

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Direct award of contract to Liquidlogic Limited via CCS RM6259 Vertical Application Solutions Framework for System C support, maintenance and hosting
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Mabu Shaik - Lead Member for Customer Service, Front of House, IT and Performance
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Ian O'Donnell - Executive Director for Corporate Resources - S151 Officer
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Martin Chalmers / Alex Cowen
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Exempt:</b>	No, with the exception of Appendix A which contains exempt information.
<b>Decision Subject to Call In:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix A: Soft market Test Methodology (Part II)

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 The support and maintenance contract for the Council's Liquidlogic (System C) Adults System (LAS) and the Children's Company's Children's System (LCS), Controcc Finance and Early Help Module (EHM) are due to expire on 31 March 2026. This contract has been managed on an annual rolling basis for circa 13 years. In line with good practice, we wish to put in place a stable arrangement with assurance of value for money.
- 1.2 The need to put in place a stable contract is reinforced by the need to move the applications to a hosted platform to support improved resilience and security. *This will be managed through a phased and prioritised programme of works over the next 18 months. The move to a hosted environment is required because current infrastructure hosting the systems is end of life and, if there were not a move to a hosted platform, would need refreshing to ensure compliance with security standards; this is currently a risk within our IT Health Check, which would impact our PSN (Public Service Network) compliance.*
- 1.3 A previous infrastructure refresh for the Liquidlogic suite was completed during Arvato's management of IT services. This required substantial financial investment, dedicated resources, and an 18-month project timeline. Without adopting the proposed hosting contract, the Council would need to repeat this

complex and costly exercise both now and in the future should the refreshed infrastructure in turn go out of support.

- 1.4 Following a soft market testing exercise undertaken in line with procurement best practice, the Council gained an improved understanding of current market capability, delivery models, and indicative cost structures for adult and children's social care systems. The soft market testing did not constitute a competitive process and was not used to determine value for money or to select a supplier. Instead, it informed the Council's assessment of available procurement options and the most appropriate route to market.
- 1.5 Having considered the outcomes of the soft market testing, alongside service continuity requirements, technical dependencies, transition risks, and the need to maintain statutory services without disruption, the recommendation is to directly award a contract to the incumbent supplier, Liquidlogic (Incumbent ), for the continued hosting, support, and maintenance, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the applicable framework.
- 1.6 A contract term of five years, with the option to extend for up to a further two years, is considered proportionate and represents the minimum viable duration to manage risk effectively. This period allows for a phased migration of applications (estimated at up to 18 months), followed by a period of stabilised operation, and subsequently provides sufficient time to plan and, if required, deliver a future competitive procurement and transition to an alternative platform. Any extension would be exercised only where necessary to ensure service continuity and value for money.

#### **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

Approve the direct award of a five-year contract to Liquidlogic Limited from 1 April 2026, with an option to extend for a further two years, via CCS RM6259 Vertical Application Solutions Framework for continued support and maintenance of the Council's Adults System (LAS) and the Children's Company's Children's System (LCS), Controcc Finance and Early Help Module (EHM), along with the hosting of the systems in their entirety. The total cost of the seven-year contract extension is estimated at £3,113k.

#### **Reason:**

1. Soft market testing was undertaken via CCS Vertical Application Solutions Framework (RM6259) To inform the council understanding of the current market including supplier capability delivery models, indicative implementation approaches transition timescales, and high-level cost drivers for adult and children's social care systems. The soft market testing did not constitute a competitive procurement process and was not used to evaluate suppliers, determine value for money, or select a preferred supplier. Instead, it was used to inform the Council's options appraisal and procurement strategy. The outcomes of the soft market testing, considered alongside internal technical assessments and service continuity requirements, highlighted that alternative suppliers would require significant system

replacement activity, including the redevelopment of interfaces, redesign of workflows, data migration, dual running of systems, and extensive staff retraining. These activities would introduce substantial delivery risk, extended implementation timescales, and additional cost, particularly given the Council's reliance on these systems to deliver statutory adult and children's social care services.

