

**VOLUME 3 – THE SPECIFICATION**

Contract title	THE PROVISION OF A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM & FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING SYSTEM FOR SCHOOLS & ACADEMIES
Contract ID	DN212852
Type of supply	SUPPLIES with SERVICES elements
Type of contract	FRAMEWORK
Contract start date	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2017
Contract end date	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021
Possible extensions ( <i>if applicable</i> )	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
Estimated total contract value	£2,000,000 - £30,000,000

**TENDER CLOSING DATE: Noon on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016**

**FOR YOUR FILE AND RETENTION.**

**YOU DO NOT NEED TO RETURN AS PART OF YOUR SUBMISSION**

## **SECTION 1A – COMMON REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ALL SIX LOTS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Council wants to implement a Framework Agreement for the delivery of a Management Information System (MIS) for schools and a Financial Accounting System (FAS) for schools.

1.2 These requirements will be divided into six Lots:

- Lot One will be in respect of the Management Information System for all primary schools and academies nationally.
- Lot Two will be in respect of the Management Information System for all secondary schools and academies nationally
- Lot Three will be for a Financial Accounting System for Local Authority (LA) maintained primary schools nationally.
- Lot Four will be for a Financial Accounting System for Local Authority (LA) maintained secondary schools nationally.
- Lot Five will be for a Financial Accounting System for use by primary Academies and Multi Academy Trusts nationally.
- Lot Six will be for a Financial Accounting System for use by secondary Academies and Multi Academy Trusts nationally.

The specifications relating to each Lot may be found at Sections 1B, 1C and 1D of this document.

1.3 Contractors will have the opportunity to bid for one or more of the Lots. Each Lot will be evaluated separately and Contractors must not apply any conditions or link their bids for each Lot in any way. Each Lot must be won on its merits and separate contracts will be issued for each where applicable.

1.4 This Framework is to be available for use by all Local Authorities (LAs) and schools throughout England and Wales. Using the Contractor's Pricing & Information Guide to determine which product will best meet their requirements, LAs and schools will have the opportunity to directly call-off from the framework without the need to undertake a further competition

between those Contractors appointed to each Lot.

- 1.5 The Council intends to appoint a minimum of three (3) Contractors per Lot. The reasoning for this being schools within the North Yorkshire region have requested increased choice as regards what is available to them via their support systems.
- 1.6 The Council recognises that changing a MIS or FAS can be a significant commitment for LAs or schools. As such, this Framework Agreement will operate for an initial period of just over four years commencing on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The Council will have the opportunity to extend this Framework for a further period of up to a maximum of two years, at the Authorities discretion and subject to performance.
- 1.7 LAs or schools calling-off from this Framework will have the opportunity to implement call-off contracts for a maximum of duration of eight years, including any periods of extension.
- 1.8 Although this Framework will commence as from 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and LAs or schools will be able to access this immediately from this date if they so choose, there will be an adjustment period from 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, whereby the incumbent Contractors will remain in situ.
- 1.9 This adjustment period is to allow North Yorkshire schools to explore their options without the need to make an immediate decision, with the assurance that their service delivery will continue via their incumbent Contractor
- 1.10 Those LAs or schools outside of North Yorkshire whose current arrangements cease during this adjustment period, will of course, be able to utilise this framework prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.
- 1.11 As from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 only this framework agreement will continue and LAs or schools will need to have made a decision during the intervening period as to what they propose to do to meet their on-going requirements. LAs and schools are not obliged to use this framework and can make alternative arrangements if they so wish. Hence, we are unable to guarantee any potential value or volumes of work.
- 1.12 Contractors need to be aware that LAs and schools are able to give a minimum of 6 months' notice to their chosen contractor prior to a break clause or contract end date. Subject to the Contractor receiving the minimum period of notice that a LA or school does not intend to renew for the following year, no costs shall be applicable for the school or LA undertaking this action.
- 1.13 A series of events will be organised for schools in North Yorkshire once the framework goes live which will allow those Contractors appointed to the framework to meet schools and demonstrate their systems.

- 1.14 Other LAs outside of North Yorkshire may ask Contractors to demonstrate their systems at their locations. This will be a matter for each LA and Contractor to agree the arrangements.

## **2 INTENDED USERS**

- 2.1 All LAs and schools throughout England and Wales will have the opportunity to access this framework if they so choose.
- 2.2 This framework should be given the widest possible context to include all LAs and educational establishments throughout England and Wales. These will include but not necessarily be limited to Local Authority maintained schools, Academies, Multi Academy Trusts, Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units and any other educational establishments primarily funded via public funds.
- 2.3 This framework is not available to schools and other educational establishments who are not within the remit of the public sector.
- 2.4 All call off contracts will be subject to a 1% levy to be paid to North Yorkshire County Council to be paid by the successful contractors. This is explained fully in Volume 4 - Pricing.

## **3 DATA SECURITY & CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 3.1 It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure that all the data obtained from whatever source in the pursuance of this Contract is securely held at all times in full compliance with the Data Protection Act.
- 3.2 Sufficient measures must be implemented by the Contractor to minimise the risk of a third party gaining access to this data. This may be achieved through a variety of methods but must be done in a way that will be acceptable to the Council.
- 3.3 Encryption of data and password protection must be employed when transferring personal or confidential electronic data between the Contractor and the Council. The Council uses a Secure Mail Delivery (SMD) system called Egress Switch, to transfer and share data with the Private Sector. The Contractor will be able to sign up to this product with no cost to themselves to ensure that all data is sent and received securely. This is the only authorised method of transferring sensitive data to/from the Council.
- 3.4 It is the Contractor's responsibility to maintain secure systems at all times and to upgrade any software as required in order to minimise risk levels. Any costs associated with maintaining an acceptable level of security must be borne by

the Contractor and will not be reimbursed by the Council.

- 3.5 If the Council becomes aware that the Contractor's data security levels are insufficient the Council will issue the Contractor with an improvement notice which must be acted upon immediately in order to minimise risk levels. Any costs associated with the issue of an improvement notice and the subsequent remedy must be borne by the Contractor.
- 3.6 Where data is being transferred in hard copy format the Contractor must also initiate secure systems which will avoid any personal/confidential data being compromised at any time.
- 3.7 The Contractor must operate a disaster recovery system which would operate in the event of a system failure.
- 3.8 Data must not be retained by the Contractor without the express written permission of the Council.
- 3.9 Where the Contractor is sharing data with another organisation, the Contractor must satisfy itself that the other organisation has robust data security mechanisms in place which comply with the Council's policies and procedures; and the reason for sharing the data is strictly in accordance with the furtherance of this Contract.
- 3.10 The Contractor must deliver this Service in total confidence and not discuss any aspects of an audit/review with any person not associated with the work.
- 3.11 In the event the Contractor needs guidance at any time, they must firstly consult with the Council before seeking guidance from any external body.
- 3.12 Where the Contractor is approached by the media in respect of any aspect of these services they must immediately refer the media to the Council's Communications team who will handle all matters relating to publicity and PR.
- 3.13 The minimum of personal/confidential data will be transferred or accessible for a given function to be carried out.
- 3.14 Everyone with access to personal/confidential data should be aware of their responsibilities. A copy of the guidance from the Information Commissioners Office on the use of cloud computing in relation to the Data Protection Act may be seen at Appendix M. Contractor's attention is also drawn to clause 12.3.5 to Volume 6 – Terms and Conditions.

