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## GOVERNMENTAL PLANS FOR DIGITAL TELEVISION SWITCHOVER

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Members on the situation regarding the switchover from analogue to digital television transmission. The three options available to Rochford District Council have been investigated and suitable options costed.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In December 2004 the Head of Revenue & Housing Management reported to Members the options which would be available to the Council when the Government phase out analogue terrestrial transmission before switching over to digital transmission.
- 2.2 It has been confirmed that Central and Anglia regions will be switched over in 2010 with the Carlton/LWT region in 2011.

### 3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 A survey has been conducted and where it was originally thought that there were three available options, the consultants advise that there are now only two which are practical:
- To upgrade the existing communal aerial system and provide Freeview boxes
  - To rewire the communal blocks, install one satellite dish and provide digiboxes
- 3.2 If the first option was to be chosen this would cost in the region of £100 per unit plus £50 per Freeview box if it was decided to purchase these for each tenant. The tenants could then access 30 channels free of charge.
- 3.3 If the second option was chosen this would also cost around £100 per unit plus £50 per digibox which would give the tenants 30 free channels and allow them the option to take out a subscription to enable them to view up to 200 extra channels. The second option would mean that all existing satellite dishes that have been installed by tenants could be replaced by just one.
- 3.4 There are 855 properties falling into the category for digital aerial upgrade. This means that the cost of the project would be around £85,500 for option one and £128,250 for option two. Option one does not include the purchase of the Freeview boxes.

#### 4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 110 of the flats within the Council owned blocks are leasehold. The Head of Legal Services has looked at a cross section of Council leases and none of them contain any provision which enables the landlord to charge the lessee for improvements. It is felt that the proposed works seem to fall within the 'improvement' category so the Council could not charge lessees for the rewiring or aerial upgrade but they would need to purchase their own digibox or Freeview box.

#### 5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Digital switchover for broadcast regions serving the Rochford District will not occur for a further five or six years. Members will be aware that the Housing Stock Option Appraisal exercise is reaching a conclusion and later this month a decision will be taken as to the future of social housing in the District. It therefore seems appropriate to delay taking any decision at this time until the final outcome of the Option Appraisal is known.

#### 6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That no further action be taken until the final outcome of the Stock Option Appraisal exercise is known.

Steve Clarkson

Head of Revenue and Housing Management

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#### Background Papers:-

None

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