

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 16 April 2019

Decision No: (CAB 18/19 23630)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Cabinet Member for Homes & Culture
SUBJECT:	HRA Capital Digital Improvements
AUTHOR:	Deborah Smart, Steve Smith

THE DECISION

- (i) To approve the use of £800,000 of HRA Capital funding for digital improvements for housing including:
- the procurement and implementation of a new mobile platform
 - the procurement and implementation of a new test system for Northgate housing
 - the procurement and implementation of 250 new mobile devices for housing operations staff
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Service Director, Adults, Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes and Culture, to make any necessary amendments to the plans set out here as the procurement and implementation is undertaken.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. On a weekly basis, Housing operations are impacted by their existing IT systems which are complex, unreliable and slow, causing additional time and cost to deliver the service. This is frustrating to all stakeholders including:
 - Council tenants
 - Front-line staff
 - Support staff
 - Managers
 - IT and digital staff

This investment is to modernise housing's IT systems and the equipment used by front-line staff to enable all staff to work digitally and provide a consistent experience for housing tenants as well as reliable IT applications. This is inline with the Council's digital strategy.

2. When the current IT devices were purchased, no allowance was made for their replacement. As they are now over 4 years old, failures happen on a regular basis which disrupts service delivery and is frustrating for staff. This IT and digital plan request the capital funding to replace the devices while putting in place the ongoing funding to replace them (from the savings delivered).
3. This investment secures the necessary platform for change within housing, supporting improvements to the communication with tenants, modern ways of working for all, better management information, reporting and insight leading to improved use of resources and decision making.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Housing improvement Board considered two alternative options before recommending capital investment. These were:

1. To adopt an agile planning and delivery approach attempting to stabilise and fix existing systems where possible. This was a way of using existing IT and Digital resources to focus on reducing the downtime of existing systems and fixing known problems. The aim of this approach was to make the best use of what was already in place, without updating, upgrading or decommissioning systems and attempting to make some changes that supported the aims and objectives of the Housing Improvement Board. Without capital investment, significant improvements to communication with tenants and extending digital ways of working to all staff in housing would not be possible, together with no guarantee that stability issues could be resolved with old versions of the software, this option was not taken forward.
2. To provide revenue investment to accelerate changes to address known issues. This was a way of increasing the available resources, including bringing in 3rd party software providers, to as quickly as possible, deliver stable reliable IT systems within housing. This approach was focused on resolving currently identified issues and delivering any improvements that were possible with existing systems quickly, in line with the Housing Improvement Board delivery timetable. However, without the capital investment, this approach had significant costs and still failed to deliver transformation to the housing IT systems and provide consistent digital ways of working and communication for tenants and was therefore not taken forward.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 16th April 2019

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Claire Heather

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*