

North Lanarkshire Council

Report

Education and Families Committee

approval noting

Ref DB/TO'H

Date 25/02/20

Implementation of an Updated Schools Management Information System (SEEMiS)

From Executive Director of Education and Families

Email brownd@northlan.gov.uk

Telephone 01698 302534

Executive Summary

This report provides members with an update on progress and actions taken by the Service in response to the roll out by SEEMiS of their '*Next Generation*' strategy which includes the delivery of updated education management information systems to partner Councils.

Within North Lanarkshire the SEEMiS suite of products are used extensively by both school based and headquarters staff. This project will result in improvements to a number of existing products which will continue to be supported by SEEMiS, coupled with the requirement for the Service to identify and implement alternate systems which are scheduled to be retired by SEEMiS.

This is a significant project for the Service which will be delivered in accordance with the Council's project management, risk management and governance arrangements.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Education and Families Committee:

- (1) Note the content of the report.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority Support all children and young people to realise their full potential

Ambition statement (25) Ensure intelligent use of data and information to support fully evidence based decision making and future planning

1. Background

- 1.1 The development of a generic schools management information system was originally undertaken by in-house staff within Strathclyde Region. The system they developed was called the 'Strathclyde Educational Establishments Management Information System' which has been colloquially and thereafter formally shortened to SEEMiS.
 - 1.2 The SEEMiS suite of modules currently deliver the key management information systems for all establishments and education HQ functions. These systems also support a wide range of functionality including finance and budgeting, music tuition, ASN pupil transport, psychological services case files, coordinated support plans, and pupil pastoral notes. Information and data generated through these systems is used internally and also underpins the production of external statutory returns.
 - 1.3 Following a critical review of existing modules, functionality, resources and future demands/aspirations of Councils, the SEEMiS partnership has approved a new operating model SEEMiS '*Next Generation*' which will result in significant changes to the existing products and systems which are utilised by both school based and headquarters staff.
 - 1.4 In summary, the SEEMiS product is being upgraded to a 'Cloud' based system and as a consequence a number of new modules/functionality will be added to the product, whilst other modules/functionality which are currently available will be retired. Retired products are referred to as legacy applications.
 - 1.5 As a result the Service response to the roll out of SEEMiS '*Next Generation*' can essentially be considered as two distinct workstreams. Firstly the migration and integration of existing and new products which SEEMiS will continue to deliver and support. These Modules are highlighted in Appendix 1. Secondly the identification and implementation of sustainable alternative systems / operational models for modules which are being retired through the legacy process. Appendix 2 highlights SEEMiS modules which are being retired.
 - 1.6 There are a number of staffing and operational considerations that the Service will have to consider and manage during the roll out of this project. These include; staff training, data management and security, local and statutory information requirements and links to wider Service and Council policies/strategies.
 - 1.7 Due to the scope, complexity, and delivery timeline linked to the roll out of SEEMiS '*Next Generation*' the Service is delivering the project in accordance with the Council's project management and risk management guidance, including the establishment of a dedicated team to support the Service throughout the transition.
-

2. Report

2.1 History of the SEEMiS Organisation

- 2.1.1 In 1997 following the disaggregation of Strathclyde Region, the ex-member authorities and thereafter other Scottish authorities entered into a Joint Agency & Funding Agreement to form the stand alone organisation 'SEEMiS'. A further strategic review of

the SEEMiS structure/operations was undertaken by Grant Thornton in 2009 to determine the most appropriate future service delivery model for the organisation going forward.

2.1.2 The outcome of this review was a recommendation that member Councils adopt a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) model incorporated per the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2000, for the purposes of owning and operating SEEMiS. The benefits to Councils of adopting this approach included:-

- Structural & Decision Making Clarity.
- Transparency of Ownership.
- Defined Liability and Reduced Risks.

All 32 Councils subsequently accepted this proposal and entered into a LLP Members Agreement on 22 June 2010. The SEEMiS LLP legal structure remains in place today, with the vast majority of SEEMiS funding being secured from agreed annual member's subscriptions. North Lanarkshire's 2019/20 annual subscription is £0.312m, which equates to a 7% stake in the partnership.

2.2 The Business Case for SEEMiS 'Next Generation'

2.2.1 During their review process SEEMiS identified a number of reasons why the existing product range required to be updated. These include:

- SEEMiS is a mission critical management information system
- Risks attached to use of old and outdated technology
- Growing user dissatisfaction with existing systems
- Heightened aspirations around new technology
- Embracing digital platforms
- Ability to support new national initiatives
- Supporting Council change programmes

2.2.2 For many years SEEMiS has grown and developed on an ad-hoc basis resulting in fragmented applications with multiple interfaces that employ ageing technical solutions. In addition much of the underlying code within SEEMiS is over 15 years old which is expensive and difficult to maintain, and the organisation is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff with the skills/experience to work with this type of outdated technology.

2.2.3 Feedback from user surveys highlighted growing dissatisfaction with the current platform in terms of aligning to new digital platforms, and the reliability and performance of current applications. There is a recognised danger that Councils will move away from SEEMiS provision if the product is not improved and modernised.

