

ANGUS COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 28 MAY 2009

DIGITAL TV UPGRADING PROPOSALS

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

**ABSTRACT:** This report is to advise the Committee of the progress being made by Angus Council in upgrading Communal TV Systems for tenants to receive digital signals by 2010.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report, prior to contracts being let to carry out the necessary upgrading works.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The proposal to switch over from terrestrial analogue transmissions to digital transmissions is planned for mid-to-late 2010 for the Angus area. Extensive advertising has taken place through the media of these proposals which are being rolled out across the United Kingdom.
- 2.2 It is normally considered to be the tenant's responsibility to purchase the necessary equipment if they wish to view digital signals with an analogue TV and this is achieved through the use of a digi-box with an existing aerial. However, in some areas, and in some types of flatted properties, the Council have communal TV systems which reduce the number of TV aerials required on the property by providing centralised aerials and equipment to distribute the TV signals to all the flats and houses in the system. Some of these properties have external insulation systems applied, which make it very difficult to fix individual aerials to the outside of the block. Sometimes the strength of the current TV signals is too poor to allow small individual aerials to pick up all the channels, and a larger roof mounted aerial, with amplifiers, is required. Typically these communal systems were installed in the 1970s and have now reached the end of their lives.
- 2.3 The technology behind modern digital television signals is considerably different from the old analogue communal systems. These existing systems require complete replacement to deliver crisp, clear digital pictures. Tenants in these properties are still obliged to either purchase either a set-top digibox or an integrated digital television, but it is the Council's responsibility to ensure the distribution throughout the properties meets current standards.

**3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 A programme has been developed in conjunction with the Property Division of Corporate Services, to identify and upgrade communal systems where necessary.. Some of these old systems, serving rows of houses, can be replaced with individual aerials at switchover, as the signal strength for digital signals will be much improved over the old analogue signals. However, there are approximately 1,615 tenants connected to systems which will require to be completely renewed.
- 3.2 The anticipated switchover in 2010 will mean that all Council tenants wishing to watch television will have to decide themselves whether to purchase a set top box for their exiting TV, or an integrated digital television set. The Council's responsibility will end at the upgrading of the communal TV systems, or providing individual aerials to those tenants currently connected to a communal system which is being dismantled.
- 3.3 Should there be any owner-occupiers of ex-Council properties currently connected to a Council system, they will be informed that they will be required to make their own arrangements for TV aerials, or contribute to the costs of renewing the digital systems as appropriate.
- 3.4 The work to upgrade communal systems, or dismantle existing communal systems is expected to commence in October 2009, with the completion expected by the end of 2009. The cost of the works is

estimated at this stage not to exceed £150,000. The work will be project-managed by the Housing Division with the work being procured through the Property Division of Corporate Services, and currently this is expected to be the subject of a further Committee Report in August 2009.

- 3.5 The new digital communal systems or individual aerials will provide the basic Freeview channels from BBC, ITV and Channel 5. However if tenants wish the more extensive (and expensive) satellite TV channels such as SKY or SKY Plus, they will have to request permission to install satellite dishes, as at present, on their houses or flats, at their own expense. The Council will retain the right to refuse this where there are valid reasons such as the existence of external insulation systems, or where there are Planning restrictions such as for Listed Buildings or in Conservation areas.

#### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 It is too early to report the final costs for this work as surveys are still being carried out and technical solutions being investigated. The costs, estimated at this stage not to exceed £150,000, will be contained within the HRA Capital Programme with the majority of the costs falling in the 2009/2010 Financial Year. An allowance in this regard is included in the HRA Capital Budget approved at the Special Neighbourhood Services meeting on 17 February 2009.

#### **5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The council's action is not incompatible with Human Rights legislation.

#### **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 In preparing this report there has been consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance, Head of Property and Head of Law and Administration who are in agreement with the above recommendation.

#### **7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The issues dealt within this report have been the subject of consideration from the equalities perspective (as required by the legislation). An equalities impact assessment is required and is attached.

#### **8 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

- 8.1 Good quality housing is available throughout Angus.

