

This report is not exempt from the Press and Public; however both appendices are exempt as they contain commercially sensitive information.

Appendix A and B are Exempt under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as these appendices contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regard to the costings of a proposed contract.

It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption would outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information, as the enterprises' commercial interests could be prejudiced by disclosure of commercial information.

Cabinet, 11th April 2016

Improving customer service through the use of modern housing information management systems.

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Graeme Betts, Interim Strategic Director of Adult Care and Housing

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

All

Executive Summary

This report seeks consideration and approval for proposed improvements to RMBC's Integrated Housing Management Systems (IHMS) which is currently under implementation. The IHMS project has already delivered significant improved

customer outcomes through the capture of all customer interactions in one place, enabling us to respond to customers' needs quickly and efficiently.

These enhancements will ensure the Housing departments IT systems include the latest advances in technology, providing real time interactions with our customers and suppliers, specifically in relation to Asset Management and Property Maintenance.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Endorse the proposed enhancements to the IHMS project implementation
2. Agree to additional spend of £139,315 from the £353,000 available Housing Revenue Account Capital Investment Programme budget.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A – System development details

Appendix B – Cost summary out of contract requirements for repairs project phase dated 11th March 2016

Background Papers

Digital Council Strategy

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

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Improving customer service through the use of modern information housing management systems.

1. Recommendations

That Cabinet

- 1.1 Endorse the proposed enhancements to the IHMS project implementation.
- 1.3 Agree to spend of £139,315 from the £353,000 available Housing Revenue Account Capital Investment Programme budget.

2. Background

- 2.1 In the spring of 2011 RBT (Rotherham Brought Together - the partnership between RMBC and British Telecommunications Plc) undertook on behalf of RMBC a procurement exercise for a new integrated housing management system. This new I.T. system was required to replace 7 existing systems some of which were nearing obsolescence and approaching the end of the period in which the original contract supplier would provide maintenance support.
- 2.2 Approval to purchase Civica Universal Housing (UH) was subsequently secured with an agreed capital budget of £860,000.
- 2.3 The project brief was to replace a number of separate management systems including the Housing Management System Northgate (OHMS), Repairs ordering system (ROCC), Asset Management System (APEX) and Athena (In house developed CRM) in addition to a number of bespoke systems. The Integrated Housing Management System (Civica UH) would then replace these separate systems and would manage the £32 million repairs contracts and £84 million of Housing Income collection.
- 2.4 The Housing service generates over 80,000 repairs and servicing transactions in relation to gas serving, responsive repairs, electrical testing each year and the proposed system enhancements will improve the customer experience and provide greater business efficiency. This will be achieved through the integration of information at the first point of customer contact, with appointments being made directly into the contractor systems.
- 2.5 The successful supplier for the Integrated Housing Management System project was Civica UK with their social housing management system, Civica Universal Housing (UH). The procurement exercise was led by RBT with the preferred supplier being identified in October 2011. At the same time the decision to conclude the partnership with BT was taken with the consequence that the contract secured under the BT framework was then novated to RMBC in December 2011. The agreed contract provided the Civica UH blueprint model; this was seen as providing business requirements with some development by the business and RMBC IT.