## **4 MARKETING**

- 4.1 Contractors will be expected to market this framework agreement to other LAs, schools and educational establishments throughout the country who are seeking a MIS or FAS solution.
- 4.2 The Contractor will be expected to utilise its marketing potential to demonstrate that its products offer the Council, LAs and schools exceptional value for money on an on-going basis.
- 4.3 Again, utilising its marketing potential, the Contractor will be expected to communicate with all of its customers to keep them abreast of special offers, discounts and other opportunities.

## **5 DELIVERY**

- 5.1 Delivery of these services could be via any of the LAs stated at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/491463/List\\_of\\_councils\\_in\\_England.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/491463/List_of_councils_in_England.pdf) or any of the Welsh LAs at <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/authorities>, or at any of the schools/educational establishments listed in DfE Edubase system <http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase/home.xhtml> . Those schools/educational establishments within North Yorkshire who are currently using the Council's MIS/FAS contractual arrangements are listed at Appendices A & B.
- 5.2 The services may be delivered through local on-site hosting at a school or via LA system (Internal hosting) or via the Contractor's hosting of the system (External hosting). It will be for each individual LA or school to determine the most appropriate method of service delivery for them and to identify a Contractor who can then address their requirement.
- 5.3 Contractors do not have to be able to deliver these systems by both internally hosted and externally hosted systems. If a Contractor only offers a cloud based system (external) or vice versa that is acceptable.

## **6 ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The Contractor will appoint a Contract Manager to oversee the day to day operational elements of this Framework. The details below will be completed if appointed to the framework:

Name:

Address:

Position in Company:

Tel:

e-mail:

- 6.2 The Council will appoint the following Contract Managers to oversee the day to day operational elements of this Framework. These people are:

In respect of the Management Information System:

Name: Keren Wild

Address: Schools ICT, Highfield House, Kearsley Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2SG

Position in Council: Service Manager

Tel: 01609 536042

e-mail: [keren.wild@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:keren.wild@northyorks.gov.uk)

In respect of the Financial Accounting System:

Name: Sally Dunn

Address: CYPS Strategic Resources, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL7 8AD

Position in Council: FMS Team Manager

Tel: 01609 532308

e-mail: sally.dunn@northyorks.gov.uk

- 6.3 The Council will hold contract review meetings with the Contractor to discuss operational and performance related issues every 12 months. The parties may agree to increase or decrease the regularity of these meetings. These meetings will be held on the Council's premises unless agreed otherwise between the parties. No expenses or subsistence will be paid for attendance at these contract review meetings.

## **7 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

- 7.1. This section will apply to all LAs and schools calling-off from this framework irrespective of whether they are located within North Yorkshire or not. Furthermore, these KPIs cannot be amended by anyone other than the Council.
- 7.2. The Contractor's system must be available for a minimum of 99.5% of the time, during the periods of 07:00 – 18:00, Monday to Friday of every week.
- 7.3. Any maintenance the Contractor wishes to undertake on the system must be conducted outside of the times stipulated in 7.2 above.
- 7.4. Any request for a Change Control from a Contractor must be submitted to the Council at least four weeks prior to when the change is proposed. And the Council must provide written approval for the change to proceed. Only the Council and Contractors will be permitted to request a Change Control.
- 7.5. Only in an emergency should the Contractor arbitrarily implement a Change Control request without prior approval. In these circumstances the Contractor is obliged to alert the Council and all Service Users at the earliest possible time as to the cause of the emergency, what remedies are being implemented and when normal service is expected to be resumed. System downtime attributable to an emergency will not contribute to the overall availability figure outlined in 7.2 above.
- 7.6. In the event the Council or any Service Users incur any costs as a result of the Contractor withdrawing the system without prior permission from the Council,



those costs may be recouped from the Contractor. This will not apply where an emergency situation has arisen as outlined at 7.5 above.

- 7.7. The Contractor will be expected to provide management information (MI) on the performance of the Contract, at least quarterly, to the Council.
- 7.8. The MI must include all contacts between the Council, other LAs and schools under this Contract in the preceding quarter.
- 7.9. The MI should be passed to the Council at least two weeks prior to any scheduled meeting.
- 7.10. The MI should include, but not be limited to:
  - 7.10.1. Numbers of schools using this Contract, broken down to show how many joined in the last quarter and the cumulative figure;
  - 7.10.2. The value of the rebate to be passed to the Council, broken down to show the amount for the last quarter and the cumulative figure;
  - 7.10.3. The amount of spend per school broken down to show the amount for the last quarter and the cumulative figure;
  - 7.10.4. The amount of system downtime in the preceding quarter and the cumulative figure;
  - 7.10.5. The number of complaints received, broken down to show how many have been received in the last quarter, how long each one took to resolve, how many remain unresolved and why, plus a breakdown of the reasons for the complaints and any identified trend analysis;
  - 7.10.6. Where the Contractor identifies a trend as outlined in 7.10.5 above, they will provide recommendations as to how these trends may be addressed, where it is applicable to do so;
  - 7.10.7. The provision of totally accurate data relating to calls made to the Support Service Helpdesk whether from the Council or directly from a school, with these calls identified accordingly;
    - 7.10.7.1. Number of calls received in the preceding quarter and a cumulative figure;
    - 7.10.7.2. The length of time a call remains unresolved;
    - 7.10.7.3. Speed of response;
    - 7.10.7.4. Resolution rates;
    - 7.10.7.5. Resolution targets;
    - 7.10.7.6. Mechanisms for expediting any queries which may have missed their target;
    - 7.10.7.7. Trend analysis of the reasons for the request for support to identify training opportunities.
- 7.11. The Council will undertake, as a minimum, an annual service user satisfaction survey. The Contractor must achieve at least an 80% overall satisfaction rate from those service users completing a survey.