#### **9 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 It is essential that tenants are able to watch television programmes via the digital transmission system from late 2010 and the Council is well on the way to upgrading existing systems to ensure that the appropriate communal systems are upgraded ahead of the switchover date.

**RON ASHTON  
DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**NOTE:** No background papers, as defined by Section 50d of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied upon to any material extent in preparing this report.

**Hsg/NS/AMcK/RB**

## EQUALITY SCREENING

### Policy Control Document

**Name of Policy, Procedure or Report** Digital TV Upgrading Proposals

**Lead Department/Service** Housing

What is the aim of the policy, procedure or report?

To advise members of the steps being taken to ensure all tenants can receive Digital TV signals after the Switchover in Sept 2010

Is this a new or a review of an existing policy, procedure or report?

New

### Screening Process

Has the policy, procedure or report already been assessed for its impact on people from different racial backgrounds, people of different genders and people with disabilities.

Yes  No

**If Yes**, unless there have been significant changes, no further action is required. Please sign and date immediately below and retain for reference.

**If No**, does the policy, procedure or report involve or have consequences for the people the council serves or employs?

Yes  No

**If yes, proceed to Step 1 of the Full Impact Assessment on page 2.**

If no, please state why not

**If no, The policy, procedure or report is not relevant and no further action is required.**

Please sign and date immediately and keep for reference

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## FULL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### Step 1

Are there any statutory legal requirements affecting this policy, procedure or report? If so please describe.

No

### Step 2

What data/research is available to assess the likely impact of the policy, procedure or report.

Limited data on tenants who are partially sighted or blind

### Step 3

Is there any reason to believe the policy, procedure or report could affect people differently due to their race or disability or gender? If so how?

Race - No

Disability – Yes, blind persons may not be aware of the changes to switchover Digital TV as they will not be able to read the Tenant's Newsletters

Gender - No

### Step 4

Is there evidence to suggest that any part of the policy, procedure or report could unlawfully discriminate against people? If so, how?

No

### Step 5

Can the policy, procedure or report be seen to favour one section of the community

Yes  No

or deny opportunities to another?

Yes  No

If yes, please give details.

Blind people will need special contact arrangements

### Step 6

Does the policy, procedure or report advance equality?

Yes  No

Or restrict equality?

Yes  No

If yes, give details

**Step 7**

Are there any other actions which could have been taken to enhance equality of opportunity?  
If so please state

Yes, special arrangements to contact the blind.

**Step 8**

Based on the work you have done, rate the level of relevance being allocated to this policy, procedure or report.

High  Medium  Low  Unknown

**Step 9**

If during **Steps 3 - 6** there has been an adverse impact identified, consider if any adverse impact can be justified.

Yes  No

If yes please give details.

Currently the Housing Service does not hold records of which tenants have partial or no sight.

If no, consider alternative ways of delivering the policy, procedure or report to minimise negative impact or eliminate unlawful discrimination. Give details of the changes to be made to the policy, procedure or report.

No changes to the report are needed but special arrangements will be put in place to ensure blind people are aware of the Digital Switchover and are given advice as necessary.

**Step 10**

Do you need to carry out a further impact assessment?

Yes  No

If yes, what actions do you need to take

**Step 11**

Make arrangements to monitor and review the impact assessment.

- i) Who will be responsible for monitoring? Mrs D McNaught
- ii) How will it be monitored and analysed? Once the addresses affected by the aerial upgrades have been identified, tenants will be contacted either by Newsletter or personal visit to find out if they are blind. If so advice will be provided by the Housing Service.
- iii) How often will the policy, procedure or report be reviewed and by whom? Six monthly , November 2009 and May 2010 ahead of the switchover date of Sept 2010, by Mrs D McNaught..

**Step 12**

Publish results of the Impact Assessment.

How will the results be recorded and reported?

On the Council website as number of tenants in Communal TV system -equipped flats provided with upgraded TV aerials

**Completion of impact assessment:**

Please sign and date immediately and forward to your designated Policy Impact Assessment Co-ordinator.

**Name:** R H Berry

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** 15.5.09

**For additional information and advice please contact:**

the Equalities Officer - Tel: 01307 476058 or E-mail: [Equalities@angus.g](mailto:Equalities@angus.g)