

RECREATION CENTRES COMPUTERISED BOOKING AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Recreation Centres currently use a computerised booking and management system (Microcache) which was originally installed in 1996/97.
- 1.2 The supplier of the Microcache system has fundamentally re-designed the application and has launched a highly improved version. This new version requires high specification servers and PC/workstations. The version of the system in use at the Recreation Centres is no longer being upgraded by the supplier and technical support for this version will cease at the end of next year.
- 1.3 A budget provision to replace the PCs in use at the end of their life cycle has been established in the ICT investment programme. This report seeks additional funding to enable the Recreation Centres to implement the new and improved version of the Microcache system.

2. CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 All five Recreation Centres have experienced increasing problems with the existing system throughout this year including
 - i) The Centres are rapidly running out of membership numbers available to them and soon will no longer be able to take on new members.
 - ii) Centres are experiencing an increase in the systems breaking down intermittently as the performance demands upon it are increasing.
 - iii) Customer transactions are taking longer and longer as a result of the data held at each Recreation Centre causing undue delays at reception and customer complaints. (The new version of the system is capable of working in a networked environment).
 - iv) The Centres are unable to offer the range of membership packages which they need to be competitive in the market due to the limitations of the current version.
 - v) Producing management reports has become inefficient and time consuming as the volume of data has grown.
 - vi) The range of customer information held is limited and restricts the number of marketing options available.
 - vii) The current version of the system is installed and runs from each Recreation Centre (i.e not networked outside of the Recreation Centre) restricting cross membership and booking opportunities. (The new version is designed to run on a network improving the overall management reporting and administration of the system.

- 2.2 There are few suppliers of such systems in the marketplace. Microcache is regarded as the market leader. The new version of the system was launched last year and has been tested in multi-leisure sites at Greenwich Council.
- 2.3 As well as tackling the problems outlined in 2.1 above it has benefits including:
- i) touch screen technology at reception
 - ii) substantially improved speed of transactions
 - iii) on line credit card authorisation
 - iv) Centre administration for Direct Debits invoicing etc.,
 - v) swipe card membership facility
 - vi) "mugshot" facility of all customers which will improve security
 - vii) flexible allocation of membership which would reduce wastage and costs
- 2.4 There are a number of future developments of the system which would also help achieve the Council's corporate IT Strategy including Digital Telephone bookings and payments and Internet bookings and Online payment.
- 2.5 The limitations and recent problems experienced with the current system are such that customer service would be seriously disrupted if the system hardware and software were not upgraded. The imminent replacement of the PCs in use at the Recreation Centres and the withdrawal of support for the current version of the system requires the Recreation Centres to upgrade the booking and management information system. The costs of software purchase and training etc, can be met from existing budgets however, no funds are currently available for the purchase of the additional hardware (servers and data communications devices required to run the networked version) and software .

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The total funding required for the implementation of the new system is £104,365, of which £57,345 relates to hardware/software, £26,785 relates to initial project set-up costs (project management and training) and £20,235 is for annual maintenance (Appendix A).
- 3.2 The existing Microcache system and associated IT equipment are currently leased and is due for replacement in December 2002, therefore any upgrade, which is implemented before this date, will result in an overlap of funding.

3.3 The following is a summary of the financial requirements of the Microcache System:

		ANNUAL COST £	FUNDED BY		SHORTFALL £
			EXISTING FUNDING £	SAVINGS £	
One-off Costs (2001/02 only)		26,785		2,500	24,285
Capital Costs (From 2002/03)	TOTAL	57,345			57,345
Revenue Costs of leased equipment (From 2002/03)	Per Annum (3-yr lease)	20,070			20,070
Recurring Revenue (From 2002/03) for maint. And other costs	2002/03 only	20,235		9,500	10,735
	2003/04 onwards	20,235		14,000	6,235

3.5 The additional annual revenue cost of the upgraded Microcache system, for which no budget currently exists in 2002/03 is £30,805 reducing to £26,305 for 2003/04 and 2004/05. The upgrade can be partially funded by capital and revenue savings.

3.5.1 The purchase of the membership cards will result in stationery savings of £2,500 per annum commencing 2001/02.

3.5.2 It will no longer be necessary to fund the present Microcache system, which will expire in December 2002. This will result in revenue savings of £1,500 in 2002/03 and £6,000 per annum from 2003/04 onwards.

3.5.3 The current ICT maintenance charge will also no longer be required, resulting in annual revenue savings of £5,500 commencing 2002/03.

- 3.6 As a result of the purchase of replacement lockers at the Recreation Centres, there have been significant revenue savings on lease charges of £13,025 in 2001/02 and £14,635 thereafter. This saving could be utilised to partly offset the shortfall in funding identified at 3.4 as follows:

Year	Shortfall	Locker Leasing	Other Virements
2001/02	24,285	13,025	11,260
2002/03	30,805	14,635	16,170
2003/04	26,305	14,635	11,670

- 3.7 Virements from the Recreation Centres' budgets will be identified during the year to meet the shortfall in funding of £11,260 in the current year. Funding for the shortfall in subsequent years will need to be included in the Expenditure Plan process.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

The system will ensure more secure access and membership arrangements and more detailed information as to who has used the building and at what times.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to approve:

- 6.1 an upgrade of the Microcache system funded by lease finance in 2001/02;
- 6.2 That the additional cost of the system be met from virements within existing budgets in the current year, and that funding of £16,170 in 2002/03 and £11,670 from 2003/04 onwards be included in the Expenditure Plan process.

For further information:

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Background Papers:

None