



## Operational Officer Decision Record

Where the decision has a financial value of between £100k - £350k and does not have a **significant** impact on two or more wards

### 1. Subject and details of the matter (to include reasons for the decision and detail of any previous cabinet decision)

The availability of data and its role in decision making have accelerated our need to reassess the technology used for statutory reporting in Children's Services. Approval is sought to extend the remit of the current Sentinel Partners contract to promptly facilitate enhanced resilience and improved performance of the technology used for statutory reporting in Children's Services.

The Sentinel software enables the Council to integrate data from various different systems, including external partners, to provide a unified view of children and families to support safeguarding and deliver targeted services. Plans are also in place to include additional data sources, which will further enhance decision-making and help achieve objectives within the Council plan.

The costs cover further integration with additional information aligned with governance standards and business need, and technical changes to how the system handles the additional volume of data in a timely manner. The cost also covers 12 months of technical support, as the effort and required expertise cannot be captured by existing resources, and recruitment to an additional post cannot yet be justified.

During the next 12 months the functionality of the Sentinel platform will be explored through our internal business development framework and eventually encompassed within other business intelligence software or procured through a competitive exercise. The whole life value of this extension is £48,065. The Total Contract Value is £160,065.

**2. Decision being taken**

That the Assistant Director for Policy, Strategy and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets extends the current Sentinel contract for a further 12 months.

**3. Anticipated outcome(s)/benefits**

The technical infrastructure for Children's Services statutory reporting is more resilient and benefits from improved availability.

Information held in wider Council systems can be incorporated in the Sentinel Partners platform to develop intelligence needed for Strategic objectives aligned to the Council plan.

**4. Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision**

To avoid this extension to the existing supplier. This approach would result in large scale disruption and further costs. It would also result in a prolonged period of instability with the existing reporting arrangements which could impact safeguarding decision making.

To rely on manual processing of data. This would significantly delay progress due to the time consuming nature of manual data handling and increases the likelihood of human error.

**5. Background documents considered** (web link to be included or copies of documents for publishing)

None.

**6. Does the taking of the decision include consideration of Exempt information? If yes, specify the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A and the reasons**

No.

**7. Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Cabinet Member who was consulted by the officer which relates to the decision (in respect of any declared conflict of interest, please provide a note of dispensation granted by the Council's Chief Executive)**

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**8. Monitoring Officer Comments (Monitoring Officer or nominee)**

The decision is an operational decision and within the constitutional remit of the named Director and Portfolio Holder. The contract extension will help the Council achieve best value for money throughout the term of the arrangement.

**9. Section 151 Officer Comments (Deputy S151 Officer or nominee)**

Continuation of the contract demonstrates best value for money.

The cost of the contract extension is covered within existing approved budgets.

**10. Human Resource Comments (Head of People and Culture or nominee)**

There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

**11. Risk Assessment (in accordance with the Report Writing Guide)**

Without stable infrastructure for statutory reporting, there is a risk the Council would not be able to meet its duties in providing a statutory service to the Children, Young People and their families.

This extended remit for a short term period enables us to consider a longer term strategy for our statutory and strategic reporting needs.

**12. If the decision links to a previous one taken by Cabinet, has the Cabinet Tracker been updated?**

Not applicable

**13. Decision Maker(s):**

Name: Joanne Robinson

Title: Assistant Director for Policy,  
Strategy and Resources

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025

**14. Consultation carried out with  
Portfolio Holder(s):**

Name: Councillor Harness

Title: Portfolio Holder for Finance,  
Resources and Assets

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025