

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CABINET MEMBER**

REGIONAL EMARKETPLACE FOR ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

- 1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**
 - 1.1 To update the Cabinet Member on the council's participation in the regional eMarketplace procurement project.
 - 1.2 To seek the Cabinet Member's endorsement for the council to opt into the deployment of the eMarketplace for North Lincolnshire from Spring 2012.

- 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**
 - 2.1 The eMarketplace is a leading edge technology solution that will significantly contribute to establishing an improved local care and support market. It will give more choice to those who need care and support. The proposed solution will be part of the council's response to the challenges of personalisation, demographic change and the future demand for care and support services.
 - 2.2 The eMarketplace will be open to people seeking care and support in addition to their carers and those who are working with individuals to help them find care and support solutions. It will provide shop windows for providers to advertise their services in addition to providing advice and information about a range of community based activities to help maintain people's health, well-being and independence.
 - 2.3 Doncaster MBC, on behalf of the Yorkshire and Humber Association of Directors of Adults Social Services, has led the procurement exercise. North Lincolnshire Council officers have been fully involved in shaping the project and in selecting the preferred supplier.
 - 2.4 Following a procurement process, which attracted a large number of bidders, a preferred supplier, 'Shop4Support 'has been chosen. The procurement included demonstrations to officer and service user groups and a thorough examination of technical, financial and functional aspects of the proposal by all participating councils.
 - 2.5 The eMarketplace will stretch across most councils in the region and offers the potential of attracting a critical mass of suppliers who can trade across council boundaries. It is anticipated that in turn, this will attract potential customers to the site to browse and to purchase the

care and support they need. Suppliers will be able to simply and effectively display what they have to offer in all the council areas they choose. The Shop4Support solution will allow also local branding as the local site will be accessed via the North Lincolnshire Council website.

2.6 If the council opts in to the project we would be able to go live by next Spring.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 The council formally opts into the regional deployment of the Shop4Support eMarketplace leading to deployment of a North Lincolnshire version in early 2012.

3.2 The council ends its participation in this regional collaborative project.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 If the council formally opts into the development of the Shop4Support eMarketplace solution, leading to deployment of a North Lincolnshire version in early 2012, this will mean: -

- the council continues to take part in a nationally significant project that promises important benefits for local people at no set up cost and at no annual maintenance cost;
- the diversification of the local care and support market with the natural benefits of competition on choice, quality and price;
- there is a source of locally relevant information for people who are supported by the council and for people who may want to use the information to access support without the help of the council to do so;
- there is a local focus on the web for customers, providers, volunteers and third sector organisations which may offer a foundation for further developments and initiatives.

4.2 If the council does not participate in the regional project:

- people in North Lincolnshire would not benefit from the regionally allocated funding that will be used to buy the eMarketplace;
- entry costs to the project after this initial offer will not be subsidised by the regional funding;
- to procure a bespoke solution just for North Lincolnshire would be more expensive and carries the risk of insufficient range and quality of suppliers to attract sufficient people to use the site;
- the development of a vibrant marketplace for customers and businesses could be hindered which will adversely impact on

the ability to ensure that people have a range of choice and control over the care and support they receive;

- any privately developed web based solutions could not be influenced by the council and may not have adequate quality, fair trading and safeguarding controls.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 *Financial implications*

5.1.1 The £500,000 regional funding secured for the joint procurement of the eMarketplace will cover the purchase and initial set up costs for all participating councils. There will be no additional cost to North Lincolnshire Council.

5.1.2 Any ongoing operational costs to the council in keeping the local content up to date will be met through existing resources on the basis that without an eMarketplace there will be ongoing costs associated with providing information.

5.1.3 It will be difficult to attribute cashable savings directly to the existence of the eMarketplace but an evaluation exercise as part of the project has identified the following factors likely to impact positively on council and NHS finances:

- the creation of a place for service users to spend their personal budgets will mean less reliance on more costly directly provided and contracted services;
- those who do not qualify for council support or do not wish the council to be involved in their affairs will be able to choose products and services to meet their needs. This will enhance their health and well being and may prevent them from needing to access other more traditional health and social care services;
- an increase in eligible service users opting to take a personal budget as a cash payment will reduce council transaction costs in procuring and paying for external care and support services.