2.2.4 SEEMiS was originally designed at a time when there was limited consideration of the internet, mobile applications and the wider connected society. In today's digital age users expect to have an ever increasingly seamless, simple, and customer friendly experience when interacting with applications. SEEMiS aim to achieve these aspirations through the introduction of 'Cloud Based' platforms.

2.3 Benefits of Cloud Based SEEMiS Platforms

- 2.3.1 Applications will be more easily personalised for individual users. In this respect the System will offer more flexibility and be less prescriptive in respect of the interface between schools and local authorities.
- 2.3.2 The applications will be delivered securely over the internet allowing increased accessibility. The system will incorporate additional security measures, for example a 2 step authentication process.
- 2.3.3 The system will incorporate industry standard coding and technology which will provide a more robust, secure and scalable service for all users.
- 2.3.4 There will be an increased ability to integrate with other Council/Partner systems through Application Programming Interfaces (API).
- 2.3.5 The front end user experience for staff will be designed to be uniform across all modules. This will include common terminology and commands, screen design, security, and layout, resulting in reduced training costs and faster user adoption.
- 2.3.6 The system will be able to report and analyse information at a local, regional and national level. To achieve these outcomes the '*Next Generation*' databases will be organised around function rather than individual Council school estate structures.

2.4 Scope/Impact on the Service and Wider Council

- 2.4.1 Having an effective management information system is crucial to the day to day operation of the Service. SEEMiS supports key activities and policies such as Devolved School Management (DSM), assists in the production of statutory information and returns, and is the key tracking and monitoring tool for many school based activities.
- 2.4.2 Within North Lanarkshire the Service has approximately 3,500 users (teaching and office based staff) of SEEMiS who use one or more of the various modules. The most widely used module that is scheduled for retirement is Finance, which has approximately 1,650 users undertaking a variety of tasks.
- 2.4.3 The two core '*Next Generation*' systems will be SEEMiS Schools and SEEMiS Early years. In addition to the functionality available to schools within these applications, SEEMiS will also continue to support the following additional applications until such times as they are incorporated into future phases of the core modules:
- Bullying & Equalities
 - Risk Matrix
 - Latest Pastoral Notes
 - Progress & Achievement (P1 to S3)
 - Tracking and Monitoring (S4 to S6)
 - Wellbeing
- 2.4.5 In terms of the legacy applications the Project Team will undertake options appraisals of alternative solutions and present relevant Business Cases to the Project Board for consideration, approval and implementation.

2.4.6 As well as future system requirements specified by education staff the Project Team are also evaluating how SEEMiS can be integrated into existing and future strategies and policies being led by other Council Services.

2.5 Current and Future Management Actions

2.5.1 The key elements of the Council's Project and Risk Management guidance, have been applied to the project including the establishment of a Project Board, Governance Arrangements, Project Team and Operational Team.

2.5.2 For each area of SEEMiS activity within North Lanarkshire, work has begun to map, analyse and interpret business requirements and needs, through liaison and briefings with relevant officers.

2.5.3 There has been engagement with other Council Services to understand interdependencies and associated project schedules and priorities, such as Digital NL, e-invoicing compliance, and HR work plans.

2.5.4 Within SEEMiS there are established governance structures surrounding the roll out of '*Next Generation*'. This includes a Project Review Board, Operational Management Group, Product and Strategy Group. Initial access and communication with these forums is through the West User Group which includes North Lanarkshire representation. There are also 6 weekly meetings between the SEEMiS NLC Customer Account Manager and the Service.

2.5.5 A number of Local Authority cross working groups have been established to gain business intelligence of alternative solutions being adopted or proposed by other Councils. This information will be considered when evaluating alternative operational models for legacy applications within the Education and Families Service.

2.5.6 There has been a programme of awareness sessions undertaken involving key Service personnel including, the Strategic Leadership Team, Head Teachers and school support staff.

2.5.7 Detailed work undertaken in conjunction with the Council's corporate risk team has been completed. This analysis has identified key business risks and issues which have been referred to the Project Board. These identified risks will be proactively managed throughout the duration of the project.

2.5.8 The Project Team is represented on a number of the Council's multi service working groups. This will help ensure that the delivery of the project is aligned to other important work streams including DigitalNL.

2.5.9 It is recognised that a significant future task is the development and roll out of staff training programmes and guidance materials in advance of the implementation of each new or updated module.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 There are no actions required per the Fairer Scotland duties included in this report.

3.2 There are no Equality Impact Assessments required per the content of this report.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Impact

The Service has previously created an earmarked reserve (£0.279m) to support the costs of the dedicated Project Team over the scheduled 23 month implementation period. In addition future reports to the SEEMiS Project Board will outline the cost and funding options for alternate systems or other on-going revenue costs linked to '*Next Generation*'.

4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

There are no specific HR/Policy/Legislative impacts linked to the content of this report. However, it is acknowledged that there will be a requirement for staff training and guidance to be produced in support of the roll out of the project. There will be on-going communication with staff, trade unions and professional bodies during the project.