2. The incumbent supplier, Liquid logic Limited, has fully embedded integrations with the Council's existing systems and a detailed understanding of the Council's operating environment, data structures, and service pressures. Retaining the incumbent avoids the need for large-scale system reconfiguration and reduces the risk of service disruption, while enabling continuity of established operational and technical arrangements. Significant investment has been made over the past 18 years in configuring system forms, templates, workflows, and integrations with internal and external systems. A move to an alternative solution would result in the loss of this investment and require substantial redevelopment effort.
3. A desktop assessment was undertaken to understand the likely resourcing and delivery costs associated with a full system replacement. Based on indicative roles and delivery approaches identified through market engagement, a specialist project team would be required for an estimated 18-to-24-month implementation period, at an estimated cost of approximately £1m per annum, equating to £1.5m to £2m over the lifecycle of the project. This estimate excludes additional costs associated with system integrations, dual running, and service transition, which would further increase overall expenditure and risk.
4. Following lessons learned from previous operational changes, a strengthened governance framework has been established to ensure appropriate controls are maintained when changes are introduced. Continuation with the incumbent supplier enables these governance arrangements to be maintained and embedded within the new contract. Taking account of service continuity, technical dependency, transition risk, proportionality of cost, and the need to maintain stable delivery of statutory services, a direct award via the CCS RM6259 framework is considered the most appropriate and proportionate procurement approach at this time.

## **Commissioner Review**

*"The Council needs to ensure that it is confident in its analysis and evidence on the legal tests; in that competition is absent for financial, business continuity, technical and logistical reasons. In addition, that a reasonable and justifiable conclusion has been reached for a direct award, relying on the exemption under Regulation 32 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and internal procurement rules, and that the best interest of the Council is being secured.*

*Commissioners are content for this report to be considered."*

### **2.1 Introductory paragraph**

Adult Social Care & Slough Children First currently use the System C Liquidlogic Adult System (LAS), Liquidlogic Children's System (LCS), Early Help Module (EHM) and Controcc Finance Module, including their associated modules and portals which are business critical systems for case management, record keeping, data analytics and reporting.

These systems enable Slough Borough Council & Slough Children First (SBC & SCF) to meet statutory duties across Adults and Children. A single shared database for the children and early help management systems is a key requirement to allow a shared record per subject to pass between these systems and enable professionals to view the entire support a child and their family receives.

Additionally, the Council would like the future option to incorporate an education module to allow a joined-up case records between children and adult services and therefore the potential to allow a single record to follow a child into adult social care services (subject to future procurement process/decision). This was tested through the soft market testing. This would at the stage of the re-tendering of the education system and would require a separate business case along with funding.

SBC has invested via the internal Systems Support Team resource to create 'bespoke' pathways and forms within these systems, maximising applicability to social care practice in Slough. In addition, SBC has invested in developing data and intelligence reports, most recently using Power BI, linking the data exports from these systems to inform strategic planning and commissioning activity.

There are five main contracts with Liquidlogic to support and maintain these systems, and numerous smaller contracts for more recent add-ons. The five main contracts are co-terminus on 31 March 2026.

A procurement exercise is required to re-procure the licensing support and maintenance services for the existing case management systems to ensure that Slough Borough Council can continue to meet statutory obligations and is compliant with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and internal procurement rules.

## **2.2 Options considered**

### **1. Do Nothing:**

This is not a viable option. Allowing the current contracts to lapse would leave the Council without valid support and maintenance arrangements for several business-critical systems, creating significant operational, financial and statutory risks. The underlying technical infrastructure is end-of-life and unsupported. Failure to address Hosting and support requirement would expose the Council to increased cyber-security risks, jeopardies PSN compliance and could result in loss of access to national systems such as DWP. This option would also severely affect business continuity across Adults and Children's Social Care.

### **2. Competitive Procurement**

A full competitive procurement exercise was not considered appropriate at this stage due to the complexity and criticality of the Council's existing Liquidlogic (System C) landscape, which has been developed, configured, and embedded over an 18-year period. Given the scale of this investment and the reliance of statutory services on the system, it was necessary first to understand whether the market could realistically offer a viable alternative without introducing disproportionate cost, risk, or service disruption.

To inform this assessment, the Council undertook a structured soft market testing exercise through the CCS Vertical Application Solutions Framework (RM6259). The purpose of this engagement was to develop an understanding of market capability,

delivery approaches, indicative implementation timescales, and high-level cost drivers. The soft market testing did not constitute a competitive procurement and was not used to determine value for money or to select a supplier. The market engagement indicated that, while alternative systems are available, no solution could meet the Council's combined Adults, Children's, Early Help, and Finance requirements without substantial redevelopment. Suppliers highlighted that migration from the existing environment would require extensive system reconfiguration, significant integration activity, data migration, and a specialist project team operating over an estimated 18-to-24-month period. This approach would introduce high delivery risk, place significant financial and resource pressures on the Council, and would not clearly demonstrate improved outcomes or proportional whole-life cost benefits.

