



Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	8 November 2008
Subject:	Procurement of replacement library management system
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Javed Khan, Director of Community and Cultural Services
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Anjana Patel : Community & Cultural Services
Exempt:	No (Appendix 1 is exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains information relating to commercial information provided by companies responding to tender documents).
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 Spreadsheet of comparative prices - exempt

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the rationale for selecting SirsiDynix Unicorn as the replacement for the Library Service's existing Dynix library management system.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

Agree the sealing of a contract with SirsiDynix to purchase the Unicorn library management system and to agree the purchase of associated hardware and software from other third party suppliers.

Reason: (For recommendation)

The existing library management system (LMS) is over eleven years old and is no longer being developed and updated; a replacement system is required. The Unicorn system meets most functional requirements and presents value for money.

The current Libraries Service Review has reaffirmed the need for an improved LMS to deliver greater electronic access, improved management information and a reduction in manual processing and cataloguing, which will lead to service efficiencies and improved user satisfaction.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

The existing public library management system, Dynix, was installed in 1996. It handles acquisition of library stock, catalogue creation and access, loans, renewals, returns, reservations, statistical records and management information. A character-based system, Dynix has been superseded by Windows-based products, and will not be enhanced further by SirsiDynix. A replacement will assist the Council in achieving corporate priorities 1(customer satisfaction), 8 (increased opportunities for participation in sports and culture) and 11 (improve working and provide value for money). It will also provide some of the essential requirements for the Service Review recommendations on stock procurement and self-service and links to the flagship action for the replacement of Gayton Library.

Current situation

Dynix is used throughout the library service to control the circulation of stock, to create and maintain databases of stock holdings and library users, and to provide a web-based catalogue available 24/7.

Why a change is needed

Although still fully functional, the system cannot handle such enhancements as electronically-transmitted orders, catalogue records that show jacket images, and self-service checking-in and checking-out of stock. In addition, indefinite technical support for Dynix cannot be guaranteed as more of its users migrate to newer products. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), self-service and the potential for use with Radio Frequency Identification triggers (RFID) are all part of the current Service Review recommendations to produce service efficiencies. The self-service options are of particular importance in avoiding increased staff costs for assistance and supervision when transferring a central library (mainly single-floor operation) to a multi-storey layout.

The warranty on the existing Dynix server expires December 2008. It will take up to 12 months to install the replacement LMS and switch to its new server.

As a result of a competitive tender process, SirsiDynix's Unicorn system has emerged as the most suitable replacement for Dynix.

Evaluation Criteria

Experience: SirsiDynix has a large number of customers in public libraries, and has a growing customer base for its Unicorn product. Notably, Hillingdon implemented Unicorn last year, and Westminster earlier this year.

Price: The prices quoted need to be competitive but realistic, for the task to be undertaken. ***See Part 2 appendix 1 listing suppliers and costs***

Functionality: Although very different to the present system in the way in which certain operations are carried out, Unicorn meets the majority of the library service's requirements. The UK Core Specification formed the basis for the specification. Although some elements of the specification are not fully developed as yet, SirsiDynix aim to make them available in the next software release, later this year.

Deliverability of products and services offered: all proposed software components and/or modules must have been in operational use in a UK public library for at least 12 months prior to the date of tender. Kensington & Chelsea Libraries have had Unicorn for several years now, and Bexley Libraries have had it for nearly 2 years. The Housebound Library Service module lacks some functionality but will be further developed in the next 1-2 years. Such developments would become a contractual agreement.

User experience: site visits to UK public library customers and feedback received

Visits to Sutton and Hillingdon Libraries demonstrated the functionality and potential of Unicorn, and indicated the willingness of SirsiDynix to resolve outstanding queries quickly.

Identification of suitably qualified and experienced personnel who will be responsible for the delivery of the contract.

SirsiDynix have a team of experienced and knowledgeable staff with experience in public libraries and in the implementation of systems.

Options considered

1 Do nothing. The consequences of doing nothing include the potential lack of support for a system that is becoming obsolete; and the inability to offer service improvements such as an enhanced web-based catalogue for the public, EDI and self-service. This would mean that some Service Review recommendations on service efficiency would not be achievable.

2 Purchase a replacement system. Five companies bid for the contract, and four were shortlisted: DS, Geac (the company now called Infor), SirsiDynix and Talis.

The functionality of the Geac and Talis systems was felt to be weaker than either DS or SirsiDynix. The high cost of DS's Open Galaxy system, and concerns about the company's reputed slowness to meet customer requirements, were deciding factors in the selection of SirsiDynix's Unicorn system. SirsiDynix has proved a reliable supplier of the library service's existing 'classic' Dynix system, and though Unicorn is still evolving, it was felt that it had more potential than its competitors.

