



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

## DECISION BOOK

**Issue: 604      Date: 25 JUNE 2020**

Decisions set out in the book have been made under delegated powers by the Chief Executive, Executive Directors or the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, in consultation either with the relevant committee or Lead Councillor.

The Decision Book process has been altered to suspend the current Councillors' call-in arrangements within the 10-day period after its publication and replace it with the ability during that period for three Councillors to request a retrospective review of the decision in writing to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

The decision book can be accessed on the Council's website - [www.reading.gov.uk/decisionbooks](http://www.reading.gov.uk/decisionbooks).

The officer reports accompanying the decisions are attached.

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## DECISION BOOK - ISSUE 604 - 25 JUNE 2020

### 1. NEW DIRECTIONS COLLEGE - LEARNER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM/DATABASE

<u>DECISION</u>	<u>LEAD COUNCILLOR(S)</u>	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
1. NEW DIRECTIONS COLLEGE - LEARNER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM/DATABASE	COUNCILLOR PEARCE	BOROUGHWIDE	1

This report sets out the decision to award a contract to supply a Learner Management System and database via the KCS procurement framework.

This report is being published in the interest of transparency.

The contract awarded to Capita is for 3 years. It is expected to commence in July 2020. The total contract value is £227k.

It is the decision of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education to award a service contract to Capita for the provision of a database (Unit E) for the purposes of completing Adult Education Board (AEB) funding returns.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR ASHLEY PEARCE		
DATE:	25 JUNE 2020		
TITLE:	NEW DIRECTIONS COLLEGE - LEARNER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM/DATABASE		
SERVICE:	NEW DIRECTIONS COLLEGE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the decision to award a contract to supply a Learner Management System and database via the KCS procurement framework.
- 1.2 This report is being published in the interest of transparency.
- 1.3 The contract awarded to Capita is for 3 years. It is expected to commence in July 2020. The total contract value is £227k.
- 1.4 Appendix 1 - *Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding allocation for 2020-21.*  
Appendix 2 - Anonymised evaluation scoring.

#### 2. DECISION

- 2.1 It is the decision of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education to award a service contract to Capita for the provision of a database (Unit E) for the purposes of completing Adult Education Board (AEB) funding returns.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council receives an AEB grant from the Department of Education administered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. New Directions College is the service responsible for the delivery of this contract.
- 3.2 Contractual requirements include the completion of monthly Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data and funding returns to the ESFA. The returns report participation, activity and calculate formula funding.

3.3 The ILR specification i.e. what data the College collects is specified by the ESFA.

#### 4. THE DECISION

##### 4.1 Current Position:

4.1.1 New Directions College has used the same database (TERMS, provided by West March Systems (WMS)) for over 16 years. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy allocates £90k (revenue) budget to the provision of a database for the purposes of completing Adult Education Budget funding returns.

4.1.2 The College is unable to routinely and easily access data and reports; this could be resolved with workflow systems which could provide routine monitoring information without further intervention e.g. once we have completed enrolment, we should produce a summary of fee income and be have a forecast of formula funding.

4.1.3 Staff require a logical system with a standard look and feel and access to a range of training materials that can be accessed remotely. Different staff require different access points e.g. tutors require online registers so that attendance data is updated in real time; with access to contact information so they can follow-up when learners do not attend.

4.1.4 The College's Senior Leadership Team have experience of at least four other databases in Adult Education settings and believe that a new system will alleviate many of these issues and frustrations and better equip staff to undertake their duties more easily and allow managers to drive performance improvement and efficiency gains.

##### 4.2 Options Proposed:

4.2.1 Pellcomp, Capita and Tribal were recommended by other local authorities therefore we invited the 3 of suppliers to provide competitive quotes and demonstrate their software (Soft market test) during half-term (W/C 17th February 2020) so that we could evaluate which one would best suit our needs and comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The evaluation criteria included:

- Cost
- Hosting and business continuity
- Online enrolment
- Website hosting
- Tutor interface
- Accessibility for different devices
- Tools for dealing with ILR errors inc bulk changes
- GUI - ease of use
- Monitoring systems - dashboards/oversight mechanisms at class and aggregate levels/tools to identify learners at risk of not achieving
- Systems integration with Awarding bodies/ULNs/e-portfolio - Currently PIVOT and Learning Assistant (City and Guilds) and initial assessment (BKSB) - avoid duplicate data entry
- Reporting - ease of use/custom e.g. Benchmarking data
- Training and reference materials

- Support during Ofsted inspection
- Data entry options - scan and upload? Direct data entry for sub-contractors
- In built text messaging so we can contact groups of learners quickly e.g. classes cancelled
- Facility to record discretionary learner support fund - does this meet ESFA audit requirements?
- In built in postcode verification.
- Dynamic system which is updated when ESFA rule changes. Are old reports/templates removed/hidden when no longer in-use?
- Online payments/virtual till.

