

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
REPORT FOR INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 19 July 2007

SUBJECT: Use of technology to reshape and improve service delivery

REPORT OF: Manchester Improvement Programme Director

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Committee on the technology component of the Manchester Improvement Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report is noted and Members advise officers in relation to the direction of travel.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET

None arising from this report

CONTACT OFFICERS

Pete North, Manchester Improvement Programme Director
Tel: 0161 219 6955
E: pete.north@manchester.gov.uk

WARDS AFFECTED

All

IMPLICATIONS FOR

Environment Employment Anti-Poverty Equal Opportunities Human Rights

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

No

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP) is a whole Council programme which has as its core aim:

“To deliver fundamental change across the Council to improve the quality of, and access to, our services”

Modern technologies are clearly important tools which support service delivery of the programme and can be used in a variety of ways including:

- i. Easier access to service e.g. through modern telephony, phone payments etc
- ii. Self service via the Council's website
- iii. One stop service through use of integrated data systems
- iv. Improved responsiveness and productivity through mobile working solutions
- v. 'Line of business' facilities such as e-planning, and assistive technology to support people
- vi. Improved customer information and communications supported by tools such as the Geographical Information System (GIS) and Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG)

This report discusses the key technologies that are being used or introduced through MIP and the infrastructure that is being built.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 The context within which the MIP commenced was one where the Council had a wide variety of legacy computer systems, often holding their own data sets, which were often in turn incompatible. The key finance and human resource systems were ageing and in the case of finance, were supported by a plethora of individual departmental databases, which impaired transparency and efficiency. There was no single authoritative property register and no council-wide procurement and customer enquiry systems, each of which in their different ways are essential to effective value for money service delivery in an electronic age.

- 2.2 The Council also faced and continues to face an issue that no councils appear to have successfully tackled yet, namely the sheer range of services it provides and commissions. For most businesses in the private sector the number of 'lines of business' are relatively small and/or similar. For a Council, this is not the case.

Our whole Council approach to technology therefore needs to be unifying and consistent yet simple for the customer and uniquely flexible behind the scenes to cope with that range of different 'lines of business'.

3 CORE SYSTEMS

3.1 Over the last 18 months, the following systems have been introduced:

- SAP
 - Procurement
 - Replacement financials
 - Replacement human resources
 - Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Local Land and Property Gazetteer
- Corporate GIS

These projects have proved difficult to deliver and to date, energy has focussed on system installation, stability and integrity.

However, the procurement system is, for the first time, providing a Council wide overview of procured goods and services which is enabling substantial savings to be generated via e-auctions and other procurement methods. The process will also raise specifications and standards to those of the best or good practice suppliers/service providers.

3.2 A Geographical Information System (GIS) and a Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) have been established as a corporate business tool. This provides service areas with the ability to maintain information that provides broad access to a wide range of spatial street based information, e.g. the location of streetlights or accident black spots.

3.2.1 The GIS toolkit is also capable of being made available to the general public via the new website allowing access to information that can demonstrate where services are making a difference. This facility will also assist in citizens being able identify locations much easier when requesting services on a self-service basis (i.e. via the website). In addition to being able to request services, the citizen will be able to observe geographical changes in activity that are resulting from council strategies, for example availability of access points or anti-social behaviour hot spots in their area.

3.2.2 The technical building blocks are already in place and there are already several layers of service area information in place. This solid foundation provides the opportunity for service areas to add more and more of their data that can be shared and exploited across the organisation to improve service delivery. For example, a geographical view of where various services are requested by citizens supports the objective of being able to deliver a joined-up 'one-council' service.

Further investment in cleansing and migrating data from other services onto this GIS tool will gradually allow service management to better target the requirements of the customer leading to an improved service.

3.3 The CRM system is well established now in Environment on Call and will be rolled out across the Council with a view to achieving single

phone access to all services. The system enables customers to access services by phone, email (24-hour response), or text. Major growth in the use of email access to services has been seen since its introduction. A principle within the service is that customers can only be 'handed off' once. Where interactive voice recognition is used, a principle is established that this is only where it conveniences the customer, not the organisation. (E.g. payment of a parking fine but with the option to speak to someone about it).

- 3.4 The combined suite of systems will, over a period, bring both further savings and the benefits of processing integrated data. This integration will, in the fullness of time, allow us a single view of the customer and one-transaction access to all services, e.g. on moving home.