- 2.6 In implementing Civica UH it is clear that the blueprint primarily provides a skeleton on which to further enhance the body of a housing management system. This has required significant time and resource to develop in line with Rotherham's requirements.
- 2.7 To meet business requirements in the implementation of phase 1, it was agreed not to accept the limitations of the initial system specification, but to remain focussed on achieving better outcomes for customers. For example; bespoke payment cascade functionality was developed to enable the system to cascade one payment across all customer accounts, the alternative was for customers to have to undertake separate transactions for each element of their account.
- 2.8 Throughout phase 1 of the IHMS project, business requirements were reviewed to take account of technological advancements during the implementation period; this resulted in additional enhancements being identified, these are further demonstrated in Appendix A.
- 2.9 Enhancing the system has enabled RMBC to maintain integrity with the initial project brief, which was to develop an integrated system meeting the full current and future business requirements, whilst improving the customer experience. With senior business colleagues being fully involved in the decisions the project has been able to build in business efficiencies with some major changes to current operations, for example, the decision to use the contractors appointment systems and their agreement to provide this at no cost to RMBC will produce an identified saving of £138,000 to the council.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The implementation of the Integrated Housing Management System has been an iterative process due to the size and complexity of the service areas that it encompasses. As a result, the requirements of the system have evolved from the original design solution document, resulting in a number of "out of contract" requirements being identified. These are set out in Appendix A.
- 3.2 These requirements were identified as an outcome from workshops held with contract partners and business colleagues from across the housing department and have been reviewed in detail with the supplier, Civica UK.
- 3.3 The proposed changes provide a real opportunity to build a system that greatly improves the customer experience through real time interactions, increased transparency of information and greater efficiency of interactions with our contract partners, providing greater business intelligence.
- 3.4 The initial project specification provided for information to be sent across system interfaces by method of File Transfer Protocol (FTP) whereby information would be sent and received in a flat file format. This would not be in real time and would result in delays of information transfer. However recent developments in I.T. now allow a practical transfer of data through

web based services. Both the Keystone API and “Webservices” described in Appendix A, replace this outdated method by enabling a live transfer of data, seamlessly transferring information between systems in a live environment.

- 3.5 By fully integrating with the contractors’ appointment systems, RMBC will provide increased customer choice and flexibility, whilst improving productivity for our contract partners’ repairs operatives with a potential increase in shared savings from the partnership as a result of the associated costs savings.
- 3.6 By enabling system generated alerts, we can ensure that at the first point of customer contact, business critical alerts in relation to hazards (i.e. Asbestos) Contact Alerts (such as potentially violent customer, disabled customer etc.), and other property related alerts, are all immediately available to RMBC staff and contractors.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Detailed consideration has been given to not investing in these enhancements, however, the benefit to customers in terms of improved access to services and the likely efficiency savings that will come from increased productivity of the repairs workforce, through real time information, makes these enhancements an extremely desirable option if we are to have an efficient effective and seamless system which enables levels of customer service that are now common place in commercial operations.
- 4.2 If we were not to proceed with these system enhancements, the service would continue to operate, but the customer experience would not reach its full potential and efficiency savings through the shared savings mechanism within the repairs and maintenance contracts may not be realised.
- 4.3 The recommended proposal is to proceed with the implementation including these system enhancements.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Extensive consultation has been undertaken with departmental staff, IT colleagues, suppliers and delivery partners to identify these system developments.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 A decision on this issue is required now if the planned timescale for implementation of Phase 2 IHMS is to remain on schedule. However the timescale for implementation is dependent upon Civica undertaking these system developments immediately to meet the planned project go live date of 19th July 2016.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 The Assistant Director of Housing, Asset Management and Neighbourhood Services has sought advice from Finance colleagues who consider these enhancements to be exempt from Standing Orders on Tendering as these adjustments fall within the original tender.
- 7.2 The one-off costs associated with this proposal equate to £139,315 whilst an annual cost of £5,400 is applicable, should this report be approved.
- 7.3 The IHMS HRA Capital Investment budget for 2016-2017 is £353k and the proposed expenditure is therefore within budget.
- 7.4 Annual licence and maintenance costs are provided for by HRA revenue budgets.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 None

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 None

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 None

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 None

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 The proposed system enhancements have been agreed with our contract partners as being required to further enhance our customer offer, whilst improving operational efficiency.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The primary risk is associated with a reduced level of integration if we did not apply these system enhancements.
- 13.2 The detailed review of system functionality and business requirements has identified the criticality of these developments to achieve a system that can deliver our aspirational level of customer satisfaction.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

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Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Kath Oakes

Director of Legal Services:- Ian Gledhill