



Confidential - For decision

Title: Replacement of finance system

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Purpose

This paper presents the business case for the replacement of the current Sage finance system.

Recommendations

The Audit and Risk Committee is asked to:

- a) Consider the business case as presented
- b) Consider whether any matters should be further considered by management prior to procurement and purchase

Background

1. This work has progressed over the course of the past year. Initially systems were based on paper records and email communication, a situation that suggested a strong need for modernisation. Over the course of the year, workflow improvements have been achieved using Microsoft 365 applications, and these have been welcomed by the wider organisation. While the work done has been impressive and has made significant efficiency improvements, the flow of data through the organisation stops at the boundary with the finance system, and as such, still leaves scope for further efficiency gains.
2. In November, Azets provided a critical friend review of the work done at that point; their guidance has been responded to in the business case provided. The business case considers three options: maintain the existing system; expand the functionality of the existing system; replace with a new system.



3. We have also followed up on their suggestions for systems to consider and have seen demonstrations of a selection of systems: these, together with indicative costs, are shown on page 13 of the business case.
4. The business case identifies Access Financials as the preferred option, based on considerations of cost and functionality. This choice also offers the potential for future collaboration with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) and with the administration of a future third park, in support of the Scottish Government's Public Sector Reform initiatives.
5. Access is one of the largest international software companies with a UK headquarters. It has grown considerably over the past decade: their revenue is reported to have increased from £33 million in 2012 to £943 million in 2023. Their customer base exceeds 100,000 in number. Their software products are used across the commercial, not for profit and public sectors. Both the company and the Financials product are well developed.

Conclusions

6. Access is a reputable supplier in this market and is available on a government procurement framework. The functionality offered by the Financials product meets our needs, and the software is appropriate for an organisation the size of the Park Authority, offering sufficient room for growth of our activities. Pricing is competitive with other products on the market. The look and feel of the system are user friendly.
7. The Committee is invited to review and comment on the business case at this stage in the evolution of our approach toward replacement of a key business system, and in support of the board's scrutiny role over the management of the Park Authority and delivery of its key functions. The Committee is asked to note that procurement of a revised system is planned by means of a direct award for the Access Financials system through an existing procurement framework agreement.