North East Derbyshire District Council

Cabinet

30 July 2014

Proposal to Purchase 'On Course' Pool IT System

Report No: GBXR/14/14/LH of Councillor G Baxter MBE, Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Building a Better Council

This report is public.

Purpose of the Report

- To procure the 'On Course' IT system – the capital cost of which to met on the basis of an 'invest to save' measure with the ongoing license cost to be met from existing revenue budgets.

1   Report Details

1.1   **Background to the proposal**

Although the Council operate an excellent swim scheme in North East Derbyshire, We are currently recognising early signs that we are falling behind with local competitors due largely to the way we administrate our lessons;

- Paper based enrolment, with a cost to stationary, printing and teacher / Swimming Development Officer (SWDO) time.
- Parent enquiry system struggling to cope with enquiries taking up reception and SWDO time.
- Paper based record keeping and registers (data protection risk)
- Reception very busy at enrolment time which results in extra staff being drafted in to cope with demand.
- No facility currently available for online payments on Swimming Lessons (although this will change soon)
- Information gathering on Swimming lessons time consuming (i.e. progression rates, % full etc)
- Losing customers due to lack of time to produce progress reports.

In addition, following the last round of customer consultations it was found that although the majority of customers were happy with the lesson programme, a large number highlighted the need for a better system of communication with customers and updating parents on children's progress through the stages.

Added to this our competitors in the swimming lesson market appear to be moving forward at a faster pace and making greater gains by embracing the latest

technology which not only creates efficiencies for the organisation but also improves the experience for the users. We have seen some customer migration to our competitors to date for this reason, however it is anticipated that the situation will rapidly worsen if we choose not to implement similar measures to ensure we remain current and competitive in this lucrative market.

2   <u>Opportunity</u>

2.1   The licensed, integrated Swim School Management software, **OnCourse**, is a web-based application which allows the easy administration of all facets of course management. Primarily focused towards swimming, the ASA-approved system is a cross-site solution allowing the sharing of data and waiting lists.

2.2   The automatic import of member details into OnCourse from Dimension is a result of full Dimension integration. OnCourse has the ability to implement rules for course bookings such as age restrictions, number limits, and debt management. The product also features the ability to run continuous assessment, manage swim schools, get access to a home portal, record awards or badges, flag medical notes, and much more.

The module consists of three parts:

<u>Base Module</u>

The receptionist who accesses OnCourse can locate a customer using their membership card or number and enroll the customer within seconds. The OnCourse solution allows customization of teaching areas, teachers, class names, levels, waiting lists, times and maximum spaces so all information is at the receptionist's fingertips.

OnCourse is set up to manage direct debit payments through a course membership with Dimension. As long as payments are received, the enrollee can remain on the course. Non-payment, or a countdown to the next payment deadline, is highlighted on the screen for action by a member of staff or for payment via the Home Portal

<u>Home Portal</u>

The Home Portal is a customer-facing website, which allows parents of pupils to log in and view their child's progress, as well as to make future bookings online. The Home Portal web application connects to the internal administration software, making real-time course information available to securely registered users online. The OnCourse Home Portal allows customers to view information on their child including progress, teacher Feedback, student information, course movements and pay for courses online. This greatly reduces the pressure on receptionists to provide information and updates and it allows a customer to re-enroll from home via the web.

<u>Portable Device</u>

The Portable Device is the teacher's part of the system. A mobile web application runs on an iPod touch, used by teachers in lessons to digitally record attendance

and assessments. The iPod touch requires access to a wireless network in order to synchronize with the main OnCourse database.

2.3 **Quick and simple course administration**

With OnCourse, there is no need for paper-based registers and competency check sheets. The teacher works using a durable touch screen device with optional waterproof cover. Connecting and syncing over a secure wireless network, all pupil information is downloaded to the Base Module, allowing the teacher to take registers, assess by individual pupils or assess by a specific skill set. Any pupil with debts, notes or medical conditions is instantly flagged to the teacher.

