
Subject:	IMPLEMENTATION OF TRUE COMPLIANCE
Date:	10 December 2024
Decision to be taken by:	Abi Robinson, Digital and Technology Services Manager
Report of:	David Parish, Head of Property Assets
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Jamie Pout, Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Environmental Services
Decision Type:	Executive Non-Key Decision
Call-in to apply:	No (<i>Call-in does not apply to non-Key Officer decisions</i>)
Delegated Authority:	Authority delegated by Cabinet (Cabinet decision CAB 84 of 4 March 2024) and Council (at its meeting held on 6 March 2024) when approving the Council Budget 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25-2027/28 (as set out in Annex 10 of the report) as follows: ‘Delegates the approval of projects included in Annex 6C, the Digital & ICT Programme, to the Digital Services Manager, in consultation with the Head of Finance & Investment and the Portfolio Holder responsible for ICT.’
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To approve a project to procure and implement True Compliance for use in Dover District Council.

Recommendation: To procure and implement True Compliance.

1. Summary

- 1.1 Ensuring that Dover District Council’s housing and corporate assets are compliant is one of the Property Assets team’s primary functions. Since the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock came back into Dover District Council’s (DDC) control on 1 October 2020, urgent work has been undertaken to ensure the stock is compliant. DDC is now looking to build further on this work by moving to True Compliance which uses advanced Artificial Intelligence-supported cloud technology to provide a sophisticated compliance monitoring system with superior document and action management capability. This includes mobile application support for portable use and surveying capabilities which allow internal and external input from officers and contractors to directly send remedial evidence into the system with vetting and automatic document safeguarding in place.
- 1.2 True Compliance will initially be used to help manage compliance of the HRA stock for the big 6 (asbestos, lifts, water hygiene, gas, electrical and fire). We currently monitor these across a number of systems (at least 4) through contractor portals at significant cost and officer time. True Compliance will eventually allow DDC to monitor all of its compliance workstreams through a single system.
- 1.3 Once the HRA big 6 are live, a further roll-out and use of the system across Property Assets will begin which will cover corporate properties as well as providing additional reporting tools for both housing and corporate monitoring.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The benefits of using True Compliance include increased efficiency of officer time, full audit trail of documentation, KPI reporting and greater asset management capability in a very important field of work. It will allow the Council to monitor and report on the big 6 within a single system. It will help the Council meet the demands of new legislation and data storage.
- 2.2 Much of the work we currently do involves the use of spreadsheets and manual data entry and checking by staff across multiple systems. True compliance will do a lot of this work for us using AI and workflow technology and will provide dashboards for superior management and KPI monitoring.
- 2.3 True Compliance offers superior AI supported cloud technology that is able to scan vast amounts of certificates and produce work actions that can be sent automatically to contractors via workflow processes. This will vastly reduce the current staff time needed to manually read thousands of certificates a year and screen off data for action. The actions sent to contractors can then be actioned by the contractor, with remedial evidence submitted directly to the system which will have DDC implemented safeguards, barriers and rules in place to automatically accept or reject and request new or additional remedial evidence per action.
- 2.4 It is expected that True Compliance will save significant officer time and resource by automating many processes. This will allow staff to focus on the much-needed remedial works and actions required to safely manage the Councils housing stock.
- 2.5 The system will assist with the management of compliance data, auditing and inspection by the Regulator for Social Housing. It will give DDC greater control of its data. There is currently a plan of data validation being completed by the Compliance team and the Strategic Systems and Performance Officer to validate, clean and standardise data ready for onboarding.
- 2.6 Once working effectively, the intention is to expand the use of the system to support other HRA work and roll it out across our Corporate Stock to monitor the same workstreams. We may also be able to roll it out across Parks and Open Spaces. True Compliance can also be used to manage and report on Energy Performance of the council stock and support the goals of the corporate plan with data feeding into programmes including bids for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- 2.7 True Compliance has been used successfully by current officers whilst at neighbouring local authorities. They have seen great benefit from its use (including transitioning away from regulatory oversight by the Regulator of Social Housing).
- 2.8 True Compliance is on an existing ICT Framework – G Cloud 14.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1 – Do nothing and keep the existing systems that are in place
- 3.2 Option 2 – Approve project for procurement and implementation of True Compliance for Property Assets.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 The option to not implement True Compliance has been considered but this is not the recommended option as the benefits detailed above will not be realised.
- 4.2 Due to the efficiencies in processes, the recommended option is to approve the project to procure and implement True Compliance for Property Assets.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 True Compliance will replace several existing portals/systems currently providing emergency reporting and data support. Decommissioning these functionally limited systems will save up to £150,000 per annum.
- 5.2 The 3-year contract costs for this project are:
- (a) Year 1: £33,200
 - (b) Year 2: £33,200
 - (c) Year 3: £33,200
- 5.3 The 3-year contract will be paid for out of the HRA.
- 5.4 There will be training provided by True Compliance. In total this would amount to ongoing training/implementation and support provided by True Compliance and included as part of the existing costs. Furthermore, True Compliance will assist with onboarding for a period of and not limited to one year whilst DDC transitions to operational viability solely using the system. True Compliance are on hand to provide close support via tickets, live chat, email and weekly meetings whilst the team navigate onboarding and loading data into the system.
- 5.5 Officers from Property Assets implementing True Compliance will be required for onboarding, data validation, training and setup of the processes/workflows for the implementation of the system (which is expected to take approximately 9 months). This work will be undertaken within the existing team under the supervision and oversight of the Strategic Systems and Performance Officer.

6. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 True Compliance works hard to ensure that their business does not place undue pressure on climate by:
- Keeping travel to a minimum for remote staff and ensuring that visits are responsible
 - Paper is kept to a minimum and processes are digital by default
 - Their software helps organisations to reduce their field visits, interactions, reduced paper-based working.

7. **Corporate Implications**

- 7.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Members are reminded that the Council's revenue and capital resources are under pressure and so they will wish to assure themselves that all proposals progress the Council's priorities, are the best option available and will deliver value for money.
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report seeking approval for a project to procure and implement True Compliance for use at the Council does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>
- 7.4 Other Officers (as appropriate):

8. **Appendices**

None.

9. **Background Papers**

Relevant papers on Property Assets files.

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