4.0 SELF SERVICE AND THE WEBSITE

- 4.1 Members may have seen the new website content management system being demonstrated outside the Council meeting on 11 July 2007. The most immediate impacts are the changes to the look and feel of the site when it launches next month but from the time of the launch we will also start to improve services. The following list gives a flavour of what the new system will enable us to deliver:

- Accessibility to 'AA' compliance - the highest standard for web accessibility. As well as improvement for customers with disabilities, this also means the site can be accessed through other mobile devices and that customers can set their own individual colour preferences if they have colour blindness or dyslexia (we believe we are the first Local Government organisation to do this). See http://mcc.jadu.co.uk/site/scripts/user_settings.php
- Vastly improved A-Z functionality, which pulls together all the documents, forms and frequently asked questions (FAQs) relating to a topic as they are generated by services. The A-Z also has its own search facility so that customers can find entries from across the A-Z.
- Google-powered search facility to deliver accurate search results.
- Central frequently asked questions (FAQ) database so that customers can ask questions and have these answered, as well as services being able to generate their own FAQs as needed.
- Searchable events database so that customers can check what is happening across the city.
- Mini homepages for different types of customer (residents, visitors and businesses) with a distinct look and feel targeted at these individual groups.
- New standards-based navigation structure based on content themes rather than how the organisation is structured. This makes it easier for customers to find the information that they need first time.
- Postcode-based "Search for my Councillor" feature, recognising that many customers do not know what ward they live in.

- Standard approach to forms and communications services.
- Ability to create 'mini' sites for sub-brands or campaigns by the Council, for example, 100 Days, Manchester People.

4.2 Key to future service improvements will be quality, relevant, up to date information for customers and the ability to conduct transactions on-line across services. The new system is already beginning to stimulate these processes.

5.0 MOBILE WORKING

5.1 The use of mobile devices to enable service providers to provide rapid action for customers from site, whilst maximising efficiency, has been established on a small scale in the Council but its full potential is as yet untapped.

5.2 A pilot scheme is being developed with the Pest Control service, and it is anticipated that this can be rolled out across most or all services. The technology comprises a series of tools and modules that are commonly required in service delivery situations and these can be economically configured to suit each service whilst achieving a consistent platform and common operating standard. It is hoped that this can be used to develop a cross service customer guarantee. The pilot will not just test the system and our use of it, but also the speed at which it can be implemented – this information will be critical to delivery of the Council's customer service aspirations over the next 2-3 years.

6.0 LINE OF BUSINESS SYSTEMS

6.1 Where a fundamental MIP change programme covers a specific service area, then opportunities are also taken to use technology to customer benefit within that service. An example is in Adult Social Care where electronic monitoring and assistive technology are included within the transformation programme.

Electronic monitoring of home care services will commence under a newly commissioned contract regime from April 2008 and will provide greatly improved quality assurance and enhanced customer and worker safety.

The assistive technology programme will include devices designed to provide enhanced support to residents. Examples are:

- **“Just Checking”**
We are currently in the process of procuring a system called, “Just Checking”. This system will be used as an assessment tool for customers with dementia and provides a picture of daily activity of a person living on their own. Small wireless sensors in the key rooms of the house are triggered as the person moves, and this information is uploaded via the mobile phone network to the web server. A family carer can then log onto the “Just Checking” website to view a chart of

activity (the system is password protected to protect confidentiality).

- **Inflatable lift**

The inflatable lift assists customers who have had a fall in their own home or at one of the Council resource centres. The lift can be used independently by the customer, or by a lone care worker. This transportable unit can be quickly deployed and will reduce staff sickness through back injury, prevent the need for double emergency cover or ambulance call out.

- **Bed and chair occupancy sensors with fall detectors**

We have recently procured bed and chair occupancy sensors which, when activated, can turn a light on automatically when the individual gets up from their chair, or out of bed. This can help to prevent falls and is primarily aimed at preventing customers sustaining injuries such as broken hips. A fall detector can be worn around the customers waist and when triggered (by a fall) alerts the Community Alarms Service. Early detection and response to these alarms reduces trauma and improves the customer recovery times.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The past 18 months has seen the introduction of a suite of modern ICT systems which will provide the foundations of a much enhanced service access and delivery for customers. The challenge going forward is to exploit these systems and others that become available such that the promised outcomes are achieved.