



Report to:

Northwards Housing Board

14 June 2006

Item No:

10f

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|---|--|-------------------|----------------------|
| Title: | ICT Strategy | | |
| Date: | 11 May 2006 | | |
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| Confidential: | No | | |
| For: (Please tick action required) | NOTING | DISCUSSION | APPROVAL √ |

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Board of the proposed ICT strategy for Northwards Housing.

The report summarises the Strategy and describes the main themes of the ICT Strategy. The full Strategy is available on request and will be published in due course.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board are asked to approve the ICT Strategy

IMPLICATIONS

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Equality & Diversity: | Yes, the strategy around public access to our IT services will impact on groups such as the elderly or disabled who have difficulty visiting our offices. |
| Financial: | Yes, the nature of the ICT strategy will effect spending on ICT |
| Staffing: | No |
| Decency Target: | Yes, the introduction of the Comino suite of systems will improve the planning and monitoring of work to meet the Decent Homes Standard. |
| Governance: | No |
| Risk Assessment | Not identified presently as a primary risk area. |

Equality & Diversity Implications (Please tick where relevant):

| | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| BME | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Elderly | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Single Parents | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Young | <input type="checkbox"/> | Domestic Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Disability

Alcohol / Drug Mis-users

Consultation/Consideration:

| | Yes, No or N/A: | Name: | Date: |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Sub-Committee: | Yes | Resource & Governance | 23 May 2006 |
| Area Panel: | N/A | | |
| Ward Councillors: | N/A | | |

Summary of ICT Strategy

1. The ICT Strategy has three main aims.

- to provide an effective ICT infrastructure that allows us to support the ICT services Northwards needs. It must not restrict the independence of Northwards from MCC.
- to provide a suite of applications that best support the organisation’s desired business processes. These applications to deliver efficiencies and improved services to customers
- to facilitate innovative ways the organisation can offer services to it customers and where possible ensure these services are available at or near 24/7

2. The main themes of the Strategy to deliver this are:

Infrastructure

The majority of our infrastructure is currently provided by MCC’s Corporate Technology Unit (CTU) via an SLA. The services are generally reliable and faults are fixed within the SLA targets. The technology behind the infrastructure is seen as advanced and flexible enough to support our known requirements during the life of this Strategy. If requirements change we anticipate willingness from CTU to discuss changes and to meet those requirements.

To ensure that the SLA offer value for money it will be reviewed as part of the SLA Review Programme by February 2007 There will also be regular quarterly reviews by Northwards and MCC

Applications

Northwards is implementing a complete new suite of business applications that will cover all its main business requirements.

- The finance system is already live
- The NH web site was operational in time for “go live”
- The new improved intranet will be in by early June
- The HR system is scheduled for July
- and the first phase of the housing management system is scheduled for October.

These applications will be modern, integrated, flexible and easier to use. They will help Northwards to be independent from MCC Housing Services and enable us to respond rapidly to change.

They also allow us the opportunity to implement in an integrated way a range of new technologies that offer efficiencies and service improvements.

Self Service

To complement existing face to face and telephone methods of service delivery, the Strategy strengthens the ability of tenants and customers to find information or order services themselves on-line.

The Strategy identifies the desire to extend our already strong web services. There will also be investigations of other methods such as text messaging and digital TV.

The other facet of providing self service methods of service delivery is the ability of our customers to access them. We need recognise that web access amongst our tenants is lower than the national average. However, the proportion is growing and we should not use the relative lack of access as an excuse to do nothing. This Strategy outlines a number of possible options in this area.

Flexible Working

To improve service delivery to tenants we are examining the use of hand held devices by our staff whilst they are working out on the patch. These devices will have a live connection back to the main systems, to allow to transmission of jobs and information to and from the Comino system in real time.

In order to make the best use of staff we need to offer flexible working practices that suit individual needs, and also make the best use of each person from Northwards' perspective. The Strategy explores areas such as home working.