

Report of: Housing Systems Strategic Manager

Report to: Neil Evan, Director of Environment and Housing

Date: 10th June 2013

Subject: To Seek Approval to Purchase Orchard Information System's Mobile App

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Summary of main issues

- 1.1 This report has been compiled to provide information in support of the procurement of the Orchard Information System's (OIS) Mobile App which will provide Leeds City Council (LCC) customers with the ability to access and update Housing Management data in real time using their mobile telephone.
- 1.2 The recent development of LCC's Internet site removed the ability that allowed tenants to view their rent account balance on line. With the issues that the Welfare change will bring, the ALMOs have raised concerns around the removal of this functionality. Housing Services have requested that tenants have the ability to view their rent balance and make a rent payment using their mobile phone.
- 1.3 The purchase of OIS Mobile App will allow tenants to:-
- View their rent balance on line
 - Request an account related call-back
 - Make a rent payment
 - View their rent arrears
 - Update customer information
 - View their own personal information
 - Log a council house repairs
 - View a repairs appointments
 - Receive upcoming events in their neighbourhood
 - Send a message to back office staff
- 1.4 The cost to purchase and implement the OIS Mobile App total £15,400.

- 1.5 Once implemented this product will not only improve customer access but will also provide cash savings due to staff time handling telephone calls on rent queries, rent payments, logging of council house repairs and updating personal information.
- 1.6 LCC staff are aware that many tenants within Leeds do not have access within their homes to the internet, therefore even with the provision of a Self Service Portal some tenants will still struggle to access their data held within our Housing Management System. Most council house tenants own a mobile telephone, therefore the OIS Mobile App will be widely accessible to our tenants from within their home or when they are out and about.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that approval is granted to procure OIS's Mobile App to provide our customers with the ability to access and update real time Housing Management data via their mobile phone.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To gain approval for the purchase of OIS's Mobile App to provide LCC customers with the ability to access and update real time Housing Management data.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The recent development of LCC's Internet site removed the ability that allowed tenants to view their rent account balance on line. With the issues Welfare change will bring, the ALMOs have raised concerns around the removal of this functionality. Housing Services have requested that tenants have the ability to view their rent balance and make a rent payment using mobile technologies.
- 2.2 Therefore Housing Services is currently working with OIS and our customer base to upgrade Orchard Housing which will provide LCC with a new web enabled product and also enable LCC to purchase new functionality that was unavailable in the previous Orchard version.
- 2.3 Demonstrations of this product have been provided for Housing Services and ALMO senior managers after which there was an overwhelming response requesting Housing Services purchase OIS's Mobile App.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 In April 2013 the Council launched the new LCC website. This development removed the functionality that provided LCC customers with the ability to view their rent account balance on line.
- 3.2 With the issues that the Welfare change will bring, the ALMOs have raised concerns around the removal of this functionality. Housing Services have requested that tenants have the ability to view their rent balance and make a rent payment using mobile technologies. With the removal of the ability for tenants to be able to view their rent account on line, this could not only raise the customer telephone contact at the Contact Centre and one stop shops, but will also prevent tenants being able to check their rent account on line, which could lead to additional tenants falling into rent arrears.
- 3.3 The Orchard Housing Information System retains LCC housing management data which currently can only be updated by LCC and ALMO staff.
- 3.4 Currently customers:-
 - a) are able to log a Council house repair on line if they have access to a PC but not have the ability to view or log their repairs appointment via a mobile telephone. Housing Services and the ALMOs have requested that tenants have the ability to log a repair and view their repairs appointments using mobile technologies.
 - b) are unable to update their own personal information. Housing Services struggle to keep the Orchard database up to date, as tenant information such as customer emails addresses, telephone numbers, etc, constantly change.

Housing Services and the ALMOs have requested that tenants have the ability to update their own person information using mobile technologies.

3.5 Housing Management information contains personal and confidential data. It is essential that a sufficiently secure system is introduced so that customer can access and update their personal data with confidence that it is secure.