4.3 Environmental Impact

There are no specific environmental impacts.

4.4 Risk Impact

The Service has undertaken a detailed assessment of risks and issues linked to this project. Regular reports on project risks and mitigation will be presented to future Project Boards.

5. Measures of success

5.1 There are no measures of success required per the content of this report.

6. Supporting documents

Appendix 1 – '*Next Generation*' SEEMiS and Supporting Applications.

Appendix 2 – Legacy Applications in Retirement.



Derek Brown
Executive Director, Education and Families

SEEMiS Schools	Function & Usage
Organisational Structures	Accommodation, Facilities, Departments/Faculties, Clubs & Activities
Administration & Service	Notification & messaging, Data Feed Management, Single Sign on and Session Management
Student Records	Basic Pupil information, Contacts, Personal details and Data Sharing Consent
Admissions	Student Location Directory, Enrolment and Departure, Applications for Placement and Next session intake planning
School Calendar	Period Structure for timetables, Holidays, Terms & Sessions and School Events
Staff Records	Staff Details, Emergency Contacts, Qualifications, ScotXed data and Work Records (linked to finance)
Attendance	Exclusions, Demographic, Absence Event Management and class registrations
Timetabling	Student Courses, Subject Structure, Resource Allocation, Next session timetabling plan and cover teaching booking
Student Groups & Activities	Includes class structures
User Management & Access Control	Access controls (security) and user account directory

SEEMiS Early Years	Function & Usage
Applications Management	The ability to enter/accept or reject applications and record decisions for placement
Communication	The ability to provide parental communication
Enrolment	The ability to create, edit, view and remove basic details, personal details and emergency contact details
Transition Management	The ability to handle transitions within an authority and cross boundary
Occupancy Management	The ability to manage resources and capacity. The ability to provide and record flexible patterns of attendance and offer additional hours. The ability to cater for Child Minder Capacity.
Invoicing & Financing	The ability to support and manage accurate invoicing
Access & Control	The ability for local authorities to create and manage access permissions
Management Reports	The ability to provide Management Reporting

SEEMiS Supporting Services

Menu	Function & Usage	
Attainment & Achievement	Exam Entries & Results (SQA)	National Testing Framework
	Homework and Monitoring/Marking	Parental Reporting
	CfE Attainment	Extra-Curricular Attainment
Pastoral Care & Wellbeing	Co-ordinated Support Plans and Child Plans	Latest Pastoral Notes
	Child Plans	Significant Event Recording
	Risk Matrix	ASN Records
Statistical Reporting	Census	FOI Reporting
	Business Intelligence	

Application	Function & Usage	Proposed Retiral Date
ASN Intranet Application	(ASN Transport) Supports the management of transport for the ASN estate. Direct feed from Student Records (Click & Go) for pupils to be linked to either a bus or taxi contract. There are approximately 1,880 pupils on transport contracts (1534 external & 530 internal).	29 October 2020
	(Psychological Services Case Files) This system provides case management for all psychological services referrals. The system directly links to a student record to pull through personal detail and contacts and holds information on placements, referrals, social worker involvement, records of needs, consultations, reviews and case notes.	
CSP (Co-ordinated Support Plan)	Partially used by the Service within headquarters to record when: CSP initiated, outcome to proceed and plan issued to parents. The initial request by establishments is via a paper request which is emailed to Headquarters. NLC can on-board the Wellbeing Application which includes the CSP functionality currently carried out within ASN application.	6 July 2020
Latest Pastoral Notes (Access for Early Years Only)	As part of the Migration to a new cloud based platforms, SEEMiS Early Years has been separately funded by the Scottish Government with 1140 Expansion readiness in mind. Therefore this application will now include all staff and pupil functionality which previously crossed over with Click & Go (School MIS). As a result the Latest Pastoral Notes functionality which will exist for SEEMiS schools will not be accessible for Early Years Establishments within the SEEMiS Early Years application.	01 November 2020
Music Tuition (Menu in C&G)	Menu provides support for pupils who engage with the instrumental music service. Within NLC there are currently 2635 pupils taking music tuition. The system is a key reporting tool centrally and also supports the financial recovery of tuition fees from parents.	6 July 2020
eCare Messaging	An automated alert system from Children & Families (MySWIS) direct to establishments SEEMiS Click & Go system. This alert can only be viewed by those staff with the relevant security profile.	6 July 2020
Budget	Used by Financial Solutions in the creation and upload of budgets for school estate and headquarter functionality in support of schools. On average up to 66,000 budget transactions are processed annually.	July 2021
Finance	Budget Monitoring tool which directly links information from Click & Go staff records & budget applications to support Devolved School Management by Head of Establishment. Consolidating budgets, staffing commitments, temporary staff payroll and direct purchasing information. In line with the Scheme of Delegation resources can be re-aligned via budget transfers (virements) in real time. This information is then linked back to the budget application on a 4 weekly basis to allow replication with the Council's financial ledger. Within 2018/19 a total of 15,121 virements were processed, 959 temporary teachers payroll records.	July 2021