- 7.12. The overall satisfaction rate outlined in 7.11 above will be kept under review by the Council and may be increased or decreased at the Council's discretion. The purpose of this rate is to be challenging yet achievable.
- 7.13. Where a Contractor fails to obtain the stipulated satisfaction rate outlined in 7.11 above, the Council will request an improvement plan from the Contractor detailing how they propose to address the shortfall.
- 7.14. As a result of a Contractor failing to meet satisfaction levels in 7.11 above, the Council may conduct more frequent satisfaction surveys from the service users.
- 7.15. If the Contractor fails to improve their satisfaction rating over at least three surveys in a period of at least a year, the Council reserve the right to terminate this Contract in accordance with Condition 24 to the Terms and Conditions of Contract in Volume 6.
- 7.16. The Council may seek to amend the type of MI it requests from the Contractor, if this is not providing the level of clarity the Council requires to monitor progress.
- 7.17. The Council may need to add, amend or replace a KPI from time to time. This will be done in agreement with the Contractor.

## **8 Exit Planning**

- 8.1. The Contractor shall produce and maintain arrangements which set out the methodology for achieving an orderly transition of these services from the Contractor to the Council or a replacement Contractor on the expiry or termination of this Contract.
- 8.2. This clause 8 will also apply to Call-Off contracts between a Contractor and a LA or school. Where reference is made to the Council, where applicable, this is to be read as school.
- 8.3. As a minimum the arrangements will include:
- A detailed description of how the services will be ceased and transferred to the Council or a replacement Contractor;
  - Details of the management structure to be employed to effectively transfer the services;
  - Details of how relevant knowledge will be transferred;
  - Details of any assets and/or contracts (if any) which may be available for transfer upon transfer or termination.
- 8.4. The Contractor is required to maintain and update the arrangements to reflect any changes in the services and other matters necessary to ensure that the

replacement Contractor is able to implement the arrangements at any time.

- 8.5. The Contractor shall provide such support and assistance as required in order to achieve a smooth transfer of the services to the Council or a replacement Contractor as specified by the Council at any time prior to, or within 90 days following, the occurrence of a termination or expiry of the Contract.

## **SECTION 1B – SPECIFICATION FOR LOTS 1 and 2 – THE PROVISION OF A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

### **Introduction**

1. This section applies to LA maintained schools/educational establishments as well as Academies and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs).
2. For the purposes of this Section 1B, where reference is made to schools, this is to be read as to include LAs acting on behalf of a number of schools, academies and multi academy trusts, primary or secondary schools, unless they have been specifically excluded.
3. The Council's Schools ICT (SICT) service is willing to provide the first line support to all LAs, schools, academies and MATs irrespective of where they are located throughout England and Wales, who request it. This will be in respect of all the MIS products pertaining to each Contractor appointed to Lots 1 and 2.
4. Contractors appointed to Lots 1 and 2 must be willing and capable of providing first line support to those schools who prefer not to obtain this element of the service from SICT or their own local support service or who do not have the resources to provide this element themselves.

### **Training and Continual Professional Development**

5. Training services will be a key component of the implementation and on-going development of a new MIS, both for LA support teams and schools. The intention is that priority will be given to training the North Yorkshire County Council (SICT) support team. SICT will then take on training services to schools, however in the transitional period it is expected that the Contractor will take on some training directly to schools to support the SICT teams until experience and expertise within the SICT team is at an appropriate level to take on the role.
6. Contractors appointed to these Lots will be required to provide "train the trainer" training to employees of SICT in order for them to be capable of providing the first line support to all schools in relation to each product.
7. Contractors may be required to provide training to any and all schools who adopt their products.
8. All requests for training may include initial and remedial/repeat elements.

9. Contractors must be prepared to adapt their training to meet the needs of the client regarding the style and place of delivery.
10. The training to be delivered to the SICT team should be provided by a professional person with the course contributing to attendees Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
11. The Contractor will be required to provide training materials, resources and documentation as part of its training packages. The costs for the provision of the training materials etc. must be included in the overall costs for each training package.
12. The Contractor will be expected to provide Continual Professional Development to its own employees in order to maintain their skills and knowledge base regarding the products they are advising on.

### **Capacity and Business Growth**

13. Contractors will be expected to support the products they are offering to schools for a minimum duration of the term of this framework plus any call-off period.
14. Contractors must not arbitrarily withdraw existing products which schools are relying upon, throughout the term of the Framework Agreement or term of any Call-Off, without schools being offered a replacement product, see para 15 below.
15. If a Contractor does develop a new product it may offer that product to all schools and it will be for each school to decide whether and when to adopt the new product. The Contractor will be expected to support both the new and existing products for all schools.
16. Contractors are expected to support schools with a commitment to continue its business model to meet the need of schools both now and in the future.
17. Contractors must be willing to market this framework to all schools and LAs as a vehicle which allows each school/LA to achieve its objectives without the need to undertake a separate procurement exercise, where appropriate to do so.

## **New Technologies and Innovation**

18. Contractors must ensure its customers are kept updated on the latest developments.
19. ICT is a fast paced industry and Contractors must implement techniques for testing and developing new technology for the benefit of your customers to ensure your systems offer best value.

## **Achieving Educational Improvement**

20. The Contractor's management information system must support and influence management teams in schools to improve education services to its students. This may be done in part by providing totally accurate management information data to a school management team, which in turn will allow them to recognise trends, set targets and monitor outcomes.

## **Technical Requirements**

21. The Contractor's products must offer comprehensive systems where technical specifications are clear and comprehensive.
22. The system must operate on industry standard platforms such as Windows, with all functionality being delivered by their system. Where required it must be possible to through the use of API's to load/unload data from the system to enable integration with other systems.
23. The MIS is required to have robust documentation to support the technical Schools ICT teams and also provide simple and clear documentation for end users.
24. As a minimum, the MIS product being offered must meet the criteria stated in the DFE Guidance Booklet at Appendix L and all the contents of the Common Transfer File (CTF) as contained at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/common-transfer-file>

## **Functionality**

25. The Contractor's system must, as a minimum, offer the basic core pupil management system functionality to the national minimum common dataset standard.

26. The system must also be capable of working in partnership with organisations such as the DFE, without the need for further interfacing or adjustments.
27. As this framework will be available in both England and Wales the products/systems on offer must be fully compliant with the requirements of each of those Governments.
28. The Council has recognised that primary schools in North Yorkshire all currently use admin modules and to an increasing degree attendance modules. With more schools looking at additional functionality, for example assessment tracking and analysis, we are looking for a system that offers this functionality.
29. The Council wants systems that offer schools a high degree of flexibility as to what modules they can choose in order to develop a bespoke package that meets each school's individual needs. To this end, Contractors should avoid bundling unnecessary modules into their core offer, as there may be elements which schools may never utilise, but are still having to pay for.

