

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, ICT & GOVERNANCE

THE BOARD
15 MAY 2008

INFORMATION SYSTEMS STRATEGY REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 NCH's business information needs and issues have been audited and a new NCH specific Information Systems (IS) strategy has been developed and subsequently approved by EMT. The new strategy provides a sound basis on which plan and control business process changes as well as manual information handling arrangements or electronic information systems (i.e. ICT) changes in future. An associated 'Information Systems and ICT Review Report' document has also been developed, which addresses the suitability of current ICT support arrangements, ICT staffing structure and also highlights the changes needed to the previous ICT (i.e. technology) strategy to bring it line with the new business focused IS Strategy thinking.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve / acknowledge that the IS Strategy document and the associated 'Information Systems and ICT Review Report' document are adopted as the official baseline for business and technology strategies relating to information management within NCH. The documents to be used to provide a working framework for future IS and ICT planning subject to IS Strategy Group governance and detailed budgeting (to replace the indicative figures in the baseline documents).

3 REPORT

- 3.1 The IS and ICT strategy review was necessary because the previous ICT Strategy had become out of date due to:
- Mock Inspection outcomes
 - Restructure of NCH
 - Changes in NCH ICT management capability
- 3.2 NCC Group, an experienced consultancy with extensive housing sector and ICT experience, were engaged to carry out the work. The method adopted for carrying out the review was to use a top-down as well as a bottom-up approach of consultation from Board level down to front-line and support staff. These were carried out by individual interviews, workshops for each functional area of the company and by assessment of relevant business plans and strategies. NCC Group also interviewed ICT managers within NCC responsible for service provision to NCH.

- 3.3 From the IS Workshops with staff, numerous information related issues were identified and documented as a primary or secondary inhibitor for the achievement of a specific business objective important to the business function concerned. Each issue was identified as related to a particular information type. By identifying the issues, the type of information involved and the business impact we can immediately begin to assess the impact of solving each individual or related group of issues as well as to prioritise them in a logical manner.
- 3.4 Analysis of the information issues showed that although there is a wide range of problems to be tackled, the largest number of cases involved problems with incomplete data, with manual systems and with tactical data sources (the latter are databases set up independently of the company's main systems to address some local need but which deny the rest of the company access to part of the overall information picture).
- 3.5 NCC Group and NCH ICT have developed the IS Strategy using the above information coupled with knowledge and experience of best practice in other housing organisations. The resulting Strategy document provides an analysis of:
- Information issues to be tackled
 - IS Strategy principles to guide IS and ICT governance
 - Specific recommendations for system developments or implementation
- 3.6 Key principles recommended for adoption include:
1. Aim to provide seamless customer service via use of common processes and technologies whenever possible
 2. Company-wide adherence to a single vision and strategy for information management – allowing coherent ICT staffing, planning, budgeting, procurement and service delivery efforts. In other words a common approach to information and ICT across NCH
 3. Adoption of Prince 2 based formal project management methods to ensure that necessary changes are implemented with reduced risk, under full business control and are benefits focused.
 4. That an IS Strategy Group (EMT led) be set up to govern implementation of the IS and the ICT strategies – and to ensure that all systems and technology investments are business-led and benefits driven
- 3.7 Key recommendations from the IS Strategy are:
1. Implement a series of Quick Wins. These are fixes for many of the information issues identified by staff which offer a large return for small investment in time and money
 2. Carry out a structured data cleaning exercise – beginning with Northgate
 3. Review Northgate and ROCC implementations to ensure that maximum benefit is being achieved – if necessary re-implementing modules according to current and future business requirements
 4. Review options for and potentially replace the OneWorld and

Human Resources systems

5. Develop and information and business intelligence strategy based on a consistent reporting process underpinned by a single application. To include development of a standard set of core corporate reports and assessment of additional performance management tools
6. Review the potential for introducing workflow tools – e.g. Northgate Task Manager – assessing against individual business area's requirements
7. Implement an Electronic Document and Record's Management system to increase efficiency and effectiveness of information management across the company – likely starting with the storage of Tenancy Applications to address Audit Commission inspection issues
8. Exploit Customer Relationship Management functionality following the consolidation of the three NCH call-centres – to provide improved levels of service to the customer and to build relationships with tenants and business partners

3.8 Next steps:

- Finalise budget availability to support IS and ICT developments
- Develop options and costs for IS systems roadmap for governance approval
- Set up the IS Strategy Group
- Initiate programme of Quick Wins projects to give early and visible benefits ahead of medium term and more strategic projects
- Revise ICT Strategy in line with the IS and ICT Review document recommendations
- Convert the base-lined IS Strategy document into a working IS governance and strategy performance measurement tool

4 **IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1 Effective, strategic control of IS and also of ICT is essential if coordinated improvements in business processes and ICT systems are to be achieved.

5 **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Without an adopted IS Strategy and ICT Strategy, there is a risk of ad-hoc development continuing. There would be no business led corporate control of IS and ICT developments with consequent potential wastage of resources and poor interoperability of systems.

6 **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, ICT AND GOVERNANCE**

- 6.1 The Director of Finance, ICT and Governance is the author of this report.

7 VALUE FOR MONEY & EFFICIENCY ISSUES

- 6.1 The IS Strategy and the IS and ICT Review documents deal primarily with how to resolve real business issues of quality and efficiency and so will contribute to VFM gains across all effected areas.

8 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Effective IS and ICT governance arrangements will ensure that equality and diversity matters are given due consideration when reviewing and developing systems.

9 BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- 9.1 'Information Systems Strategy 2008-2011' (14 page executive summary only) provided as an appendix to this report.

Note that the full 'Information Systems Strategy 2008-2011' (82 pages) and the 'Information Systems and ICT Review' (38 pages) documents have not been attached, but are available upon request.

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DATE: 7 May 2008