



## AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>IBS review</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS:** Public

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	02/06/09
<b>Policy Document:</b>	No
<b>Directorate:</b>	Housing
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Sally Beardsworth

### 1. Purpose

1.1 To advise Audit Committee of progress on the review of the IBS OPEN Housing It system review.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 That Audit Committee notes progress and reviews the consultants report when it is received.

### 3. Issues and Choices

#### 3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 Attached at Appendix A is an extract from the brief which was put out to tender, (the full specification can be supplied on request but runs to nearly 30 pages). Submissions were due on Monday 18 May and final selection due 22 May 2009. 28 companies expressed an interest and 6 were shortlisted on the basis of direct implementation experience of IBS and IBS OPEN Contractor, which is the system designed to address the financial monitoring of the responsive repairs service Direct Service Organisation (DSO) and to reward performance in the work force.

3.1.2 The systems team in housing was previously a temporary arrangement using staff seconded from other areas to implement the IBS modules. That temporary team did not have any clear cut responsibility for upgrades, report

design or issues which arise from time to time with implemented systems. As part of the reorganisation of the Housing Directorate, a permanent team to support the integrated IBS suite of modules is being put in place, with a new Team Leader appointed to head the Housing Technical Systems and Rent Accounting Team. Adjustments will be made to that team in the light of the IBS review.

3.1.3 It was previously reported verbally to Audit Committee that there were some implementation problems around the Choice Based Lettings module and its impact on other modules such as voids, but these have been largely ironed out by the new team.

3.1.4 The questions that the consultants will be asked to address will include the lessons of previous implementations, compared to their experience elsewhere, planning for IBS OPEN Contractor, the functionality of other modules and the need for and structure of a permanent support team in Housing. Corporate ICT and Customer Services have been involved throughout in developing the brief and the selection of the preferred advisor.

### **3.2 Issues**

N/A

### **3.3 Choices (Options)**

N/A

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

None

### **4.2 Resources and Risk**

N/A

### **4.3 Legal**

None

### **4.4 Equality**

N/A

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

As described above

#### **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

The delivery of web based services to housing customers is a key part of the Housing Services Improvement Plan 2008-10 and the establishment of a fully integrated information system is a key part of that plan.

#### **4.7 Other Implications**

N/A

### **5. Background Papers**

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5.1 IBS OPEN housing system specifications

5.2 Full specification for consultancy services

**Brian Queen**  
**Interim Housing advisor**  
**Ext 7174**

# **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **OPENHousing Project**

### **Brief for consultancy/implementation support**

#### **Introduction and Background**

A suite of IBS OPENHousing modules was purchased by Northampton Borough council in 2006. As appendix 1 shows, 20 modules have been implemented in full or in part and a further 10 are in the process of being implemented, with a further 11 to be considered for the future. At the time, housing services were delivered through five different Corporate Managements including Finance, although the principal users were always Housing, Streetscene and Property Maintenance, and Finance.

The initial decision to purchase this software suite was based on a full evaluation of the housing rents, allocations and management modules, which is known to be successful and is an industry standard installed in a large number of local authorities. It is not known what business case was subsequently put forward to include other modules from the OPENHousing suite, including OPENContractor, and it is understood that all modules were acquired at the same time, but a persuasive case may have been made for software from a single source.

With respect to housing rents and housing management modules, it is understood, subject to independent verification, that all of the accounting interfaces and controls are working effectively, but the interface with Agresso is manual and as yet is functioning but not complete, finance are working with housing to resolve outstanding issues. As the risk log (appendix 2) indicates, however, there is a serious risk of “mission creep” and it is necessary to put the implementation plan on to a prioritised basis which meets the needs of a restructured housing service for delivery of a first class housing service. This particularly means prioritising those modules with a direct positive impact on customer service. There is also a question whether the implementation of various modules has been adequately resourced by practioner staff that use the systems and whether follow up training and support has been adequate.