#### 4.3 Other Options Considered:

4.3.1 The marketplace is limited. Based on knowledge from 150 local authority Adult Education services (HOLEX network) the marketplace consists of just 7 providers:

Provider	Product	Notes
West March Systems.	TERMS	Current Provider
Pellcomp	PICS	Recommended by other Local Authorities. Invited to Quote.
Capita	Unit E	Recommended by other Local Authorities. Invited to Quote.
Tribal	EBS/Maytas	Recommended by other Local Authorities. Invited to Quote. Maytas was developed for work based learning.
Monterpoint	Learnertrack	Very limited reporting. No online enrolment.
Cognisoft	YETI	Used previously on Troubled Families phase 1 project work - encountered reliability issues. Likely unsuitable for all AEB activities.
Oneadvanced	Prosolution	Mostly FE Customer base, high cost.

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 This decision is in line with the overall direction of the Council; it contributes towards 3 Corporate Plan priorities:

- Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living;
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy; and
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

5.2 The decision will help to facilitate more cost efficient, effective and sustainable working practices.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This decision supports the Council's objectives to work digitally by default therefore reducing consumption of consumables.

6.2 The database will also help to facilitate increased remote working; potentially reducing unnecessary travel.

## 7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Is not relevant. This decision relates to compliance with a contractual requirement.

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision.

8.2 The database will facilitate the analysis of AEB funded educational participation and achievements by those protected characteristics set out in the ILR specification. This will aid the service to dispense its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## 9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Contract Procurement Regulation 9 provides authority for Directors to award contracts up to £500k.

9.2 Contractual notice has been given to West March Systems in order to comply with 90-day terms.

## 10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

### 10.1 Revenue Implications

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
Current Expenditure	90	90	90
Proposed Expenditure	140.5	42.7	43.8
Net Cost(+)/saving (-)	50.5	-47.3	-46.2

The net cost of the decision can be funded from within the existing New Directions College (3340) service budget. One off implementation costs are £78k.

### 10.2 Value for Money (VFM)

Capita's UNIT E was the cheapest of the 3 quotes; that could fully-deliver our service specification. Should the council review it's hosting costs and rationalise this that component is £34-35k per annum.

### 10.3 Risk Assessment.

AEB funding is subject to the Comprehensive Spending Review which takes place every 3 years therefore we have opted for a 3-year contract; with an expectation that it will continue to roll forward. Whilst unlikely; the ESFA could cease funding therefore we will seek provision to terminate early on that basis.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 The Education and Skills Funding Contract 2020-21 Version 1.

11.2 The ILR Specification is available at:  
<https://guidance.submitlearnerdatabeta.fasst.org.uk/ilr>



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

UKPRN: 10005398

# ESFA funded adult education budget for 2020 to 2021

26 March 2020 version 1

## Total 2020 to 2021 allocation

**£1,265,805**

## ESFA funded adult education budget grant

August 2020 to March 2021	£790,875
April 2021 to July 2021	£474,930

## How your ESFA funded adult education budget grant is broken down

19 to 24 traineeships allocation including learner support	£0
Adult skills allocation	£576,735
Community learning allocation	£689,070
Illustrative continuing learners in newly devolved areas	£0
<b>Total ESFA funded adult education budget grant</b>	<b>£1,265,805</b>

## Appendix 2 - Anonymised Evaluation Criteria

Scoring ranged from 0 - No information offered / not relevant, 1 - Less than required or offers little relevance, 2 - Some relevance but not acceptable, 3 - Acceptable answer / Meets the requirements, 4 - Better than acceptable / greater than required and 5 - Exceptional

The scoring panel consisted of the College's Principal and Assistant Principal - Business Support and a Technical Consultant. Further College staff were present to have an opportunity to ask about specific areas of functionality.

1	· Cost	11	10	7
2	· Hosting and business continuity	11	6	10
3	· Online enrolment	13	2	11
4	· Website hosting	14	7	8
5	· Tutor interface	13	7	10
6	· The solution should allow BYO secure access for tutors and others that are not provided with ND supplied devices	12	7	10
7	· Tools for dealing with ILR errors inc bulk changes	12	5	9
8	· GUI – ease of use	12	3	10
9	· Monitoring systems – dashboards/oversight mechanisms at class and aggregate levels/tools to identify learners at risk of not achieving	13	5	9
10	· Systems integration with Awarding bodies/ULNs/e-portfolio – Currently PIVOT and Learning Assistant (City and Guilds) and initial assessment (BKSB) – avoid duplicate data entry	9	6	9
11	· Reporting – ease of use/custom e.g. Benchmarking data	14	7	9
12	· Training and reference materials	12	6	9
13	· Support during Ofsted inspection	11	6	4
14	· Data entry options – scan and upload? Direct data entry for sub-contractors	11	4	2
15	· In built text messaging so we can contact groups of learners quickly e.g. classes cancelled	12	10	10
16	· Facility to record discretionary learner support fund – does this meet ESFA audit requirements?	12	4	10
17	· In built in postcode verification.	12	4	10
18	· Dynamic system which is updated when ESFA rule changes. Are old reports/templates removed/hidden when no longer in-use?	8	8	9
19	· Online payments/virtual till.	8	0	10
20				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>166</b>