### **Security and Disaster Recovery Requirements**

30. The MIS is increasingly core to the business of a school and schools need access to the system continuously. Contractors must offer MIS that meets all requirements in terms of the latest data protection guidance from DFE and Information Commissioners Office (ICO).
31. Every MIS, whether hosted locally or not, must possess sufficient security measures to prevent any unauthorised access by any third party. All security procedures must be regularly updated to keep abreast of changing developments in the wider community in order to ensure on-going secure service delivery to each and every school.
32. In the event the MIS, or any aspect of it, is compromised by an internal or external party, the Contractor must act immediately it becomes aware of this security breach to minimise the impact.
33. The Contractor must notify the Council of any security compromise within 24 hours of being alerted to the breach, to advise the Council what has occurred, the extent of the compromise, the potential outcomes and what they are doing to remedy the situation and how long it will be before the systems are fully secure.

34. After notifying the Council of any compromise as outlined in para 32 above, the Contractor, must also immediately notify all those schools affected, or likely to be affected, by the breach.
35. The Contractor will be expected to offer solutions as to how schools may protect themselves from any cyber-attack whilst systems are compromised.
36. Contractors must also have a robust disaster recovery policy/plan in place. It will not be sufficient to simply possess a disaster recovery policy/plan, the Contractor must, from time to time, implement its disaster recovery policy/plan to ensure it is still fully functional and can address all identified threats/occurrences.

## **Upgrades**

37. In order for systems to evolve and keep pace with the changing environment, Contractors are expected to have a developed and planned programme of upgrades.
38. Prior to the release of any upgrade Contractors must have fully tested these upgrades in the environment in which they will be deployed, to ensure a smooth implementation.
39. Contractors must have sound mechanisms in place in order to release any upgrade to the Council or a school, with full support packages for their implementation, where applicable.
40. The Council expect that the price of any upgrade will be included in the price charged to each school, and not be in addition to that cost.

## **Contract Management**

41. As well as the annual contract review meetings the Council is seeking to develop a collaborative relationship with those Contractors appointed to the framework to monitor and progress elements of the service delivery.
42. The Contractor will be expected to have mechanisms in place to maintain an open line of communication with the Council to provide updates on developments and the number of schools adopting their system, possibly on a monthly basis. How, the supplier manages the contract on an on-going basis will be an important part of the relationship with the authority. This will require the Contractor to ensure they can demonstrate a commitment to maintaining



communications and relationships, not just with the Council, but also with schools.

43. The Contractor must have reliable mechanisms in place for obtaining customer feedback and be willing to share that feedback with the Council.
44. The Contractor will be expected to explain to the Council how they propose to use the feedback obtained to improve and develop their products, service delivery and customer satisfaction levels.

### **Support Services**

45. The Council already possesses the infrastructure via a highly trained support team, to respond fully to approximately 75% of all first line support calls. The remaining 25% of calls represent the more complex queries and these are escalated via the SICT support team to the Contractor's support team for resolution.
46. The Council recognises that its support team will require in-depth training on some new products. The Council's intention is for the SICT support team to develop and offer their skills through first line support resolution to those requiring this service, be they within or external to North Yorkshire.
47. It is extremely important to the Council that the Contractor can provide a good quality support service, which is responsive in providing accurate, knowledgeable and practical advice to the Council's support team and directly to schools, where applicable, in order to resolve any issues as quickly and simply as feasible.
48. The Contractor must have on-line mechanisms in place that can log and track all queries escalated to their support teams. These mechanisms must also be capable of providing data on the usage of the service to include, but not be limited to:
  - 48.1. Number of calls received in a given period;
  - 48.2. The length of time a call remains unresolved;
  - 48.3. Speed of response;
  - 48.4. Resolution rates;
  - 48.5. Resolution targets;
  - 48.6. Mechanisms for expediting any queries which may have missed their target

49. The Contractor is expected to resource and staff their support team sufficiently in order to ensure a quality service is delivered to those accessing it.
50. The Contractor will be required to implement access routes for use by the Council or schools for using the support service. These routes will need to be publicised and stipulate how quickly users can expect to receive a response.
51. The Contractor may be required to provide on-site support to schools and must have mechanisms in place to address this eventuality.
52. The Contractor must be capable of analysing the data emanating from the use of their support service and to recognise instances or occurrences which could have a much wider impact on users of their services/products. Where a trend or issue is recognised which could affect all service users the Contractor must have robust mechanisms in place to communicate with all those service users to explain the issue and outline how that issue is going to be resolved.
53. Where an issue, as outlined in para 52 above has been identified, the costs associated with resolving that issue shall be borne by the Contractor.
54. Where individual schools choose to take their first or second line support directly from the Contractor, rather than from SICT or their own organisations support team, this will form part of the call-off agreement between the Contractor and the individual school.

### **Maintenance and Service**

55. The Contractor must have totally adequate maintenance and support agreements in place. These maintenance and support agreements must, as a minimum, cater for the following elements:
  - 55.1. Clear and transparent wording as to what is included in the agreement;
  - 55.2. Clear and transparent wording as to what is excluded from the agreement, and what may be optional for a fee;
  - 55.3. Clear explanation of the mechanism for determining price movements up or down;
  - 55.4. Clear explanation of any pricing mechanism for bundling modules/products and how this operates in practice.

### **Implementation**

56. The Council considers that the implementation of a new MIS at a school will be a significant event, and must not be underestimated.

57. The Contractor must be capable of planning and managing a school or number of schools, through the transition process to fully embrace any new product.
58. All elements of the transition must be clearly outlined in a detailed project plan for each school along with the timescales allocated for each element of the process, and a totally transparent broken down cost.

### **System Integration Requirements**

59. North Yorkshire uses a range of tools to administer its duties. The MIS must be capable of sharing data and integrating with other applications (as outlined below).
60. Any system offered by a Contractor to a school must be capable of interfacing with the Council's central pupil database.
61. Any system offered by a Contractor to a school must be capable of complying with all statutory returns required by the DfE and exports such as, but not limited to, School Census and SWFC.
62. The Contractor will be required to provide open API's.
63. The Contractor's products/systems must interface with existing web services such as Raise Online, but not necessary limited to this.