### **3. Direct award via CCS RM6259 Vertical Application Solutions Framework**

This is most pragmatic option as it offers the strongest balance of value, quality, risk and deliverability. The soft market exercise confirmed that the incumbent supplier remains the only provider capable of meeting the Council's needs without significant redesign or service disruption. A direct award enables:

- Continuity of a fully configured mature systems with established integrations
- Migration to a secure hosted platform, addressing infrastructure end-of-life risks
- Consolidation of multiple contracts into a single agreement, reducing administrative burden
- Retention of existing user knowledge processes and reporting capability
- Avoidance of substantial implementation and migration costs
- Lowest overall whole life cost and least operational risk

This route therefore represents the Most Economically Advantageous Option for the Council

#### **The consolidated contract will:**

- Improve contract management arrangements, along with a reduction in effort.
- Facilitate future integrations between adult, children, and education case management systems
- Join up prioritisation of development activity

Allow for supplier management efficiencies and collaborative contract management

## Options, Advantages & Risks

<b>Option</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Risks</b>
1: Do Nothing	None – This is not an option.	<p>This is not an option.</p> <p>These systems are critical to the Council as these are the primary Social Care Case Management systems for both Adults and Children.</p> <p>A new contract must be established via a PCR 2015 compliant route.</p>
<p><b>2a: Consolidated contract approach to current supplier-</b> To award a contract for an initial period of 5 years, with an extension option for a further 2 years(in annual increments), with Liquidlogic Ltd for the Adults and Children's Social Care Case Management and Finance Systems.</p> <p>This will be via a compliant Direct Award through the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Vertical Application Solutions Framework Agreement (RM6259) – <b>(Recommended Option)</b></p>	<p>Consolidated contract approach to leverage economies of scale, technical interoperability, and resource / contract management efficiencies.</p> <p>The internal appetite is to continue with the incumbent systems. This represents best VFM as will remove the risk of transition, change and cost, which would have resulted in significant resource implications.</p>	<p>Potential risk of challenge from other providers.</p> <p>This risk is mitigated by undertaking a procurement process which is compliant with the Framework Agreements contract award protocol.</p>

<p><b>2b: Consolidated contract approach</b> –new supplier To undertake a further competition exercise for the Adults and Children’s Social Care Case Management and Finance Systems.</p> <p>This would be via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Vertical Application Solutions Framework Agreement (RM6259) – Lot 2 Education, Community Health and Social Care Solutions</p>	<p>Consolidated contract approach to leverage economies of scale, technical interoperability, and resource / contract management efficiencies.</p>	<p>Risk of change – A potential new supplier would require a significant time to implement a new system (including migrating data and business change).</p> <p>Cost of change – There would be significant duplication of costs in the short term as parallel running of systems would be required. Any delays in implementation would then have an intensified impact.</p> <p>Resource Implications - There would be significant resource implications including a project team to support delivery of the system. Training would then have to be rolled out to users.</p>
<p><b>3a: Continue with multiple separate contracts</b> - existing supplier</p> <p>To award multiple separate contracts with Liquidlogic Ltd for the Adults and Children’s Social Care Case Management and Finance Systems.</p> <p>This will be via a compliant Direct Award through the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Vertical Application Solutions Framework Agreement (RM6259) – Lot 2 Education,</p>	<p>A continuation of the Council’s incumbent systems, removing the risk of transition and change, which would have included significant resource implications.</p>	<p>Disjointed approach not leveraging economies of scale and resource / contract management efficiencies.</p>

Community Health and Social Care Solutions.		
<p><b>3b: Continue with multiple separate contracts- new supplier</b></p> <p>To undertake multiple further competition exercises for the Adults and Children's Social Care Management and Finance Systems.</p> <p>This would be via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Vertical Application Solutions Framework Agreement (RM6259) – Lot 2 Education, Community Health and Social Care Solutions.</p>	<p>A further competition approach could leverage economies of scale.</p> <p>Reduce reliance on a single supplier.</p>	<p>This would be the most resource intensive approach.</p> <p>Risk of change – A potential new supplier would require a significant time to implement a new system (including migrating data).</p> <p>Cost of change – There would be significant duplication of costs in the short term as parallel running of systems would be required. Any delays in implementation would then have an intensified impact.</p> <p>Resource Implications - There would be significant resource implications including a project team to support delivery of the system. Training would then have to be rolled out to users.</p>

