

ITEM No ...4.....

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 2 SEPTEMBER 2024

**REPORT ON: PROCUREMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALING APPLICATION
SEESAW SOFTWARE**

**REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

REPORT NO: 237-2024

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the development of a sourcing strategy for the tender process for the procurement of a communication and journaling application and to seek approval to direct award a contract compliantly via the NHS digital workplace solutions framework.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Approves the direct award of the contract in respect of the project described below, based on the sourcing strategy, summarised in this report.
- Delegates authority to the Executive Director of the Corporate Services to award a contract to the successful bidder, following a quote received from the supplier of Seesaw. This is a continuation of this service which has been embedded across schools since 2020. This process has been carried out in compliance with the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations of 2015.
- Approves expenditure on the project to the total value described in 3.1 below.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The estimated cost of the contract is £99,499. There is provision in the Children and Families Revenue budget in 2024/25 to meet the costs of the contract. If schools wish to continue the license during the extension period schools will be requested to fund this from their devolved revenue budget.

3.2 The total project cost, under the current model, will amount to £290,000 over three years if schools wish to continue funding this product.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 This report supports the Council's IT Strategy which was approved at the City Governance committee on 4 March 2024 (Article VIII of the minute of meeting and Report 62-2024). The Council's IT strategy sets out to deliver secure, robust, and affordable IT platforms. Helping to enable digital services, mobile and flexibly accessible services through a cloud first approach.

4.2 This report supports the Children and Families Service improvement priority to improve educational outcomes for all and to narrow attainment and achievement gaps which was approved by City Governance Committee on 4 September 2023 (Article III of the minute of meeting and Report 185-2023).

4.3 This cloud-based software system will provide an engaging platform where families can communicate with the school and gain an insight into the learning opportunities their child is experiencing. The local authority monitors usage data to support schools and highlight high quality experiences taking place through Seesaw whilst sharing high levels of engagement.

- 4.4 The system provides learning and teaching materials which can be used to augment and further the learning opportunities taking place online or via the cloud-based platform. Seesaw provides the school and Service with real-time data which can be used to inform the wider educational picture.
- 4.5 It is anticipated the contract length will be 1 year with the option to extend it for a further two years. The initial year will cost £99,499 and is expected to cost in the region of £290,000 if schools extend it for a further two-year period.
- 4.6 Seesaw was deemed to be the most appropriate tool by Children and Families Service following market evaluation and consultation when it was initially procured. The system is embedded across the Dundee school estate with high levels of usage by schools and families.
- 4.7 Seesaw consistently receives positive feedback. In 2022, 92.5% of parents who responded to a family survey stated they either agreed or strongly agreed that Seesaw creates a positive connection between school and home and more than two thirds stating that they felt their child responded positively to their school's use of Seesaw. The same survey of 935 families, showed that 68.2% felt they had an improved relationship with the staff at the school/nursery where their child attended as a result of Seesaw being used to communicate and share learning.
- 4.8 The Service continues to monitor and support the use of Seesaw to ensure family engagement and learner activity data provides continued positive educational impact on engagement and parental communication. In the academic session 2023/ 24 there were over 35,000 family comments on posts within Seesaw and over 1 million unique family member visits to posts shared by school, viewed by family members. 81% of all families accessed Seesaw throughout the school year. A Seesaw data summary is included in Appendix 1.
- 4.9 Community Benefits will be activated in line with the Community Benefits policy on spend. This will include the Community Wish List for the contractor to contribute in line with the value of the contract.

5.0 SOURCING STRATEGY SUMMARY

- 5.1 Alternative, off the shelf, providers are available. However, an exit strategy would be required if the local authority were to transition to a new provider.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 There are four standard risks in any procurement and for public sector regulated procurements, a fifth is added, that of the procurement exercise itself breaching the public contract regulations and leaving the Council open to a legal challenge.

Description of Risk	Actions required to manage Risk
Commercial Risk – That either the price objectives are not achieved up front or there are other costs that arise during the contract and diminish the overall benefits.	Price charged is the standard rate.
Technical Risk – This concerns the difficulty in being able to specify the desired outcome and on the market being unable to deliver to the specification	Discussions have taken place with the provider to ensure that Dundee's requirement will be met from the system. A demo school has been created within the District Admin board to allow for system testing.

<p>Performance Risk – This concerns the ability of suppliers to perform consistently over the life of the contract to deliver the planned benefits</p>	<p>Clear specification of requirements has been discussed and agreed with provider, these will be incorporated into contract. To develop appropriate monitoring requirements to be met by the supplier. Regular meetings take place between Dundee City Council and Seesaw to ensure the required performance of the product and suggested amendments are in place.</p>
<p>Contractual Risk – Being able to remedy the shortcomings in the contractor's performance without severely damaging the contract and about avoiding reliance on the contracted supplier as the contract develops.</p>	<p>Clearly stated in the tender specification and evaluated as part of the procurement process.</p>
<p>Procurement Risk – where a procurement is found unsound in law, through the public procurement rules</p>	<p>Clear set of requirements stated and use of a procurement framework.</p>

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The approval of this report will allow the procurement process to be carried out for Seesaw Software and Application.

8.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

Robert Emmott
Executive Director
Corporate Services

Audrey May
Executive Director
Children and Families Service

Date: June 2024

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Appendix 1

Seesaw Summary Usage Report – Dundee Schools

Data Usage:
August 2023 – June 2024

The data below shows an overview of Seesaw usage in Dundee schools between August 2023 and June 2024 inclusive.

Family Engagement Overview

ENGAGEMENT WITH SEESAW CITYWIDE – OVERVIEW	AUG 23 – JUN 24
Total number of unique family member visits to posts shared by school, viewed by family member(s)	1036267
Total unique families in Seesaw	14818
Percentage of families active within Seesaw throughout 2023/2024	81%
Family Comments on posts within Seesaw	35159

Citywide School Activity Usage Summary

SHARING AND ENGAGING WITH POSTS OVER FIRST WEEK OF TERM	AUGUST 2024
Total of practitioners enrolled in system	1579
Percentage of practitioners active within Seesaw throughout 2023/2024	86%
Total unique learners tagged into posts to share in learning journals, classes or with family members	13609
Total Responses to Activities and Posts	264246
Items created within Seesaw Classes	278576
Posts tagged with Skills depicting skills or CTE Experiences and Outcomes	4310

Learner Activity and Engagement Summary

FEATURE	AUGUST 2024
Total unique learners logged in to Seesaw to complete activity, comment on post or share post	7227
Total Activities Assigned to Learners (including 1731 of which were presented within Seesaw)	11735
Learner Journal posts which contain multimedia content	26680
Learner Journal posts which contain video clips to illustrate learning experiences	23213
Learning Journal posts which containing voice clips to illustrate learning experiences	4330

Additional Information

In January 2024, representatives from Seesaw met with practitioners from a representative group of Dundee schools along with representation from the Central Children's and Family Team. This allowed feedback to be provided by practitioners to the company on what was working well and what they would like to see.

Throughout the year features introduced or available in Seesaw were shared and highlighted, this led to an increased use of these in the city e.g. the use of using tags within posts rose from 80% in August 23 to 100% by end May 24. Growth was also seen in the use of activities assigned, the use of multimedia posts in early years which also linked to the development of skills and learning in digital technologies within nurseries as they completed their Digital Schools Awards.

Professional learning is scheduled for the duration of the licence in August 2024 - March 2025 to further support this investment.