## **SECTION 1C – SPECIFICATION FOR LOTS 3 & 4 – THE PROVISION OF A FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING SYSTEM (FAS) FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS**

### **Introduction**

1. This section applies to all Local Authorities in England and Wales and LA maintained schools/educational establishments only.
2. For the purposes of this Section 1C, where reference is made to schools, this is to be read as to include those LAs who are representing their maintained schools or LA maintained establishments within or outside of North Yorkshire acting independently of their LA for the purpose of procuring these products/services.
3. The Council's Financial Management Services (FMS) Team are only able to provide the first line support to those schools who are maintained by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and are not resourced to support others beyond this remit.
4. Any other LA maintained school who wishes to access this Framework must either implement their own first line support, or make arrangements with their chosen Contractor. This will be in respect of all the FAS products pertaining to each Contractor appointed to Lots 3 & 4.
5. Contractors appointed to Lots 3 & 4 must be willing and capable of providing first line support to those schools who prefer not to obtain this element of the service from the FMS team or their own local support service.
6. Contractors appointed to Lots 3 & 4 must acknowledge that the FMS Team will not be responsible for hosting the FAS. This will be a matter for the individual school or the Contractor to resolve. This also applies to those schools maintained by NYCC.

### **Capacity and Business Growth**

7. Contractors will be expected to support the products they are offering to schools for a minimum duration of the term of this framework plus any call-off period.
8. Contractors must not develop new products and arbitrarily withdraw existing products which schools are relying upon, throughout the term or term of any call-off.

9. If a Contractor does develop a new product it may offer that product to all schools and it will be for each school to decide whether and when to adopt the new product. The Contractor will be expected to support both the new and existing products for all schools.
10. Contractors are expected to support schools with a commitment to continue its business model to meet the need of schools both now and in the future.
11. Contractors must be willing to market this framework to all schools and local authorities as a vehicle which allows each school to achieve its objectives without the need to undertake a separate procurement exercise, where appropriate to do so.

### **New Technologies and Innovation**

12. Contractors must ensure its customers are kept updated on the latest developments.
13. ICT is a fast paced industry and Contractors must implement techniques for testing and developing new technology for the benefit of your customers to ensure your systems offer best value.

### **Achieving Educational Improvement**

14. One of the core purposes of a Financial Accounting System is to support and influence management teams in schools to ensure best use of resources and to thus improve education services to its students, this will be done in part by providing financial accounting data and monitoring outcomes.

### **Technical Requirements**

15. The Contractor's products must offer comprehensive systems where technical specifications are clear and comprehensive.
16. The system must operate on industry standard platforms such as Windows, with all functionality being delivered by their system. Where required it must be possible to through the use of API's to load/unload data from the system to enable integration with other systems.
17. The FAS is required to have robust documentation to support the technical FMS team and also provide simple and clear documentation for end users.

18. As stated above the Contractor must be capable of either hosting the FAS or installing it locally for the school to host.

## **Functionality**

19. The system must also be capable of working in partnership with organisations such as the DFE, without the need for further interfacing or adjustments and be fully compliant with all relevant accounting standards.

20. As this framework will be available in both England and Wales the products/systems on offer must be fully compliant with the requirements of each of those Governments.

21. Contractors should avoid bundling unnecessary modules into their core offer, as there may be elements which schools may never utilise, but are still having to pay for.

22. All North Yorkshire local authority maintained schools have full autonomy with regard to their budget management and maintain the prime financial accounting records within the school. Every school manages its own school Bank Account and makes payments using cheques or via Faster Internet Payments or by BACS transfer. Increasingly schools are looking at additional functionality, for example each budget holder would benefit from having easy remote access to information about their spend/receipts and budget position.

23. Contractors need to understand the FAS will be used by a wide range of users with differing financial experience and accounting knowledge e.g. Administrator in a small Primary School and Finance Manager in a large Secondary School.

24. Owing to the varying levels of accounting knowledge possessed by users, the FAS must be capable of supporting users with different skill sets.

25. If the product a Contractor is proposing to use in a school has not been specifically designed for use in an educational establishment, it must have been customised to meet the needs of a school prior to being offered as a potential solution to a school's requirement.

26. The product must be flexible enough to operate in different environments such as small or large schools or across more than one school where schools are

Federated or remotely when the school cannot be accessed for whatever reason.

27. The core product must be capable of being customised in respect of a school's own budget codes/cost centres etc. It would be advantageous if it were possible to import a skeletal coding structure which a school could then further customise.
28. It would be advantageous if the Contractor's product was capable of migrating all the data from a school's current system to the Contractor's new system, with no loss of data.
29. The FAS must be capable of supporting multiple users requiring different levels of functionality and authorisation.
30. Whatever licensing system is used, it must be clear and transparent so that each school considering the Contractor's product will know exactly what their costs are going to be and how often and whether users at multiple sites need different approvals.
31. The Contractor's FAS must be capable of supporting a school to adopt the culture of a "paperless office" approach.
32. Many schools now manage Extended Activities e.g. Before/After School Clubs and Early Years provision all of which may require payment from external parties. It would be advantageous if the Contractor's FAS product was capable of being used to facilitate these payments and interfacing with other payment solutions such as Parent Pay and Parent Mail.
33. The FAS product must support the Purchase Ordering Process. This functionality should be capable of being deployed across one or more sites where multiple users/budget holders operate.
34. A Reporting and Budget Monitoring module is an essential element of the core functionality. This may need to be capable of being customised by the school where applicable, without the school necessarily having to have recourse to the Contractor.
35. If a separate Reporting module is required in addition to the Reporting and Budget Monitoring module, the Contractor must be totally transparent about this with any school, especially in relation to potential extra costs.

36. The Contractor's FAS product must be capable of exporting data in different formats to meet the requirements of a range of other computerised systems i.e. CSV files, files required by the central LA finance system, an external payroll provider, budgeting systems and Excel. This list is not exhaustive.
37. As well as the FAS product being capable of exporting data, it will be an advantage if it is capable of importing data from external sources e.g. central LA finance system, external payroll provider, budgeting systems, Excel, bank statements.
38. Schools must be able to use the FAS product to undertake data enquires and search functions.
39. The Contractor needs to acknowledge that each month an LA Maintained school is required to export a VAT return (using a schedule of pre-set dates) and a Bank Reconciliation statement to the Local Authority via Anycomms. The FAS offered by the Contractor must be capable of meeting this requirement.
40. The FAS must be capable of delivering statutory reports e.g. the provision of a consolidated Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) at the end of each year for the DfE.
41. The FAS must be able to deal with the operation of multiple local bank accounts and a central fund within an individual school budget in terms of general operation and also specifically in relation to monthly reconciliation and the process required at the end of the financial year.
42. All functionality regarding month end and year end processes must be catered for in full by any FAS.
43. Service Users of the Contractor's FAS must be able to access some form of Help Functionality, in the event they become unsure of elements of the process.

### **Security and Disaster Recovery Requirements**

44. The FAS is increasingly core to the business of a school and schools need access to the system continuously. Contractors must offer a FAS that meets all requirements in terms of the latest data protection guidance from DfE and ICO.
45. Every FAS, whether hosted locally or not, must possess sufficient security measures to prevent any unauthorised access by any third party. All security



procedures must be regularly updated to keep abreast of changing developments in the wider community in order to ensure on-going secure service delivery to each and every school.