5.1.4 *Staffing implications*

5.1.5 It is not anticipated that any additional staff will be required to administer the eMarketplace. However, some existing staff roles may need to change slightly to incorporate the existence of the eMarketplace. Training will be provided to relevant staff to enable them to provide information and advice differently and to ensure the quality of the information and the providers accessed through the eMarketplace.

5.2 *Property implications* – None

5.3 *IT implications* – IT Services are supportive of the proposals. There are no hardware or operational issues for the councils IT services. The eMarketplace and web based transactions and payments will all take place on a hosted website.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 *Statutory implications* – The eMarketplace operator, 'Shop4Support' will have to conform to all relevant UK legislation (including Data Protection principals) and to meet all legal and good practice requirements for selling products and services over the internet.

6.2 *Environmental implications* – None

6.3 *Diversity implications*

The eMarketplace will comply with all technical accessibility standards and will offer other languages but there will be challenges to ensure that those who are not comfortable with the Internet are not excluded. By ensuring people are supported appropriately by friends, family or council staff to access the system, Adult Social Services will seek to ensure nobody is excluded where access would be of real benefit.

6.4 *Section 17 – Crime and Disorder implications* - None

6.5 *Risk and other implications*

6.5.1 Risks to vulnerable adults as a result of unscrupulous providers advertising on the eMarketplace will be minimised by;

- the need for 'Shop4Support' to comply with all relevant legislation in relation to selling goods and services via the internet;

- the ongoing requirement for Adult Social Services staff to apply safeguarding practices in approving providers of care and support as part of assessment and support planning processes;
- the continued application of processes already in place to assure the quality of care and support services directly or indirectly commissioned by the council;
- the monitoring of activity and spend by council staff to ensure that personal budgets are being used for the persons benefit to provide appropriate support.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to endorse the decision to opt into the deployment of the eMarketplace project.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Adult Social Services cabinet Member report "Regional eMarketplace for Adult Social Services" 24th January 2011

Business Case and Feasibility Assessment for an eMarketplace in adult social care in the Yorkshire & Humberside region prepared by Gradus Consulting October 2010

Inter-Authority Development Agreement for the provision of an e-Marketplace for Adult Social Care Services

Specification for Yorkshire & Humber regional Adult Social Care eMarketplace

Appendix 1

Characteristics of the Adult Social Services eMarketplace

The vision is for a website shared by councils in the Yorkshire and Humber region which focuses on products and services of interest to Adult Social Services customers. It will be open to anyone (not just service users) to browse and for those who sign up it will allow them to make enquiries, buy services and products. There will be personal data security, confidentiality, and secure transactions.

The eMarketplace is intended to create competition that will lead to improved service standards, moderate prices and enhance market development that will respond to customer needs.

The site will not just offer services that social services have traditionally provided but will have other specialist products that will be of interest to people with care and support needs. It is intended to be the website that search engines (such as Google) put at the top of the search list for support and care

It will: -

Offer an “Amazon style” products and services website.

Enable customers to research, browse, window shop and buy products and services.

Allow postcode searches to find local services.

Encourage providers to offer their wares (businesses, third sector organisations and individuals, including established enterprises, new entrants, those seeking to diversify and the self employed).

Promote the creation of bespoke services

Create competition that will lead to improved service standards, moderate prices and enhance market development that will respond to customer needs.

Allow supplier rating by customers and feedback to councils.

Offer bespoke local content for events, news, and local policy/practices

Offer free web space for voluntary groups

Provide usage and activity information to the council’s commissioners about the types, quantity, value and geographical distribution of services procured and those needed but not available.

It will streamline back office functions for the council and create capacity for the increase in transactions expected from a personalised market.

There are several groups we expect to use the eMarketplace for information and services: -

- Council funded personal budget holders (or those supporting them) who take their allocation as a direct payment (cash).
- People wanting to buy services above those the council funds.
- People not funded by the council because they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

- People not funded by the council as they can afford fund to fund themselves.
- Council staff will go to it for ideas and options to help service users create their Support Plans and to buy services via council contracts for virtual budget holders.
- Parents/guardians of children who receive a direct payment.

Further developments of the eMarketplace solution at some time in the future could allow council staff and service users to access and share on line the documentation for assessment, support planning and case management and could enable appropriate links into council case management and finance systems. In time this could become an “all-embracing” solution.