



Report to:

Northwards Housing Board
13th March 2007

Item No:

11d

Title:	Digital Television		
Date:	5 March 2007		
Author:	David Heys	Tel No:	0161 740 6279
E mail:	d.heys@northwardshousing.co.uk		
Confidential:	No		
For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING	DISCUSSION	APPROVAL √
PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To advise the Board on the current status with regards to Digital TV upgrade works to Northwards communal TV aerial systems and to obtain formal approval to the recommendations below as considered and commended by the Procurement & Property Sub Committee on 28 th February 2007.			
RECOMMENDATIONS			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a bid be submitted for funding of £42,000 from the 2008/09 capital programme in order to complete the upgrading of communal TV aerial systems. 2. That Technical Services be instructed to enter into negotiation with MDTV to carry out the remaining communal aerial upgrading work (Option 3). 3. That advice and guidance notes be put on Northwards Housing's web site for all tenants together with links to the Government's "digitaltelevision.gov" and Granada's "digitaluk.co.uk" web sites. 			
IMPLICATIONS			
Equality & Diversity:	Digital TV provides subtitling and audio descriptions for people with hearing and sight impairments and contributes to achieving our equality and diversity aspirations.		
Financial:	Funding of approximately £42,000 will be required from the 2008/09 capital programme for this upgrading work.		
Staffing:	There are no staffing implications to this report.		
Decency Target:	This report has no direct implications on decency targets.		
Governance:	There are no governance implications associated with this report.		
Risk Assessment:	Not considered a primary risk area.		

Equality & Diversity Implications (Please tick where relevant):

BME	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young	<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol/Drug Mis-users	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consultation/Consideration:

	Yes, No or N/A:	Name:	Date:
Sub-Committee:	Yes	Procurement & Property	28 February 2007
Area Panel:	No		
Task Groups:	No		
Ward Councillors:	N/A		

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Today, two-thirds of UK homes have digital TV. However, one in four cannot get it via their aerial and many still cannot receive channel Five. In order to make the superior and more efficient digital options more widely available, it is necessary to boost the digital TV signal by switching off the rapidly ageing “analogue” system.
- 1.2 Switch over to digital is being done by TV region and the Granada region, which serves Manchester, is scheduled to be switched over during the last 3 months of 2009.
- 1.3 Digital TV not only provides improved picture and sound quality, but also provides digital radio and other benefits such as subtitling and audio descriptions for people with hearing and sight impairments.

2.0 Upgrading of Communal Aerial Systems

- 2.1 Northwards Housing is committed to providing an effective and reliable digital TV signal to all properties that are served by a communal TV aerial system and this affects the following properties:
 - All multi storey blocks
 - All sheltered housing blocks
 - Several low and medium rise blocks of flats (see Appendix 2)
 - A small number of low rise houses in the Harpurhey area. (see Appendix 2)
- 2.2 Most of the affected dwellings served by a communal TV aerial system have already been upgraded to digital including all multi storey blocks and all but two of the sheltered housing blocks. These blocks have been fitted with an Integrated Reception System (IRS) and are listed in Appendix 1.

(N.B. – An IRS system is capable of receiving both digital and satellite signals which is necessary on multi storey and sheltered housing blocks in order to obviate the need for individual satellite dishes to each flat)

- 2.3 The properties listed on Appendix 2 have yet to be upgraded to digital and, in order to complete this before the analogue signal is switched off in the Autumn of 2009, funding of £42,000 will be required from the 2008/09 capital programme.
- 2.4 For the purposes of consistency, it is proposed to install the superior Integrated Reception System to the two outstanding sheltered housing blocks but, in order to minimise cost, it is proposed to fit the less expensive Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) system to the remaining low and medium rise flats, maisonettes and houses.

3.0 Procurement Options

- 3.1 There are three options available to Northwards Housing to procure this work as follows:
 1. Competitive tender
 2. Negotiate a target cost with Manchester Working Limited (MWL) under the current Framework Contract.

3. Negotiate a fixed price with existing specialist service provider, MDTV

3.2 **Option 1** would ensure best value but is a time consuming process for technical staff who could otherwise be engaged on the Decent Homes programme.

3.3 **Option 2** would appear to offer a relatively simple solution. However, this is likely to be the most expensive option, given that Manchester Working Limited would probably out source this work to a specialist sub-contractor and levy their agreed overheads and profit on-costs accordingly.