The system also allows automated reporting: users can receive daily, weekly or monthly spreadsheets containing all of their personalized course data, direct to their email inbox. As the administrator, you can customize the content of the spreadsheet and decide who receives what data and how often. The information is automatically generated from the system in a matter of moments, saving staff hours of administration time.

2.4 **Benefits**

Improved Customer Service

- Customers can keep track on child's progress from their own home, device or mobile.
- Customers will have regular communications via email with automated updates.
- Customers can give feedback on the lessons via email.
- Customers can move their child around the system when prompted.

Teachers Time

- Swim Teachers can instantly update registers and competency sheets with the hand held devise. No delay and slowing down of lessons
- Time saved on answering parent enquiry cards as this is all done through ON COURSE.
- No enrolment period, time saved on moving children, finding classes, badge slips and chasing payments.

Reception

- Reduced queues at enrolment time as payment online available.
- No need for doubling up on reception during enrolment time.

Swim Development Officer Time

- Workload can be focused more on retention of current customers. No enrolment or need for current enquiry system which would free up time.
- Information on lessons instantly available to react quickly to any opportunities or issues.

- Better information available to track teacher performance and highlight any shortfalls.

On Line payments

- Lessons can be paid for online, reducing queue at reception.

Longer Term

- Higher retention rate through improved customer satisfaction.
- Improved image and reputation.
- Revised PI's leading to bigger income generation.
- Swim Teacher job satisfaction leading to improved performance.
- ON COURSE can be used for all courses not just Swimming Lessons.
- ON COURSE can be used for staff training records and competencies.

3   Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1   The current swim scheme generates £414,668 income p.a. safeguarding this current level of income and taking opportunities to increase this level where possible is a key strand of the Leisure Services Subsidy Reduction Plan.

3.2   Approximately 6 hours of admin time per week could be saved across the three Leisure Centres equating to approx. £3k p.a. saving.

3.3   Reduced additional reception hours will be required during enrolment equating to approx. £2k p.a. saving.

3.4   An anticipated increase in new income and retained income in excess of £7k p.a.

3.5   This proposal forms part of NEDDC Leisure Services Subsidy Reduction Plan and the wider corporate Transformation & Growth Strategy designed and developed to meet the challenges and changes to the way in which local authorities are currently funded and the need for the Council to maximize income potential in all areas with an overarching target to become self sustaining.

4   Consultation and Equality Impact

4.1   Substantial communication and consultation with both our I.T. and Data Protection Officer has supported the development of this business case.

4.2   This system will have the ability to assist the department to positively target underrepresented groups within our community and increase the opportunities for people to participate.

5   Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

None – this system is a 'bolt on' to our current bookings and management system for which there is not an alternative.

6   Implications

6.1   The implementation of this system will result in increased sales of leisure course related products and memberships which in turn will increase the income generated through the Council's facilities.

6.2   This equipment post will help to safeguard the Council's current investment in the leisure facilities at Eckington, Dronfield and Sharley Park.

7   Finance and Risk Implications

7.1   Initial outlay would include;

i.   YEAR 1 - £10k for all hardware and software.
ii.   YEAR 2 and subsequent years - £3k (£1k per site for licenses)

7.2   Anticipated net savings/increased income over 5 years of between £33k-£53k approx.

7.3   This system would assist the service to safeguard the existing income associated with Swimming Lessons - £414,668 p.a.

8   Legal Implications including Data Protection

None.

9   Human Resources Implications

The implementation of this system would lead to a review of current working hours in this area which could result in a reduction of hours for some staff members.

10   Recommendations

10.1 Members are asked to approve the procurement of the 'On Course' IT system which has a capital cost of £10,000 for the hardware and software with the financing of the proposal to be met from the 'invest to save' reserve.

10.2 Cabinet are asked to approve the following General Fund revenue expenditure and income budget changes arising from this proposal:-

- Annual Licence Fee £3,000
- Saving in Reception and Administration employee costs £5,000 p.a.
- Increase in Swimming Lesson income of £7,000 per annum.

11   Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to	No

the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	
District Wards Affected	All
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Improving Peoples Health/ High Performing Council

12 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
N/A	
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
N/A	

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