

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

14 November 2016

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 DOCUMENT IMAGING SYSTEM FOR HOUSING SERVICES

The report seeks Cabinet approval to expand the existing Revenue and Benefits Document Imaging Processing (DIP) Capital Plan scheme to include the Housing Service.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 There are currently two Document Image Processing (DIP) systems used by the Council, which are IDOX and Northgate Information@Work.
- 1.1.2 An evaluation of the IDOX DIP system has deemed it unsuitable for the Housing section's business needs, primarily due to the document workflow solution.
- 1.1.3 In February 2015 Council approved a DIP scheme for the Revenue and Benefits Section as part of the budget setting process, enabling the procurement of the Northgate Information@Work DIP system. It was anticipated that subject to successful implementation the system would be rolled out across the Housing Service. This system was implemented by Revenue and Benefits in December 2015 and has helped the section run more efficiently, providing greater flexibility in terms of how work is automatically allocated and/or manually distributed, which has resulted in work being processed in a timelier manner. The system has enhanced security features enabling controls/ restrictions to be set based on document types and staff permissions.
- 1.1.4 Revenues and benefits have been pleased with the level of support provided by the software supplier. This gives greater confidence that should any problems arise, they will be resolved quickly.
- 1.1.5 In order to continue with the modernisation of the Housing Service and achieve further efficiencies following the redesign of the Service it is proposed to now roll out the Information@Work to include the Housing Service.
- 1.1.6 The Housing Service uses paper based files to store information relating to our customers applications for housing assistance and advice. For the housing register alone there are approximately 10,000 files held by the Council containing

personal, and in some cases sensitive information, which at present must be manually maintained in various locations within the Council offices. This outdated method of storing customer records is costly in terms of both manual labour and the physical space required to store these records, as well as increasing the Council's exposure to risks associated with holding such information.

- 1.1.7 Housing Services share a similar customer base with the Revenue and Benefits section and it is beneficial for both services to use the same system for the purpose of storing and sharing customers' documents and associated information. The security model inherent within Information@Work allows the physical enablement of information sharing protocols. This benefits customers and reduces inefficiencies by using the same documents across services wherever possible.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 Improved compliance with Data Protection, Freedom of Information and other legal obligations. The systematic management of information and particularly personal data through the robust application of retention and disposal policies could dramatically reduce risk of fines by the Information Commissioners.
- 1.2.2 Improved compliance with Section 8 of the National Archives Record management code.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 The total cost of the expansion is estimated at £40,000 and comprises:

- Licenses and Support - £4,000
- Implementation costs - £24,500
- Hardware/ Ancillary - £3,000
- Interface with Housing system (Locata) - £7,000
- Contingency - £1,500

- 1.3.2 The expansion is to be funded by way of virement from existing Capital Plan schemes as follows:

- £8,000 from the existing Revenues and Benefits DIP scheme
- £16,000 from Housing Renewable Energy Schemes
- £16,000 from the 2015/16 underspend on Housing Disabled Facility Grants (DFG)

1.3.3 There will be an additional annual support and maintenance charge of £675 per annum based on 18 licences (users).

1.3.4 Members will be aware from previous reports to the Board that the virement from the Disabled Facility Grants budgets does not diminish expenditure for DFG use as we have seen an increase of 87 per cent in government grant funding for 2016/17.

1.4 Risk Assessment

1.4.1 Reduced risk of lost or misplaced documents through the use of an electronic document management system. We are required to hold documents & records for many years and there is a risk that some may be irretrievably lost if steps are not taken to protect them.

1.4.2 Improved adhesion of document retention and disposal policies.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

1.5.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Procurement.

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet approve to expand the existing Revenue and Benefits DIP Capital Plan scheme to include the Housing and that the expansion is funded by way of virement from Capital Plan schemes as set out in section 1.3 of the report.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Jason Wheble
Satnam Kaur

Nil

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health