Option recommended and reasons for recommendation

The Unicorn system is recommended as the replacement for the library service's management system. The current system, Dynix, is supported by SirsiDynix, and the relationship between the library service and the company over the last 11 years (first as Ameritech, then Epixtech, Dynix and, for the last 2 years, SirsiDynix) has been excellent. Their technical support has been reliable and thorough during upgrades, and they have been responsive to requests for improvements. They understand the requirements of a busy public library service like Harrow's, and have offered a system that most closely meets Harrow's needs.

In addition, unlike its competitors, Unicorn is an Oracle-based system, which also meets Harrow's corporate IT requirements.

Resources, costs and risks associated with recommendation

Resources:

It is expected that the cost of IT staff time will be contained within current support charges. Library staff time will be managed within existing resources.

Costs:

The new library management system will require the upgrading of 110 PCs, at an approximate cost of £15,000, to cover extra memory and larger screens. Other costs are stated below under Financial implications.

Risks:

There is a risk that the software will lack features to which the staff and public have become accustomed, but it is expected that these will be outweighed by new features such as improved search capabilities and a more customer-friendly interface. Past experience has shown that the supplier has been prompt in resolving problems.

Although the financial position of the company is less healthy than its competitors, the value of this contract is less than 5% of the company's annual turnover, well within the recommended maximum limit of 30%.

It removes the risks associated with the expiry of the warranty on the current Dynix server, as a new server is a necessary part of the replacement LMS (whichever system was purchased).

Staffing/workforce

Impact on staffing is expected to be limited. Later in the project, self-service check-in and check-out will be an alternative to using the library counter at busier branches. This will not necessarily save staff at first, but when the new Central Library opens in early 2010, on more than one floor, an increased level of transactions will be managed without increasing the level of counter staff.

Equalities Impact

The online catalogue provided by Unicorn will be more user-friendly than the present catalogue, and more accessible to visually impaired people. The catalogue will also make it easier for people to select and reserve items without visiting the library.

Improved management information will help the library service match the stock provision more accurately to users' profiles, requirements and usage patterns, deploying resources more appropriately.

Legal comments

The council has conducted an EU compliant procurement exercise and can award the contract to SirsiDynix.

Community Safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998)

No negative impact.

Financial Implications

The capital costs are £161,000 and within the approved capital budget. Revenue costs for the first year are £50,685 and over five years are £222,843.

Revenue costs will be contained within the current budget, since this is a replacement system with similar maintenance costs.

Procurement followed the EU procurement route according to Financial Regulations.

The inclusion of the self-service equipment will enable staff in time to be released for other duties at major libraries or prevent the need for additional staff when moving to a site serving users over several floors. The EDI component should produce efficiencies in stock procurement. These are necessary to meet some cost-saving recommendations of the current service review of the Library Services.

Performance Issues

Current KPI's and likely impact of decision on KPI's

There is a range of library KPIs (including some based upon Public Library Service Standards) in the Cultural Services Block Indicators. All those KPIs likely to be affected by the replacement of the library management system would be affected positively. This will assist the Council in maintaining or improving the Cultural Services block score.

C2c Public Library Service Standard 6 - Number of library visits per 1000 population. Currently 9,045 (meets the standard and exceeds the upper threshold of 8,600).

C4 Active borrowers as a percentage of population. Currently 29.6% (upper threshold of 27.3%)

C8 Resident satisfaction with libraries. Currently 75% (upper threshold of 72%)

C11a Public Library service Standards PLSS5a, 5b and 5c. request supply times in 7 days , 15 days and 30 days. Harrow's ratings (with upper threshold in brackets are): 67% (50%); 77% (70); 93% (85%). Harrow meets the standards.

C14 Public Library Service Standard 7. Satisfaction of library users over 16 years old. Currently this is 90.6% and below the standard of 94%, but above the most recent upper threshold of 87%.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Bharat Jashapara



on behalf of the*
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 03/10/2007.

Name: Stephen Dorrian



on behalf of the*
Monitoring Officer

Date: 16/10/2007

**Delete the words "on behalf of the" if the report is cleared directly by Myfanwy or Hugh.*

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Anu Singh



on behalf of the*
Divisional Director
(Strategy and
Improvement)

Date: 04/10/2007.

**Delete the words "on behalf of the" if the report is cleared directly by Tom Whiting.*

Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Nikki Copleston, Principal Librarian (Stock & Support Services)
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