers were slow to sign up, but once a critical mass was reached and people were contacting services through the site the benefits could be seen. Numbers are growing steadily, with over 400 providers signed up. Some of the providers will also work across the boundary into Nottinghamshire and will therefore already be on the directory.
13. Nottingham City Council is also considering the system as their preferred option which would promote consistency to local providers and citizens across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The current overall yearly contract price is set until March 2014 and is shared between however many Councils join the partnership. It is therefore a feasible, cost effective option which could deliver in a relatively short time-scale.
14. In the future there may be benefit to extending the directory to other Departments and having a single Corporate Directory for services across the County. Health is also trialling a database, but this is currently accessed by the public only through a 111 non-emergency number, with a focus on medical advice.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Implications for Service Users**

16. A web-based information system will enable people who can, to find out what is available themselves, thus avoiding or delaying the need to come to social care. It will also make it easier for people with greater needs to choose the right services. Staff across a range of agencies will be also be able to access the information and support to people with this if needed.

## **Financial Implications**

17. It is recommended that £126,000 is required to fund the contract for developing and maintaining the web-based directory for two years and the temporary commissioning officer for one year. Is to be funded £50,000 from Social Care Reform Grant and £76,000 from Departmental Reserves. There is potential for future funding for the project highlighted in the White Paper, Caring for our future: reforming care and support, July 2012.

18. The breakdown of funding is as follows:

	<b>Year 1 (2012/13)</b>	<b>Year 2 (2013/14)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Commissioning	11,700	35,500	47,200

Officer			
Mileage	300	1,050	1,350
Initial IT Set Up	5,000	0	5,000
Maintenance	33,000	33,000	66,000
Promotional Activity		6,450	6,450
	<b>50,000</b>	<b>76,000</b>	<b>126,000</b>

### Equality Implications

19. A web-based system aims to provide the most relevant and accurate information in the easiest format possible. Information will be able to be printed off for people without access to a computer. The system will not discriminate and intends to meet needs and encourage participation. Within the project plan steps will be taken to meet the needs of those who cannot access the web based system, including working with the Customer Service Centre and libraries to support members of public.

## **Human Resources Implications**

20. It is recommended a temporary Commissioning Officer be assigned to the web-based directory for one year.

## **Implications for Sustainability and the Environment**

21. An increased use of a web-based system may reduce the use of paper and printed products across the county.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

It is recommended that Members approve:

- 1) The purchase of an appropriate web-based information directory costing up to £77,000.
- 2) The establishment of a temporary 1 fte (37 hours) Commissioning Officer post, Pay Band C, scp 39-44 (£32,800 - £37,206 per annum) for one year with effect from the date of appointment, based in the Joint Commissioning Unit at County Hall and the post be allocated an approved car user status.

## **CAROLINE BARIA**

**Service Director for Joint Commissioning, Quality and Business Change  
Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection**

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## **Constitutional Comments (LMc 18/09/2012)**

22. The Adult Social Care and Health Committee has delegated authority to approve the recommendations in the report.

## **Financial Comments (SC 18/10/2012)**

23. The financial implications are set out in the report.

## **Background Papers**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- a. Caring for our future: reforming care and support – White Paper July 2012  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/07/careandsupportwhitepaper/>

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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