46. In the event the FAS, or any aspect of it, is compromised by an internal or external party, the Contractor must act immediately it becomes aware of this security breach to minimise the impact.
47. The Contractor must notify the Council of any security compromise within 24 hours of being alerted to the breach, to advise the Council what has occurred, the extent of the compromise, the potential outcomes and what they are doing to remedy the situation and how long it will be before the systems are fully secure.
48. After notifying the Council of any compromise as outlined in para 47 above, the Contractor, must also immediately notify all those schools affected, or likely to be affected, by the breach.
49. The Contractor will be expected to offer solutions as to how schools may protect themselves from any cyber-attack whilst systems are compromised.
50. Contractors must also have a robust disaster recovery policy/plan in place. It will not be sufficient to simply possess a disaster recovery policy/plan, the Contractor must, from time to time, implement its disaster recovery policy/plan to ensure it is still fully functional and can address all identified threats/occurrences.
51. In the event the Contractor's staff are required to visit a school adequate security checks must be implemented and those staff must comply with any security measures the school has in operation.

## **Upgrades**

52. In order for systems to evolve and keep pace with the changing environment, Contractors are expected to have a developed and planned programme of upgrades.
53. Prior to the release of any upgrade Contractors must have fully tested these upgrades in the environment in which they will be deployed, to ensure a smooth implementation.
54. Contractors must have sound mechanisms in place in order to release any upgrade to the Council or a school, with full support packages for their implementation, where applicable.

55. The Council expect that the price of any upgrade will be included in the price charged to each school, and not be in addition to that cost.

### **Contract Management**

56. As well as the annual contract review meetings the Council is seeking to develop a collaborative relationship with those Contractors appointed to the framework to monitor and progress elements of the service delivery.
57. The Contractor will be expected to have mechanisms in place to maintain an open line of communication with the Council to provide updates on developments and the number of schools adopting their system, possibly on a monthly basis. How the supplier manages the contract on an on-going basis will be an important part of the relationship with the Council. This will require the Contractor to ensure they can demonstrate a commitment to maintaining communications and relationships, not just with the Council, but also with schools.
58. The Contractor must have reliable mechanisms in place for obtaining customer feedback and be willing to share that feedback with the Council.
59. The Contractor will be expected to explain to the Council how they propose to use the feedback obtained to improve and develop their products, service delivery and customer satisfaction levels.

### **Support Services**

60. It will be an important part of the contract to offer a good quality support service. Within the authority we have a highly trained support team; the expectation will be that NYCC maintained schools use the authority support service who in turn will use the supplier support service. The majority of calls from schools are dealt with on the first contact with our support team, with more complex or difficult to resolve queries escalated to the supplier support team. We would look to maintain this arrangement.
61. The Council recognises that its support team will require in-depth training on some new products. The Council's intention is for the FMS support team to develop and offer their skills through first line support resolution to those requiring this service. This will only apply to those LA maintained schools in North Yorkshire.

62. It is extremely important to the Council that the Contractor can provide a good quality support service, which is responsive in providing accurate, knowledgeable and practical advice to the Council's support team and directly to schools, where applicable, in order to resolve any issues as quickly and simply as feasible.
64. Both the Council and schools will require the Contractor to appoint financial specialists to operate their support service. These specialists must be accessible to all requiring their skills.
65. The Contractor must have on-line mechanisms in place that can log and track all queries escalated to their support teams. These mechanisms must also be capable of providing data on the usage of the service to include, but not be limited to:
  - 65.1. Number of calls received in a given period;
  - 65.2. The length of time a call remains unresolved;
  - 65.3. Speed of response;
  - 65.4. Resolution rates;
  - 65.5. Resolution targets;
  - 65.6. Mechanisms for expediting any queries which may have missed their target
66. The Contractor is expected to resource and staff their support team sufficiently in order to ensure a quality service is delivered to those accessing it.
67. The Contractor will be required to implement access routes for use by the Council or schools for using the support service. These routes will need to be publicised and stipulate how quickly users can expect to receive a response.
68. The Contractor may be required to provide on-site support to schools and must have mechanisms in place to address this eventuality.
69. The Contractor must be capable of analysing the data emanating from the use of their support service and to recognise instances or occurrences which could have a much wider impact on users of their services/products. Where a trend or issue is recognised which could affect all service users the Contractor must have robust mechanisms in place to communicate with all those service users to explain the issue and outline how that issue is going to be resolved.
70. Where an issue, as outlined in para 69 above has been identified, the costs associated with resolving that issue shall be borne by the Contractor.

71. Where individual schools choose to take their first or second line support directly from the Contractor, rather than from the FMS team or their own organisations support team, this will form part of the call-off agreement between the Contractor and the individual school.

### **Maintenance and Service**

72. The Contractor must have totally adequate maintenance and support agreements in place. These maintenance and support agreements must, as a minimum, cater for the following elements:

- 72.1. Clear and transparent wording as to what is included in the agreement;
- 72.2. Clear and transparent wording as to what is excluded from the agreement, and what may be optional for a fee;
- 72.3. Clear explanation of the mechanism for determining price movements up or down;
- 72.4. Clear explanation of any pricing mechanism for bundling modules/products and how this operates in practice.

### **Implementation**

73. The Council considers that the implementation of a new FAS at a school will be a significant event, and must not be underestimated.

74. The Contractor must be capable of planning and managing a school or number of schools, through the transition process to fully embrace any new product.

75. All elements of the transition must be clearly outlined in a detailed project plan for each school along with the timescales allocated for each element of the process, and a totally transparent broken down cost.

### **Training and Continual Professional Development**

76. Training services will be a key component of the implementation and on-going development of a new FAS, both for LA support teams and schools. The intention is that priority will be given to training the local authority (FMS) support team. The FMS team will then take on training services to LA maintained schools in North Yorkshire only, however in the transitional period it is possible that the Contractor would be asked to take on some training directly to schools to support the FMS team until experience and expertise within the FMS team is at an appropriate level to take on the role.

77. Contractors appointed to this Lot will be required to provide “train the trainer” training to employees of FMS in order for them to be capable of providing the first line support to all LA maintained schools in North Yorkshire, in relation to the product.
78. Contractors may be required to provide training to any and all schools who adopt their products and choose not to take first line support from the FMS Team.
79. All requests for training may include initial and remedial/repeat elements.
80. Contractors must be prepared to adapt their training to meet the needs of the client regarding the style and place of delivery.
81. The Contractor will be required to provide training materials, resources and documentations as part of its training packages. The costs for the provision of the training materials etc. must be included in the overall costs for each training package.
82. The Contractor will be expected to provide Continual Professional Development to its own employees in order to maintain their skills and knowledge base regarding the products they are advising on.

