

Housing Strategy and Development Briefing Note 15/3

Integrated Housing Management System (IHMS)

February 2015



Introduction

Welcome to a series of regular briefings prepared by the Housing Strategy and Development team on the big issues concerning housing. These briefings will be shared with staff, tenants and elected members and keep everyone up to date with regards the ever changing policy context that we are operating within.

The Housing Strategy and Development section is responsible for:-

- Providing the statutory strategic housing authority role within the local authority area;
- Strategic Housing Asset Management delivery;
- The delivery of the Council House New Build Programme and the delivery of the affordable Housing supply programme;
- Supporting the development of a culture of continuous improvement in Housing services and to facilitate opportunities to excel;
- Developing and implementing effective strategies for Housing and Community Safety Services within West Dunbartonshire;
- Developing the Council's housing strategy to ensure that it supports the delivery of our strategic priorities;
- Service development within Housing and Community Safety services; and
- Promoting effective management and the involvement of tenants across all aspects of Housing Services.

For further information on Housing Strategy and Development please telephone 01389 737889 or e-mail: housing.strategy@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Briefing Note

Integrated Housing Management System (IHMS)

Introduction:

On Wednesday 4 February 2015 councillors agreed that West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) should work towards buying a new integrated housing management system (IHMS).

An IHMS is a system that will improve service delivery across all housing services.

This briefing note gives a background to an IHMS, how it will be purchased, how long it will take to implement and the benefits that staff and tenants can expect

Background:

Current computer systems within housing have not been upgraded in around 20 years and have become old and no longer fit for purpose. Some of the system currently in use are paper based which are time consuming and do not allow services to share information easily.

In this time technology has moved on a lot. Systems are now available that allow staff such as housing officers and joiners to use mobile working. Mobile working means that the staff can be on-site and can access all the information they need from a mobile phone or tablet rather than accessing paper files or systems in the office.

The system will also allow all services to share information with minimal to no effort. Currently simple admin tasks can take a lot of time.

WDC is currently looking to buy a system that will modernise its service delivery to tenants and residents.

Key Points:

WDC are currently looking at the best way to buy the IHMS. In order to do this a procurement process has to be followed. The procurement process will take 3-4 months. At the moment there are 3 ways in which we can buy the system:

1. Buy a system direct from a supplier
2. Share a system with a housing association or council who already have an IHMS
3. Buy a new system with a housing association or council who, like WDC, are currently looking to upgrade the systems.

There is a chance that option 2 or 3 may save money so discussions are taking place with neighbouring councils and housing associations to see if it is possible.

However we simply cannot just buy a system and expect it to work. Whatever option is chosen there will be an implementation phase. During this time staff will be trained, processes will be reviewed to make sure they get the best from the system and tenants will be consulted.

Implementation should take around 12-18 months meaning the system should be getting used by staff and tenants by summer 2017

The total cost to buy the system will be £1.5 million:

1. £1 million for the system
2. £500,000 on staff to carry out the implementation phase

Once the system is implemented it will directly save £1.2million per annum. This will be achieved through a number of ways and some are listed below:

1. Mobile working for 260 repairs staff – the new system will save 30 minutes per day for every operative in repairs because they will start on-site rather than having to visit the office to get their jobs for the day.
2. Reduce paper systems in repairs - the new system will save another 30 minutes per day for every operative in repairs because they will no longer need to use paper based systems in the office every morning. Any jobs will be sent direct to their mobile device. There will also be a saving through buying less paper.
3. Mobile working for Housing Officer – currently housing officers spend around 2-4 hours per day in the office doing paper work. This will be reduced a lot as the officers will have full access to all the information they need on a tablet.

What can tenants and residents expect from the new system?

There will be a better presence of Housing Officers in areas as they will spend less time in the office doing paperwork

Tenants will be able to access the system through the internet and book repairs, check what is happening with a repair, report anti-social behaviour, apply for a house, check their status on the waiting list and lots more

When contacting the housing service staff will have access to all information on the tenant to be able to answer questions in a simple and effective way.

For further information contact:

Graham Watters, IHMS Project Officer 01389 737702

graham.watters@west-dunbarton.gov.uk