



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
Castle Ward

CABINET

1st September 2008

Capital Programme - De Montfort Hall Box Office

Report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration & Culture

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide further information to Cabinet on the replacement of the box office and telephone systems at De Montfort Hall included within the 2008/09 Capital Programme and to seek approval to commence the project.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The current De Montfort Hall box office system has been in use for a decade and is out of date and approaching obsolescence. In the near future it will cease to be supported as a system and this will heighten risks with regard to business continuity should the system fail. Since the system was installed the volume of ticket sales has grown to four times the level the system was originally required to deal with and this puts further strain on the box office. The expectations of service users have also evolved during this time and the functionality of the current system is limited when compared with the latest systems. To resolve the situation this funding is needed to procure and implement a new box office system.
- 2.2 Both the telephone and box office systems will improve the service across the whole of the De Montfort Hall Box Office function, including the satellite provision at the Tourist Information Centre in Town Hall Square, which currently is unable to offer the same level of availability information as the main Box Office at De Montfort Hall.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet approve the commencement of the project at a cost of £135,000 from the 2008/09 Capital Programme.

4. REPORT

Aim:

- 4.1 To replace the Databox box office system and existing telephone system at De Montfort Hall. These developments will greatly increase the venue's service to customers and will enable the box office to fully integrate with the marketing functions – due to the new intelligence that will be obtainable from the systems. Both current systems are frankly on their last legs and cannot deliver on our desire to work smarter in terms of information the venue collects and what it does with it – let alone provide an efficient and responsive service to customers.

4.2 The sum of £135,000 was agreed by Cabinet towards the development of the venue's box office system to include a fully interactive online booking and ticket payment system for the venue. The work will also include the replacement of the current telephone system.

Box Office System:

4.3 The Databox box office system is carrying significantly more information than it was designed to house, having been installed at a time that the volume of business at De Montfort Hall was roughly a quarter of the level it is now. Although it has been upgraded a number of times, the upgrades have essentially been 'bolt ons' to a 10 year old system – an extraordinary length of time for any software programme.

4.4 In addition the current system does not integrate with contemporary marketing and selling techniques. It does not create automatic email lists, nor does it integrate with the online booking system which is email based and has to be entered on to Databox manually. It has no integration at all with the programming and internet functions at the Hall, which results in broadly the same work being undertaken several times on different systems. An online booking system will offer disabled service users another method of booking tickets that may overcome barriers faced when booking by telephone or in person. The project will also investigate options for ticketless sales that reduce the need for printed materials, envelopes, transportation/delivery and thereby reducing the impact of the process on the environment.

4.5 DMH are working with IT Services to ensure PCI DSS Standards compliancy and all audit requirements are met – which is fundamental requirement of any new system (of any type).

Telephone system:

4.6 The current Box Office system doesn't allow for effective management of calls or for essential reporting of call statistics (which would allow us to best serve customers by analysing phone usage patterns to run a more effective service). All that is known at the moment, given the number of call-backs required (at cost to the venue), is that the system is not able to cope with the demands of a busy box office.

4.7 One of the fundamental issues is that the current system has no queuing system. A customer ringing in will be taken directly to the voicemail service if the call is not picked up within a designated number of rings. There is no facility for reassuring or informative prompts. So there is a perception that the taking customer call is not the priority that it clearly is.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

5.1.1 There is an ongoing project to improve the operations and financial performance of DMH. The benefits of the new box office and telephone system will contribute to those improvements.

5.1.2 The new box office system is an essential component in improving the efficiency of producing meaningful financial management information on a regular basis for DMH. Data extraction from the current system involves significant re-keying of data into

spreadsheets. The new system will be more flexible in terms of the information available and the extraction will be through automatic downloads.

5.1.3 The project was approved by Council in March to the value of £135k subject to providing the further details outlined in this report.

Martin Judson, Head of Resources, Regeneration & Culture (Ext.297390)

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The Report Author has noted that there will be a requirement to seek advice on Procurement Law to achieve these Project's aims. It is recommended that a Solicitor or Legal Officer from within Legal Services together with a member of the ICT Contracts team are invited to be members of the Project Board so that both the procurement process/ route and acceptable terms and conditions for the resulting contract can be agreed.

Rebecca Jenkyn, Senior Solicitor, Commercial and General (Ext.296378)

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References within the report
Equal Opportunities	Yes	4.2
Policy	No	
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	4.2
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

7. RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX			
Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1 Failure to implement new system	L	H	The process has been started – a list of requirements is in draft stage and the date for the first Project Board meeting has been set.
2 Delay in implementation	M	M	The Project Board is aware that there are only certain times with each year where it would be prudent to implement the transfer of systems and is drawing up a robust timetable to fit in with that pattern.
3 Increase in cost of implementation	M	M	The 'requirements' list is currently in draft stage – however the Project Board is aware that it needs to do work to ascertain the likely costs of various systems (in terms of both capital and revenue).

4 Issues with implementation	M	H	Other venues have had issues with data transfer, which has had both a logistically and financial impact on the projects. The project is aware that it needs to ensure that this doesn't affect the DMH box office project.
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L - Low
M - Medium
H - High

L - Low
M - Medium
H - High

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None

9. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations have taken place with Simon Bennett, Head of ICT, Regeneration & Culture, Mohammed Ali Choudry, Business Analyst, Resources, Martin Judson, Head of Resources, Regeneration & Culture, Rebecca Jenkyn, Senior Solicitor, Resources.

10. REPORT AUTHOR

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Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)