Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission   8 October 2020
Council   27 October 2020

Wards affected: All wards

Upgrade of Mobile Housing Solution

Report of Director (Community Services)

1.   Purpose of report

1.1   To inform Members of the current position with the mobile solution software (SVS) utilised by Housing Repairs to manage responsive repairs and planned works.

1.2   To advise Members of the potential risks to service delivery if advancements to mobile solutions are not supported by upgrading current arrangements.

1.3   To seek approval from Members for a supplementary capital and expenditure budget to be established for the recommended Repairs Mobile solution.

2.   Recommendation

2.1   That Members approve the recommendation to purchase AccuServ - Orchard Repair Mobile to replace current SVS software.

2.2   A supplementary capital budget of £71,850 and an annual revenue budget of £10,015 is established.

3.   Background to the report

The Council's Digital Strategy supports our workforce to work in an agile manner in order to provide efficient and effective services to meet the needs of our customers. In 2014 the Housing Repairs team implemented a new system called Direct Works and SVS Mobile to mobilise our workforce and offer a paperless solution to our repairs and maintenance processes, working

alongside our existing Orchard system; thus meeting our digital objectives and improving efficiency, productivity, and in turn customer satisfaction.

Although our current solution does meet our essential requirements, Orchard has advised that the SVS product is now retired and support will be revoked from December 2020. We currently have no ICT upgrades or security releases going forward and any technical support is limited. To mitigate against this risk, further procurement of this system or an alternative system is required. This will enable continuance of our safe working practices and compliance. In addition, this provides us with an opportunity to create further efficiencies within the system which will ultimately build capacity within the team, capacity which is much needed given increasing service demands due to changing legislation and our customer base.

3.1   OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND PROCUREMENT

The Housing Service uses Orchard Housing as its primary Housing Management system. A number of alternative providers were considered against our specifications which are cited in Appendix A. There are no readily accessible procurement frameworks available for the provision of a Repairs Mobile Working solution; alternative solutions that were explored did not meet the specified requirements. The preferred option, to ensure standardisation and integration with the existing Housing Management system is further procurement of an Orchard solution. There are considerable efficiencies in adopting an Orchard Housing product rather than purchasing an entirely new system which would require integration and officer time, across a number of teams, to mange and support its implementation.

Part 3 section 4.3 of the Constitution states that;

Notwithstanding compliance with EU public procurement rules, tenders also need not be invited where.

The contract consists of goods/services the same as currently in use by the council, which are required, in the interest of standardisation, for maintenance or other special reasons. In such a case, a report should be prepared and presented to SLT stating such reasons.

As this is an upgrade rather than a new system, SLT have confirmed that there is no requirement to tender for a new system.

ICT were also consulted regarding the proposed solution. ICT confirmed that moving towards an Apple based system would be preferable to remaining on an Android system as there are significantly less security risks in doing so.

The table below details the associated costs incurred including the annual revenue budget required, and the annual support and maintenance costs. This includes continuous development, updates, and upgrades, patches including security updates, technical support and the provision of a support desk.

Option	Name	Description	Initial Outlay	Annual Cost	Cost Over 5 years
1	SVS (unsupported system)	Continue with SVS and accept the risks of an un-supported solution with no security updates.	£0	£8095.13	£0
2	Orchard Accuserv	A product from our existing Housing Management Software supplier, Orchard.	£71,850	£10,015*	£101,895

*We already pay annual revenue costs for the existing SVS software, therefore the additional amount required is the difference which is £1,919.87.

3.2   Option 1 – Remain with existing SVS Software

From December 2020 we will no longer have any support or patch upgrades to remedy system errors and arising issues. Any issues that arise would be chargeable. Each occasion would cost a minimum of £400 which is for half a day's work. The software is already retired and we no longer receive updates, upgrades or security releases.
This option creates other inefficiencies and would see a return to paper based solutions further impacting capacity.
By remaining with this system we may see a decline in customer satisfaction as problems or issues with the systems can not be easily remedied.

3.3   Option 2 – Upgrade to Orchard's Accuserv Mobile Solution

Moving to this upgrade would ensure business continuity whilst creating further opportunities for service improvements; informed by our customer satisfaction surveys and resident feedback.
The ability to monitor voids and reactive trade in conjunction with other housing services would improve, enabling us to better direct resources and meet performance targets.
Other system benefits include:

- This upgrade would allow us to carry out void works, planned maintenance, variations to existing jobs and inspections digitally, improving efficiencies to all types of work carried out by In-House by reducing manual paperwork, printing, scanning and data entry.
- A reduce carbon footprint- eliminating the need for paper and scanning.
- The ability to attach documents and technical drawings to job tickets and inspections, satisfying tenant feedback.
- Real time information-creating flexibility within the scheduling system to redeploy officers more dynamically.
- The scheduling system is integrated with google maps and provides suggestions and guidance to book better geographically, creating fuel and time efficiencies.

- This solution allows the system to send text messages to tenants in relation to appointments and "engineer on way" texts. This is the biggest request from tenant groups in relation to repairs. This would also reduce the number of tenants that our out at the time of appointments, which reduces wasted operative time.
- In-House will be able to offer narrower appointment time windows, rather than just AM/PM. This also satisfies feedback from tenants who have asked for this to help support them fit appointments around school run times and working hours.
- The upgraded system will allow the scheduling team to share individual requirements with engineers such as keysafe information or waiting longer for tenants to come to the door if they have mobility issues etc.
- This solution offers a stock monitoring system, allowing real time stock ordering – creating even further staffing efficiencies by not needing to visit merchant as frequently. Automated stock updates for van stocks – reducing the number of visits to a tenant to complete one job by increasing the ability to get the job right the first time with the appropriate equipment.
- A tenant signature or satisfaction survey can be captured at the end of the repair, thus encouraging engineers to strive for higher satisfaction rates from tenants and reducing complaints.
  By upgrading the current software capacity and efficiencies will be realised across the Housing Service. The system will also enable us to make greater progress towards climate change objectives.

3.4   RECOMMENDED OPTION

Whilst additional costs will be incurred in the short term to upgrade the system there are considerable benefits to both the customer and service delivering in doing so.

4.   Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

4.1   This report is to be taken in open session.

5.   Financial implications [AW]

5.1   A supplementary capital budget of £71,850 is needed with an annual revenue cost of £10,015. These costs are not covered by any identified savings or reserve balances.

5.2   As the supplementary is over £50,000, the constitution requires approval by Council.

6.   Legal implications [MR]

6.1   Contract is in excess of £50,001.00.

7.   Corporate Plan implications

7.1   The following objective will be met.
           Places- to improve the quality of existing homes.

8.   Consultation

8.1   None required.

9.   Risk implications

9.1   It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks
       which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2   It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will
       remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion
       based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with
       this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in
       place to manage them effectively.

9.3   The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were
       identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks		
Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failure to meet the objectives set our within the corporate Digital Strategy, should a solution not be met.	Implementation of one of the options recommended	Maddy Shellard

10.   Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

10.1   The adoption of one of the systems recommended will support the completion
       of repairs work across our housing stock, including rural areas.

11.   Climate implications

11.1   The recommended option has considerable climate benefits. It will enable the
       council to further reduce its carbon footprint by reducing fuel emissions by
       working smarter. By integrating with google maps, jobs can be booked in
       geographically which should reduce fuel and emissions from excessive
       travelling. It will also enable a move to a paperless system.

12.   Corporate implications

12.1   By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into
       account:

       -   Community safety implications
       -   Environmental implications

- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

Background papers: Digital Strategy

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