

The Objective

Following their Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) from Walsall MBC, midlands based housing association Walsall Housing Group (WHG) were looking for a tightly integrated system which provided flexible access to management information. Confidence in the chosen system and supplier were key issues to system selection along with the ability to be able to accommodate anticipated changes to procedures and service levels which would occur after the transfer.

The Solution

A rigorous evaluation process narrowed the field down to two preferred housing system suppliers before MIS Active Management System's SQL based ActiveH product was chosen.

WHG required that the system had to be :-

- supplied from a source that WHG could work in partnership with as housing professionals to develop the solution to their requirements
- seamlessly integrated to ensure no "islands of data" were created and to prevent re-keying of data
- flexible for the organisation's changing current and future needs
- a full windows product and a solution to cover all areas of the business
- user friendly with full on-line help and requiring the minimum of training
- reliable and compatible with Citrix servers (now a 30 server farm)
- flexible in respect of target finance systems
- proven and deliverable within budgets and timescales
- integrated with workflow functionality to provide the flexibility to operate the package as if it were an extension of other own internal procedures
- web and mobile compliant with interfaces for tenant, employee, operative and external supplier interaction.



Customer Comments

Jim Weardon, IT Manager commented:-

"Top of our IT list of requirements was certainly Integration, Integration, Integration. The luxury of entering information once and having it easily available within other modules is in these days a necessity. Our colleagues have the easiest to use and most transparent system in the marketplace today and from a KPI and reporting viewpoint we have all that we need to demonstrate our commitment to our tenants and the community in which we work.

MIS have delivered each module when required with minimum slippage and have pulled out the stops and provided flexibility well beyond what would generally be expected from a software supplier.

Big enough to deliver, but small enough to care

From the initial demonstrations of the products through to our dealings with MIS on a daily basis it is evident that we have respected each other as professionals and that crucial relationship has enabled us to make some great strides in a short space of time. We feel from anecdotal evidence, this may have been difficult with a number of bigger suppliers.

MIS is fully aware that they are not one of the larger housing system suppliers and this very fact probably explains why they try so much harder."

Linda Riding, WHG Housing Consultant commented:-

"From the initial demonstrations it was evident that the MIS Rent Accounting module with its natural and easy to learn browser/inspector interface would pose WHG few problems to roll out quickly to many hundreds of staff across the organisation".

"It was impressive that housing officers needed just 6 mouse clicks to generate a report of arrears cases and start straight away working on their patch, updating accounts directly"

"Each integrated module was rolled out very smoothly with no disruption to the business with the full commitment of the MIS implementation, development and management staff evident at every stage"

"In contrast to some previous experiences, the bi-monthly progress meetings with MIS are a pleasure. WHG can plan reliably, the MIS system handles our current and changing business needs in such a flexible manner"

Implementation

A phased implementation of the MIS AMS ActiveH Housing Management modules started in February 2003 and by Summer 2003 the core modules, Asset Management, Planned Maintenance and Rent Accounting were live.

Data was successfully transferred from the council's in-house systems and other information from a pre-transfer stock survey. These modules were then integrated to a new Cedar Open Accounts financial system.

An implementation team of WHG product champions was formed and a "train the trainer" approach was used to devolve the knowledge of the new systems to all the relevant staff.

WHG has now implemented the full range of MIS AMS ActiveH Housing Management modules, including the MIS AMS advanced Mobile Working Solution for the internal repairs workforce of over 120 operatives.

In addition, KPI and other reporting mechanisms have been provided as standard with additional data extracts for third party reporting tools such as Microsoft Reporting Services, Crystal Reports and Business Objects.

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