

DELEGATED DECISION NOTIFICATION

REF NO ¹
D35273

DECISION MAKER Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)

SUBJECT² Corporate IVR Solution

DECISION ³	COUNCIL FUNCTION <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SUBJECT TO CALL IN	EXECUTIVE DECISION (KEY) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ⁴ EXEMPT FROM CALL IN: YES / NO	EXECUTIVE DECISION (MAJOR) <input type="checkbox"/> ⁴ EXEMPT FROM CALL IN: YES / NO	EXECUTIVE DECISION (OTHER) <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SUBJECT TO CALL IN
<p>ICT have an approved capital scheme to fund ICT development projects including staff time and purchase of hardware/software. ICT Management Board, at its meeting on 27 February 2009, supported the proposal for £261,865 to be allocated for expenditure on the creation of an IVR system for the Corporate Contact Centre. This money will, therefore, be transferred from the ICT capital scheme into a newly created capital scheme – Corporate IVR Solution.</p> <p>Breakdown of expenditure: Equipment £72,833 ICT Development Staff £40,000 Departmental Staff £50,286 Hardware/Software £71,150 Other £27,596</p> <p>The project will deliver an Integrated Voice Recognition infrastructure within the Corporate Contact Centre that is adaptable and able to provide various levels of automated telephony to services across the Council.</p> <p>The attached report provides further detail on the proposal.</p>				

AFFECTED WARDS

ADVICE SOUGHT		Yes	No
Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Equal Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT have been consulted to ensure the product supports the council's corporate ICT agendas.			

DECLARED OFFICER / MEMBER INTERESTS⁵ None

¹ This reference number will be assigned by Governance Services and notified to you

² A brief heading should be inserted

³ Brief details of the decision should be inserted. This note must set out the substance of the decision, options considered and the reason for deciding upon the chosen option, although care must be taken not to disclose any confidential or commercially sensitive information. Guidance on the substance of the note is available from Governance Services

⁴ For Key and Major decisions only. If exempt from Call In details to be provided in the report. The Call In period expires at 5.00 pm on the 5th working day after publication. Scrutiny Support will notify decision makers of matters called in by no later than 12.00 noon on the 6th day.

DISPENSATION BY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE:

BACKGROUND PAPERS⁶

The Business Case for a corporate IVR solution is available if required.

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

YES NO RULE NO 10.4⁷ ()

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN (OTHER REASONS/ ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED)

	Yes	No	Date
Executive Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11/3/09
Ward Councillors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Chief Officers Affected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Others (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____

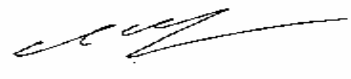
CONTACT PERSON

Paddy Clarke

CONTACT NO

2660001

AUTHORISED SIGNATORY⁸

	DATE 02/04/09
James Rogers	

	KEY	MAJOR	OTHER
⁹ *First publication (5 day notice)	2/4/09		
Commencement for Call In	9/4/09		
Last date for Call In	20/4/09		
Implementation Date	21/4/09		

* If key decision not on Forward Plan, the reason and need that the decision be taken are that:

The IVR business case demonstrated that the Council could achieve significant savings through the implementation of IVR in the Corporate Contact Centre as well as providing the customer with access to Council services outside of normal office hours. The amount of savings achievable in 2009/10 as a result of this project is dependant upon the first phase being completed by 1st July 2009. In order for this to happen, development work must commence in April 2009 (the development is expected to take approximately three months), hence the requirement for this funding to be released as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the deadline for inclusion in the Forward Plan for April was missed - a further delay until May would make it impossible to achieve the required delivery date and would reduce the level of savings available to the Council.

⁵ No officer having a pecuniary interest in any matter should take a decision in relation to that matter. Other interests of a non-disqualifying nature should be recorded here.

⁶ A separate Index should be prepared if necessary. ALL DOCUMENTATION UPON WHICH THE DECISION WAS BASED MUST BE RETAINED AND BE READILY ACCESSIBLE SO IT CAN BE PRODUCED SHOULD THE DECISION BE CHALLENGED

⁷ Access to Information Procedure Rules

⁸ The signatory must be duly authorised by the Director to make the decision in accordance with the Department's scheme. It is not acceptable for the signature to be 'pp' for an authorised signatory. For Key Decisions only, the date of the authorised signature signifies that, at the time, the Officer was content that the decision should be taken. However, should representations be received following public availability of reports the signatory will consider the effect which such representations should have upon the final decision.

⁹ Governance Services will enter these dates



Date: 2nd April 2009

Subject: Procurement of a corporate Interactive Voice Recognition package.

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity
Community Cohesion
Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

There is a drive from Central Government and professional bodies, such as the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM), to increase the use of electronic channels as a means of communicating with customers, increase efficiency and optimisation of resource, and achieve 3% cashable savings year on year

Once such communication channel is Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR). IVR refers to an automated telephony system which takes an input from a customer (by either pressing digits on the telephone or speaking words or short phrases) and provides an automatic, intelligent response. One of the key functions of IVR is its ability to provide a fully automated, end-to-end, self-service facility for customers. The customer may be provided with information depending upon the choices they input (voice or keypad) and/or allowed to perform a transaction e.g. make a payment for a service, renew a library book or enquire about a balance. The idea of self-service using an IVR solution is that the IVR solution guides the customer through the process without the need to have interaction with a member of staff.