### **Route to Market:**

Based on the outcomes of the soft market test, the Council will proceed with a direct award through the CCS RM6259 Vertical Application Solutions Framework. This route is compliant, reduces procurement timescales, and is specifically designed for situations where an incumbent supplier is demonstrably the only provider capable of meeting the authority's technical, functional and integration requirements. Using the framework's direct award mechanism ensures continuity of service, minimises transition risk, and provides the most efficient and cost-effective route to secure the required support, maintenance and hosting services.

### **3 Background**

Liquidlogic is the core casework system supporting social care for both adults and children. It is currently hosted on-premise so that the council is responsible for carrying out application updates and also upgrades to the operating system of the 22 servers on which it is hosted.

Upgrades to the application are carried out by Council staff, working with the supplier out of hours, requiring overtime working.

The council is also responsible for maintaining and upgrading the operating system of the servers on which the application is hosted. Operating system upgrade, as explored in this case, is a significant undertaking.

Database administration of the application is also carried out by Council staff, equating to 1 FTE.

Change is urgent because the operating system on which the application is hosted is beyond end of life and therefore poses a security vulnerability. This creates both a direct cyber risk and is also risk to our Public Sector Network accreditation, which is a requirement for connections to wider government systems such as DWP.

More strategically, a move to cloud hosting, which would be in line with the Digital & ICT Modernisation budget agreed in 2022, would reduce risks associated with security and service by transferring responsibility for system management to the supplier (which can bring to bear the effectiveness and economic benefits of scale and specialism). In the longer term, once a critical mass of applications has been migrated, there is the potential to the facility and personnel costs of in-house staffing.

Finally, for technical reasons, a move to the cloud-based solution will obviate the need for users to use a virtual desktop (or “ultra-thin client”) to access social care documents held in a legacy document management system, leading to a saving.

#### **Liquidlogic Adults System Overview:**

- 3.1 The Liquidlogic Adults System is the main case management system for Adults Social Care. It has comprehensive functionality to enable the management of contacts, referrals, assessments, reablement plans care commissioning, personal budgets, self-funders, safeguarding, DOLS, provider management, financial management and assessment. LAS is also the main depository for all statutory reporting for Adult Social Care.
- 3.2 LAS links to several integrated software modules including OCC financial management system, provider management, self-service portal, and integration with health systems.
- 3.3 LAS is a critical application ensuring that SBC can deliver statutory services to the residents of Slough. LAS is also the main information repository for all annual statutory reporting for adult social care. There is no alternative provision to for the LAS system.

#### **4 Liquidlogic Children System Overview:**

- 4.1 The Liquidlogic Children's System is a case management system that supports all aspects of social work with children and record keeping. This includes children in need, looked after children, adoption, and child protection cases. LCS is also the main depository for all statutory reporting information for children's social care.

- 4.2 LCS links to several integrated software modules including: the Early Help system, Groupwork, OCC financial management application, self-service portals, integration with Health and Education systems.
- 4.3 LCS is a critical application ensuring that SBC and Slough Children First can deliver statutory services to the residents of Slough. LCS is also the main information repository for all annual statutory reporting for Children's social care. There is no alternative provision to for the LCS system.

## **5 Early Help Module Overview:**

- 5.1 The Early Help system provides a case management and recording facility for children and families that do not reach the social care thresholds but require support and attention. It is fully integrated with the LCS system with a shared database to support enhanced business intelligence and information sharing. EHM is used by a range of professionals and services within and outside of the Council.
- 5.2 EHM includes the recording of the common assessment framework including request consent and security. The system integration with LCS allows children, in and out of social care, to be electronically escalated and referred into social care. It allows teams of professionals to be set up around a child across agencies and record all their intervention and activities on a common case management system.

## **6 Controcc Finance Module Overview:**

- 6.1 Controcc Adults reduces the administration of contracts and the payments processing required to manage payments to adult's social care providers; managing direct payments; financially assessing and invoicing clients for the care they have received; and invoicing third parties (including health and individuals) for their contributions. The system includes advanced functionality, including managing deferred payment agreements and managing contracts (including block contracts).
- 6.2 In addition to the Liquidlogic Adult Social Care Case Management System (LAS), Slough Borough Council purchases a finance module (Controcc) which is fully integrated with LAS and SBC's Corporate Finance System, Unit4 Business World (U4BW). Controcc automates payments, collects contributions, and supports adult social care finance teams to manage contracts and budgets.