The introduction of Choice Based Lettings in July 2008 also highlighted anomalies between different modules, most notably the treatment and progression of voids from vacation, through works, to offer and to final re-letting.

A number of reports and reviews have highlighted the need to account better for the performance of the Property Maintenance Direct Service Organisation, which has in recent months undergone a major overhaul and re-structure. This overhaul includes a new pay and performance structure which will require systems to record accurately the performance of the workforce, in addition to linking with the Council’s invoice and payments system (Agresso) and producing information to allow Value for Money to be assessed. The question now is the functionality of the OPENContractor module to meet the needs of the property maintenance service, given the changes in the working environment since it was originally procured.

## **The Brief**

Assistance is required from experienced consultants, who have previous experience of implementing IBS OPENHousing and with particular experience of OPENContractor, for the following areas: -

1. Review of the existing rents, housing management and lettings modules to provide assurance (or take remedial action to ensure) that
  - Existing controls and checks and reports are soundly based and up to auditable standards
  - That interfaces are working properly and efficiently (possibility of automation?)
  - That reports are properly defined and correct to auditable standards and are easily maintained
  - That issues identified in rents audits in respect of the system and reports are addressed
2. To review the functionality of OPENContractor and to plan an implementation programme, including interfaces with relevant financial and monitoring systems (in particular with the Council's financial management system Aggresso)
3. To review the present implementation programme to ensure that resources are concentrated on the priority areas,
4. To review the need for a permanent support team and project related implementation teams.
5. To advise on appropriate budgets for continuing support and development.

## **Timescales**

A report on elements 1) and 2) above is required by 30 June 2009 or a date to be agreed. The remaining timetable to be discussed.

B. Queen  
Interim Housing Advisor  
20/03/09

<b>LIVE Modules</b>	<b>Current Modules</b>
<p>People and Property  Voids (excluding repairs)  Rent Accounting  Arrears Control  Mutual Exchange  Nominations  Supporting People  Allocations and Waiting List  Estate Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Post Recording</li> <li>○ Abandoned Property</li> <li>○ Sitex Procedure</li> <li>○ Anti-Social Behaviour</li> <li>○ Customer Contact</li> <li>○ Pet Policy</li> <li>○ Introductory Tenancies</li> <li>○ Demoted Tenancies</li> <li>○ Emergency Access</li> <li>○ Business Use of Dwellings</li> </ul> <p>Workflow  Reporting Tool (Hummingbird)  CORE Digital  Former Tenant Debt Recovery  Direct Debits  Interface</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cash Receipting</li> <li>○ Housing Benefits</li> <li>○ General Ledger</li> </ul> <p>Homelessness  Homeless Advice  Choice Based Lettings  Temporary Accommodation  Private Sector Leasing</p>	<p>OPENContractor  Day-to-Day Repairs  Appointments  Void Repairs  OPENMobile  National Register of Social Housing (NROSH)  Stock Valuations  Asbestos Register  Progress Replication (Disaster Recovery)  Estate Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Succession of Tenancy</li> <li>○ Permission for Mutual Exchange</li> <li>○ Boundary Disputes</li> <li>○ Fly Tipping</li> <li>○ Request for Land</li> <li>○ Tenant in Prison</li> <li>○ Removal of Furniture</li> <li>○ Police Disclosure</li> <li>○ Mediation</li> <li>○ Crack House Closure Protocol</li> <li>○ Decants</li> <li>○ Child Protection</li> <li>○ Assignments</li> <li>○ Environmental Enhancements</li> <li>○ Use and Occupation</li> <li>○ Unauthorised Occupation</li> <li>○ Notification of Death</li> <li>○ Floating Support</li> </ul>
<b>Future Modules</b>	
<p>Planned Maintenance  Decent Homes  Energy Rating  Gas Servicing  Stock Condition  Geographical Information System  Interface</p>	<p>Right to Buy  Service Charges  Customer Relation Management  Interface  Document Image Processing Interface  Executive Information System</p>