### **System Integration Requirements**

83. North Yorkshire uses a range of tools to administer its duties. The FAS must be capable of sharing data and integrating with other applications (as outlined below).
84. The Contractor will be required to provide open API's.
85. The Contractor's products/systems must interface with existing web services such as Anycomms, third party financial planning software and various e-mail systems, but not necessary limited to these.

## **SECTION 1D – SPECIFICATION FOR LOTS 5 & 6 – THE PROVISION OF A FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING SYSTEM FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACADEMIES AND MULTI ACADEMY TRUSTS**

### **Introduction**

1. This section applies to Academies and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) only.
2. For the purposes of this Section 1D, where reference is made to schools, this is to be read as to include only academies or MATs within or outside of North Yorkshire.
3. The Council's Financial Management Services (FMS) Team are unable to provide any first line support to those schools who are academies or MATs. This is because the FMS Team are not resourced to provide support to others beyond this remit.
4. Any academy or MAT who wishes to access this Framework must either implement their own first line support, or make arrangements with their chosen Contractor. This will be in respect of all the FAS products pertaining to each Contractor appointed to Lots 5 & 6.
5. Contractors appointed to Lots 5 & 6 must be willing and capable of providing first line support to those schools who prefer not to obtain this element of the service from their own local support service.
6. Contractors appointed to Lots 5 & 6 must acknowledge that the FMS Team will not be responsible for hosting the FAS. This will be a matter for the individual school or the Contractor to resolve.

### **Capacity and Business Growth**

7. Contractors will be expected to support the products they are offering to academies for a minimum duration of the term of this framework plus any call-off period.
8. Contractors may develop new products however they must not arbitrarily withdraw existing products which schools are relying upon, throughout the term or term of any call-off.
9. If a Contractor does develop a new product it may offer that product to all schools and it will be for each school to decide whether and when to adopt the new

product. The Contractor will be expected to support both the new and existing products for all schools.

10. Contractors are expected to support academies with a commitment to continue its business model to meet the need of academies both now and in the future.
11. Contractors must be willing to market this framework to all academies as a vehicle which allows each school to achieve its objectives without the need to undertake a separate procurement exercise, where appropriate to do so.

### **New Technologies and Innovation**

12. Contractors must ensure its customers are kept updated on the latest developments.
13. ICT is a fast paced industry and Contractors must implement techniques for testing and developing new technology for the benefit of your customers to ensure your systems offer best value.

### **Achieving Educational Improvement**

14. One of the core purposes of a Financial Accounting System is to support and influence management teams in academies to ensure best use of resources and to thus improve education services to its students, this will be done in part by providing financial accounting data and monitoring outcomes.

### **Technical Requirements**

15. The Contractor's products must offer comprehensive systems where technical specifications are clear and comprehensive.
16. The system must operate on industry standard platforms such as Windows, with all functionality being delivered by their system. Where required it must be possible through the use of API's to load/unload data from the system to enable integration with other systems.
17. The FAS is required to have robust documentation to support the technical FMS team and also provide simple and clear documentation for end users.
18. As stated above the Contractor must be capable of either hosting the FAS or installing it locally for the academy to host.

## Functionality

19. The system must be capable of working in partnership with organisations such as the DFE, without the need for further interfacing or adjustments and be fully compliant with all relevant accounting standards.
20. As this framework will be available in both England and Wales the products/systems on offer must be fully compliant with the requirements of each of those Governments.
21. Contractors should avoid bundling unnecessary modules into their core offer, as there may be elements which academies may never utilise, but are still having to pay for.
22. All academies and MATs have full autonomy with regard to their budget management and maintain the prime financial accounting records within the academy. The academy or MAT may make payments using cheques or via Faster Internet Payments or by BACS transfer. Increasingly academies are looking at additional functionality, for example each budget holder would benefit from having easy remote access to information about their spend/receipts and budget position.
23. Contractors need to understand the FAS will be used by a wide range of users with differing financial experience and accounting knowledge e.g. Administrator in a small Primary Academy and Finance Manager in a large Academy or MAT overseeing a number of smaller schools.
24. Owing to the varying levels of accounting knowledge possessed by users, the FAS must be capable of supporting users with different skill sets.
25. If the product a Contractor is proposing to use in an academy has not been specifically designed for use in an educational establishment, it must have been customised to meet the needs of an academy prior to being offered as a potential solution to an academy's requirement.
26. The product must be flexible enough to operate in different environments such as small or large academies or across more than one academy where schools



are part of a MAT or remotely when the academy cannot be accessed for whatever reason.

27. The core product must be capable of being customised in respect of an academy's own budget codes/cost centres etc.
28. It would be advantageous if the Contractor's product was capable of migrating all the data from a school's current system to the Contractor's new system, with no loss of data.
29. The FAS must be capable of supporting multiple users requiring different levels of functionality and authorisation.
30. Whatever licensing system is used, it must be clear and transparent so that each academy considering the Contractor's product will know exactly what their costs are going to be and how often and whether users at multiple sites need different approvals.
31. The Contractor's FAS must be capable of supporting an academy to adopt the culture of a "paperless office" approach.
32. Many academies now manage Extended Activities e.g. Before/After School Clubs and Early Years provision all of which may require payment from external parties. It would be advantageous if the Contractor's FAS product was capable of being used to facilitate these payments and interfacing with other payment solutions such as Parent Pay and Parent Mail.
33. The FAS product must support the Purchase Ordering Process. This functionality should be capable of being deployed across one or more sites where multiple users/budget holders operate.
34. A Reporting and Budget Monitoring module is an essential element of the core functionality. This may need to be capable of being customised by the academy where applicable, without the school necessarily having to have recourse to the Contractor.
35. If a separate Reporting module is required in addition to the Reporting and Budget Monitoring module, the Contractor must be totally transparent about this with any academy, especially in relation to potential extra costs.
36. The Contractor's FAS product must be capable of exporting data in different formats to meet the requirements of a range of other computerised systems i.e.

CSV files, files required by the DfE, an external payroll provider, budgeting systems and, Excel. This list is not exhaustive.

37. As well as the FAS product being capable of exporting data, it will be an advantage if it is capable of importing data from external sources e.g. central DfE finance system, external payroll provider, budgeting systems, Excel, bank statements.
38. The Contractor's FAS product must also possess the capability to undertake cash flow reporting and projections.
39. Academies must be able to use the FAS product to undertake data enquires and search functions.
40. The Contractor needs to acknowledge that an academy is required to produce a VAT return and may be required to submit additional statutory returns to the DfE. The FAS offered by the Contractor must be capable of meeting this requirement.
41. The FAS must be capable of delivering statutory reports as required by the DfE. The FAS must be able to deal with multiple bank accounts the process's required at the end of the financial year.
42. All functionality regarding month end and year end processes must be catered for in full by any FAS.
43. Service Users of the Contractor's FAS must be able to access some form of Help Functionality, in the event they become unsure of elements of the process.

