ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Deputy Leader
2.	Date:	17th March 2014
3.	Title:	Renewal of Aqua SQL System Maintenance and Support – Application for Exemption from Standing Orders
4.	Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval to invoke Standing Order 38, which permits exemption from normal contract standing orders. This is to allow AQUA Birmingham to continue to provide the annual support and maintenance for the AQUA SQL system.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

(i) **The contract for the annual support and maintenance of the AQUA SQL System be exempt from the provisions of standing order 47.6.2, the requirement to invite at least 2 oral or written quotations for contracts with a value of £5,000 but less than £20,000**

7. Proposals and Details

- The AQUA SQL system holds course and learner details for adults enrolled on Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funded projects including Community Learning, the Adult Skills Budget and ESF Co-Financed projects. It supports the Individual Learner Record in compliance with SFA and statutory reporting requirements.

- The AQUA SQL system has been recommended by the SFA as the leading Learner Management Information System (MIS) system, created for recording learner enrolment details, for over 15 years. It produces the Individual Learner Record (ILR), in compliance with the Skills Funding Agency data requirements, ensuring we meet SFA data deadline returns by validating the data against the Learning Aims Reference Service (LARS) and various SFA systems. If another system was used, there would be issues with data compatibility, which would lead to delays in claims being processed or potentially being invalid.

- In addition, in line with SFA requirements, through the Aqua system, the Authority has recently introduced an online facility, Coursefinder, which allows learners to search for courses, enrol and pay on line, using a link with the Civica payment system. If another system was used this facility would not be available.

- The Local Authority holds a perpetual license and renews the annual support and maintenance of that license on an annual basis.

- AQUA SQL is used by over 80 customers including Doncaster, Barnsley and Sheffield Councils and enables us to produce reports using Crystal XI and Business Objects.

- The contractor concerned is the only supplier able to provide quotes, due to the fact that only the system supplier can provide annual support and maintenance for their system.

8. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to renew the annual support and maintenance will result in the AQUA SQL system running with no support from the supplier and we will be unable to apply any upgrades or fixes to this business critical system. This will have financial and performance management implications leading to financial and reputational risk.

9. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Policy and performance issues are discussed in section 9 of this report.

10. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation has taken place with colleagues in Legal, Finance and Procurement Services, and all have confirmed agreement with the proposals.

Contact Names:

Jon Baggaley, Finance Manager Jonathan.baggaley@rotherham.gov.uk; x54516