## **7 Singleview Module Overview:**

- 7.1 Liquidlogic SingleView brings data together from a number of agencies to provide a read-only, holistic view of an individual all in one place. The SingleView interface can be launched from a hyperlink or icon within core case management systems such as the Liquidlogic Adults' System (LAS), Liquidlogic Children's System (LCS), and Early Help Module (EHM).
- 7.2 Liquidlogic SingleView also provides proactive alerts and intelligence from multiple agencies. For example, a change of address, contact information, changes in education or health that you were unaware of etc. - all discrepancies are highlighted. The information drawn from the underlying systems is also customer definable. The information displayed to individual practitioners is defined by their security profile.

## 8. Implications of the Recommendation

### 8.1 Financial implications

8.1.1 The total cost of the seven-year contract extension is estimated at £3,113k. Figures for the final two years (i.e. the extension period) are subject to future discussion with the supplier.

This cost is split over the 5 years as follow:

Year	01/04/2026 £000	01/04/2027 £000	01/04/2028 £000	01/04/2029 £000	01/04/2030 £000	Estimated 01/04/2031 £000	Estimated 01/04/2032 £000
Annual cost	406	419	431	444	457	471	485

The annual cost for 2026/27 will be £406k compared to an equivalent cost for 2025/26 of £270k. This leads to an additional cost of £136k. The cost will be met from existing DDaT budgets, with the annual uplift built into inflation assumptions in the 2026/27 budget and MTFS.

In addition, Professional Services for Planning, Implementation & Go-Live will amount to £58k. This was reflected in the “Progress Update - Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30” report to December Cabinet, (then estimated at £64k).

### 8.2 Legal implications

8.2.1 The CCS RM6259 Vertical Application Solutions Framework is accessible to local authorities and has been established following a procurement process conducted in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

8.2.2 The Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) state that framework agreements that have been established by other public sector bodies that are accessible to the Council must be used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the relevant framework agreement.

8.2.3 The authority to procure through a framework must follow the authorisation routes set out in the Application and Authorisation Table in the CPRs. For contracts with a total value of £500,000 or above, approval to award must be obtained by a Cabinet decision.

### 8.3 Risk management implications

8.3.1 There will be no access to Liquidlogic expertise to support LAS, LCS and EHM after 31.03.26 which could affect the Council and Slough Children First ability to deliver statutory services relating to both Children and Adult Social Care services.

8.3.2 The Council and Slough Children First could fail to comply with changes in legislation and be unable to deliver accurate statutory reporting for both Adult and Children's Social Care. If regulations within LAS, LCS and EHM are not updated, there is a high risk of reputational damage if standards of practice are not met.

8.3.3 A lack of supplier support for staff and in the ongoing development of LAS, LCS and EHM could result in a negative rating for the Council and Slough Children First in any future inspections of both Children's and Adult services.

#### 8.3.4 Risk & Mitigations for proposed option:

Risk	Mitigation
Loss of service	System kept up to date; UK hosting; reviewed by security partner
Data not being transferred properly	Parallel running; phased approach; close work with the business; UAT processes
Cloud service not being secured	Security updates; UK hosting; review by security partner; moving to hosted system improves security posture
GDPR compliance	Security partner review; maintaining system updates to ensure compliance
Loss of access to service during transition	Parallel running; phased approach; structured UAT; close business collaboration
Loss of functionality	Parallel running; phased implementation; UAT and business alignment

#### 8.4 *Environmental implications*

8.4.1 None

#### 8.5 *Equality implications*

8.5.1 None

#### 8.6 *Corporate Parenting Implications*

8.6.1 None

#### 8.7 *Procurement implications*

3. 8.7.1 This is a direct award from the CCS RM6259 Vertical Application Solutions Framework. Direct award is permitted under the rules of the framework if the buyer's Contract Procedure Rules are followed. These require Cabinet approval. The justification of the procurement route is set out in sections 2 and 3 of this report.

#### 8.8 *Workforce implications*

8.8.1 None

#### 8.9 *Property implications*

8.9.1 None

## **9. Background Papers**

None