3.6 OIS has a Mobile App that LCC Housing Services can utilise to fully meet these requirements.

Error! Bookmark not defined.

3.7 In addition to the improved service this product will provide for our customers, saving around staff efficiency will also be achieved.

3.8 Savings will also be made in staff time:-

- by reducing the number of calls and email requests the Contact Centre receives for information on rent balances and repairs appointments.
- as customers will be able to view live data so reduce the need to contact the Contact Centre to check if data submitted on line has been received. Currently data submitted on line take 24 hours prior to the web updating information submitted. The mobile app will provide real time updates.
- checking rent arrears and organising payments.
- checking date and time of repairs appointments

3.6 The cost to purchase and implementation of the OIS Mobile App total £15,400.

3.7 After consultation with ICT Strategic Sourcing section they have advised that Housing Services is able to purchase this solution under the terms of the LCC Corporate Procurement Regulation 12.1 which states 'On a case by case basis where the Relevant Chief Officer deems it appropriate for the efficiency of service provision and it represents Best Value for Money for the Council they shall be able to use their discretion to raise the amount referred to in CPR 11.1 and CPR 12.1 to £25k and award a contract to a specific Contractor without the need for competition'.

4. Consultation and Engagement

4.1 A number of demonstrations of the new Orchard Housing system and products that are available to purchase during and after the upgrade of the system has been undertaken by the Housing Systems Support Team and OIS to all senior managers within Housing Services, the ALMOs and BITMO. One of the new products demonstrated was the Mobile App. At each demonstration staff expressed an interest in this product and have subsequently emailed the Housing System Support Team requesting the procurement of this product and highlighting the business benefits as detailed above.

6 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

6.1 There are no Equality and Diversity/Cohesion and Integration issues

7. Council Policies and City Priorities

7.1 The purchase of the Mobile App will contribute to the Council's response to the Welfare change as it will allow tenants to update incorrect information held within the Orchard systems, allow tenant to keep an eye on their rent arrears/balance if in the event their housing benefit does not fully cover the cost of their rent and keep them up to date on Council events occurring within their area.

7.2 The purchase will contribute to the Council's drive for staff efficiencies by providing the tenants with the ability to update our Housing systems themselves.

7.3 The purchase will contribute to the Council's value 'Treating People Fairly'. To improve the way we treat our tenants fairly, we need to understand their individual communication and access needs. The Mobile App will provide our tenants with a solution to overcome some of their access needs by providing tenants with easy access in real time to data held on our Housing Management Systems.

8. Resources and Value for Money

8.1 Whilst the costs to purchase and implement the Mobile App amounts to £15,400, the service offering will provide staff efficiencies and greatly reduce customer contact issues.

8.3 The Housing Systems Support Team will work with OIS to implement this new module. Budget for the purchase and implementation of the SSP will be resourced from within the Housing ICT budget.

9. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

9.1 ICT Strategic Sourcing has advised that Housing Services do have the option to purchase OIS's Self Service Portal without competition under the provisions of CPR 11.2.

10. Risk Management

10.1 Risks will be managed through the ICT Delivery of Successful Change project management methodologies throughout the implementation of the Mobile App.

11. Conclusions

11.1 The introduction of OIS's Mobile App will bring significant benefits to both tenants and LCC staff on issues that the Welfare change will bring. The Mobile App will help overcome some of our tenant's access needs by providing them with easy access their own personal data held in the Council's Housing Management system, the ability to update any incorrect information in real time, gain real time access to their rent account balance, provide easier access of their rent arrears and allow them to make a rent payment if in the event their housing benefit does not fully cover the cost of their rent. The product will also provide staff efficiencies within LCC and the ALMOs.

12. Recommendations

12.1 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve the purchase of OIS's Mobile App to enable tenants easy access to LCC Housing Management data held within the OIS.

13 Background documents

None

.1 The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.