3.4 **Option 3** offers both a simple and, potentially, the most cost effective solution. MDTV has already won all three competitive tenders, previously issued by Manchester City Council for the digital upgrading work to multi story blocks and sheltered housing blocks across the City. They have also provided budget rates for the outstanding upgrading work that are favourably comparable to those previously tendered.

3.5 The Board is, therefore, recommended to approve **Option 3** for the procurement of this work.

4.0 Information and Advice to Tenants

4.1 In order to keep tenants fully informed about what Northwards Housing is doing in readiness for the switch over to digital, it is proposed to have articles in future editions of "Northwards News". It is also proposed to put more detailed information and guidance on Northwards Housing's web site with a links to the Government's "digitaltelevision.gov" and Granada's "digitaluk.co.uk" web sites.

4.2 This will advise those tenants who are currently receiving analogue TV through a communal aerial system, that they need do nothing in respect of their aerial system. They will, however, need to purchase a digital "set top" box to operate in conjunction with their existing analogue TV or purchase a new digital TV.

4.3 Tenants with their own aerial will also have to purchase a digital "set top" box or a new digital TV and may also need to install a new TV aerial which is capable of receiving the digital signal. Most independent aerials should already be capable of receiving digital signals but this can only be assessed on an individual property basis.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 That a bid be submitted for funding of £42,000 from the 2008/09 capital programme in order to complete the upgrading of communal TV aerial systems.

5.2 That Technical Services be instructed to enter into negotiation with MDTV to carry out the remaining communal aerial upgrading work (Option 3).

5.3 That advice and guidance notes be put on Northwards Housing's web site for all tenants together with links to the Government's "digitaltelevision.gov" and Granada's "digitaluk.co.uk" web sites.

**List of properties with communal aerial systems
which have already been upgraded to digital as at 31
December 2006
Multi Storey Blocks**

Bradford Court.
Cartmell Court
Clifford Lamb Court.
Deepdale Court
Dobson Court.
Hayden Court.
Kentmere Court.
Kingsbridge Court
Lancaster Court.
Lincoln Court.
Liverton Court.
Pevensey Court.
Rushcroft Court.
Rusland Court.
Sanderson Court
Sandyhill Court
Shackleton Court.
Sheriden Court
Somerton Court
Whitebeck Court.

Sheltered Housing Blocks

Annie Derby Court
Apprentice Court.
Edward Grant Court.
George Halstead Court.
Harry Pigott Court.
Joseph Dean Court.
Sir Robert Thomas Court

Others

Victoria Square
Central House

Properties with communal aerial systems which have yet to be upgraded to digital		
Property	Number of Dwellings	Anticipated Cost (£)
Sheltered Housing Blocks		
Duncan Edwards Court.	30	7,500
White Moss Gardens, Charlestown	28	8,500
Low & Medium Rise Flats		
Bridgnorth Road, Blackley	16	500
Kingsbridge Road, Harpurhey	32	1,500
Kesteven Road, Harpurhey	42	1,500
Bramhope Walk, Harpurhey	8	500
Hurstead Walk, Harpurhey	8	500
Dunoon Walk, Harpurhey	12	500
Dam Head Drive, Blackley	40	3,500
White Moss Road, Blackley	33	1,500
Haddington Drive, Blackley	30	2,000
Hillingdon Drive, Moston	12	500
Riverdale Road, Blackley	20	1,000
Inchcape Drive, Blackley	8	500
Others		
Dorchester House	9	500
St James' House	9	500
Moston Court	28	500
Lowton Court	28	500
Harpurhey houses (see footnote*)	21	10,000
	Totals:	414
		£42,000

*This parcel of 21 houses has a communal TV aerial system which was installed by Manchester City Council approximately two years ago. This was necessary following the construction of a tall building in the immediate vicinity which effectively "blocked" the signal from the Winter Hill TV transmitter. Unfortunately, it has now been established from a recent survey, that this system is unsuitable for upgrading to receive the digital signal and, consequently, needs to be replaced with a new, "digital ready" system. The houses served by this system are:

- 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 & 11 Tiptree Wk
- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 & 13 Kingcombe Walk
- 3 & 5 Thornsett Close
- 3 & 5 Hanslope Wk