### **Security and Disaster Recovery Requirements**

44. The FAS is increasingly core to the business of an academy and users need access to the system continuously. Contractors must offer a FAS that meets all requirements in terms of the latest data protection guidance from DFE and ICO.
45. Every FAS, whether hosted locally or not, must possess sufficient security measures to prevent any unauthorised access by any third party. All security procedures must be regularly updated to keep abreast of changing developments in the wider community in order to ensure on-going secure service delivery to each and every school.

46. In the event the FAS, or any aspect of it, is compromised by an internal or external party, the Contractor must act immediately it becomes aware of this security breach to minimise the impact.
47. The Contractor must notify the Council of any security compromise within 24 hours of being alerted to the breach, to advise the Council what has occurred, the extent of the compromise, the potential outcomes and what they are doing to remedy the situation and how long it will be before the systems are fully secure.
48. After notifying the Council of any compromise as outlined in para 47 above, the Contractor, must also immediately notify all those schools affected, or likely to be affected, by the breach.
49. The Contractor will be expected to offer solutions as to how schools may protect themselves from any cyber-attack whilst systems are compromised.
50. Contractors must also have a robust disaster recovery policy/plan in place. It will not be sufficient to simply possess a disaster recovery policy/plan, the Contractor must, from time to time, implement its disaster recovery policy/plan to ensure it is still fully functional and can address all identified threats/occurrences.
51. In the event the Contractor's staff are required to visit an academy adequate security checks must be implemented and those staff must comply with any security measures the school has in operation.

## **Upgrades**

52. In order for systems to evolve and keep pace with the changing environment, Contractors are expected to have a developed a planned programme of upgrades.
53. Prior to the release of any upgrade Contractors must have fully tested these upgrades in the environment in which they will be deployed, to ensure a smooth implementation.
54. Contractors must have sound mechanisms in place in order to release any upgrade to the Council or an academy, with full support packages for their implementation, where applicable.
55. The Council expect that the price of any upgrade will be included in the price charged to each academy, and not be in addition to that cost.

## **Contract Management**

56. As well as the annual contract review meetings the Council is seeking to develop a collaborative relationship with those Contractors appointed to the framework to monitor and progress elements of the service delivery.
57. The Contractor will be expected to have mechanisms in place to maintain an open line of communication with the Council to provide updates on developments and the number of schools adopting their system, possibly on a monthly basis. How the supplier manages the contract on an on-going basis will be an important part of the relationship with the Council. This will require the Contractor to ensure they can demonstrate a commitment to maintaining communications and relationships, not just with the Council, but also with schools.
58. The Contractor must have reliable mechanisms in place for obtaining customer feedback and be willing to share that feedback with the Council.
59. The Contractor will be expected to explain to the Council how they propose to use the feedback obtained to improve and develop their products, service delivery and customer satisfaction levels.

### **Support Services**

60. It will be an important part of the contract to offer a good quality support service. As stated above, the FMS team will not be in a position to provide any support services to academies or MATs using this framework.
61. It is extremely important to the Council that the Contractor can provide a good quality support service, which is responsive in providing accurate, knowledgeable and practical advice directly to schools, where applicable, in order to resolve any issues as quickly and simply as feasible.
62. Academies will require the Contractor to appoint financial specialists to operate their support service. These specialists must be accessible to all academies and MATs requiring their skills.
63. The Contractor must have on-line mechanisms in place that can log and track all queries escalated to their support teams. These mechanisms must also be capable of providing data on the usage of the service to the Council to include, but not be limited to:
  - 63.1. Number of calls received in a given period;
  - 63.2. The length of time a call remains unresolved;

- 63.3. Speed of response;
  - 63.4. Resolution rates;
  - 63.5. Resolution targets;
  - 63.6. Mechanisms for expediting any queries which may have missed their target
64. The Contractor is expected to resource and staff their support team sufficiently in order to ensure a quality service is delivered to those accessing it.
65. The Contractor will be required to implement access routes for use by the academies for using the support service. These routes will need to be publicised and stipulate how quickly users can expect to receive a response.
66. The Contractor may be required to provide on-site support to schools and must have mechanisms in place to address this eventuality.
67. The Contractor must be capable of analysing the data emanating from the use of their support service and to recognise instances or occurrences which could have a much wider impact on users of their services/products. Where a trend or issue is recognised which could affect all service users the Contractor must have robust mechanisms in place to communicate with all those service users to explain the issue and outline how that issue is going to be resolved.
68. Where an issue, as outlined in para 67 above has been identified, the costs associated with resolving that issue shall be borne by the Contractor.
69. Where individual academies choose to take their first or second line support directly from the Contractor, rather than from their own organisations support team, this will form part of the call-off agreement between the Contractor and the individual school.

## **Maintenance and Service**

70. The Contractor must have totally adequate maintenance and support agreements in place. These maintenance and support agreements must, as a minimum, cater for the following elements:
- 70.1. Clear and transparent wording as to what is included in the agreement;
  - 70.2. Clear and transparent wording as to what is excluded from the agreement, and what may be optional for a fee;
  - 70.3. Clear explanation of the mechanism for determining price movements up or down;

- 70.4. Clear explanation of any pricing mechanism for bundling modules/products and how this operates in practice.

## **Implementation**

71. The Council considers that the implementation of a new FAS at an academy will be a significant event, and must not be underestimated.
72. The Contractor must be capable of planning and managing an academy or number of academies, through the transition process to fully embrace any new product.
73. All elements of the transition must be clearly outlined in a detailed project plan for each school along with the timescales allocated for each element of the process, and a totally transparent broken down cost.

## **Training and Continual Professional Development**

74. Training services will be a key component of the implementation and on-going development of a new FAS, for academies.
75. Contractors may be required to provide training to any and all academies who adopt their products.
76. All requests for training may include initial and remedial/repeat elements.
77. Contractors must be prepared to adapt their training to meet the needs of the client regarding the style and place of delivery.
78. The Contractor will be required to provide training materials, resources and documentations as part of its training packages. The costs for the provision of the training materials etc. must be included in the overall costs for each training package.
79. The Contractor will be expected to provide Continual Professional Development to its own employees in order to maintain their skills and knowledge base regarding the products they are advising on.

## **System Integration Requirements**

80. Any system offered by a Contractor to an academy must be capable of complying with all statutory returns required by the DfE. The Contractor will be required to provide open API's.