The Corporate Contact Centre (CCC) at Westgate has identified the need for an advanced IVR system that is capable of handling high volume/low complexity enquiries from customers. Such a system would allow the CCC to;

- increase the overall number of calls handled without a comparable increase in staff
- better align their resources towards those customers with more complex enquiries
- offer a range of self-service solutions to customers outside of normal opening hours

Sabio, the CCC's telephony partner, have provided a detailed IVR solution which would see the installation of the necessary hardware. In addition, an initial IVR application capable of handling Choice Based Letting bids¹ would also be developed in order to make immediate use of the new functionality and to start achieving the savings such a facility offers.

¹ Choice Based Lettings allows customers to register an interest in a vacant council property. Properties are then allocated based on existing allocation rules. These are high volume/low complexity calls and will provide maximum savings through IVR automation.

1.0 Purpose of this report

This report outlines the need for an Interactive Voice Recognition facility and recommends that funds be authorised to procure the solution offered by the Councils telephony partner, Sabio.

2.0 Background information

There is a drive from Central Government and professional bodies, such as the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM), to increase the use of electronic channels as a means of communicating with customers/citizens, increase efficiency and optimisation of resource and achieve 3% cashable savings year on year

The e-Services Delivery (eSD) Programme has been established to develop and deploy solutions which support electronic access to Council services by citizens. Electronic access is deemed to cover both self-service and mediated access. Whilst contact made through a mediated channel will typically result in a Customer Services Officer (CSO) dealing with the enquiry over the telephone or face to face, self-service is about citizens being able to access Council services via a variety of access channels as defined by the Customer Services Strategy. Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) delivers such an access channel.

IVR refers to an automated telephone system which takes an input from a customer (by either pressing digits on the telephone or speaking words or short phrases) and providing a response. A typical IVR solution has several menus of pre-recorded options that the caller can choose from. Commonly, the choices are as basic as asking the customer to choose a number relating to an option which the customer will enter into their telephone keypad. However, increasingly with more sophisticated IVR solutions, the customer may be required to speak their choice from the options provided or provide detailed information such as their name or account number. The input from the customer is used by the IVR solution to access the appropriate information from a database.

A small number of simple IVR applications from various suppliers are being used across the Council, each with differing maintenance and support contracts, etc. This project will see the procurement of a corporate IVR solution that can incorporate the existing applications as well as providing a platform for the creation of new IVR applications that will provide around-the-clock, end-to-end automated services to our customers. It is intended for the IVR platform to be situated in the Corporate Contact Centre (CCC).

3.0 Main benefits

Providing a corporate IVR solution will enable Leeds City Council to:

- deliver efficiency savings through customers being able to self serve at a time convenient to the customer.
- provide a positive and consistent corporate image.
- reduce the number of complaints.
- increase overall capacity to deliver a wider range and availability of services without increasing staff numbers and associated costs.
- enable enquiries that are low complexity to be handled without any mediated contact.
- provide a better quality of customer services.
- reduction in repeat contact by being able to provide customers with accurate information.
- provide out of hours access.
- improved in response times.
- improve the managing of call volumes during peak hours.
- further enhance the capacity and level of service offered by the Corporate Contact Centre.
- support the Council's aims of dealing with 80% of calls at first point of contact.
- enable consolidation of existing IVR solutions into the corporate IVR solution.

The CCC would also benefit as IVR could handle a large volume of calls with no CSO involvement, thereby allowing them to focus on the more complex customer enquiries as well as increasing the overall number of calls answered with no associated increase in staffing levels.

4.0 Approach

Sabio, the CCC's telephony provider, have provided detailed costs for an IVR platform, plus the development of an IVR application. Sabio were asked to provide these costs due to their detailed knowledge of the CCC technology, an understanding which will help ease IVR integration and reduce the risks associated with such an exercise. In addition, their solution can be secured without the need for a potentially lengthy and expensive procurement exercise due to Sabio incorporating the possible provision of IVR into their original tender for the CCC contract.

At the ICT Management Board (27th February), it was agreed that Sabio should be appointed to

- provide and install an IVR platform
- develop an IVR application for dealing with Choice Based Letting bids

In addition, the Council will also look to recruit an IVR developer. This will give the Council maximum flexibility in terms of IVR support as well as a dedicated resource for future IVR application development, thereby giving the option to realise further efficiency savings through IVR automation.

The project will be managed by a dedicated Project Manager in Customer Services, using Delivering Successful Change methodology, and who will be supported by staff in both Customer Services and Corporate ICT.

5.0 Conclusions

The development of an IVR solution will further strengthen the range of services currently offered by the Corporate Contact Centre at no additional staffing costs. It is adaptable and has the potential to be further developed to create solutions to, and achieve savings against, other high volume/low complexity enquiries as identified by the business. It will also assist the Council in achieving key targets as outlined in the Councils Plan around;

- Increasing the volume of total transactions delivered through customer self – service (BP – 08)
- Answering 85% (in 2009/10) of public telephone calls to the council (BP –12)

6.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that funding for this project is authorised so as to enable the initiation of this project at the earliest opportunity, in order to maximise the savings that this project can achieve.

Anthony Derbyshire
Project Manager
Business Transformation