

## TSOL ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### INTRODUCTION

The Treasury Solicitor's Department (TSol) provides a comprehensive legal service to other Government Department's in England and Wales and is one of the largest legal organisations in the country. In addition to being responsible for financial activity within the Agency the Treasury Solicitor is responsible for financial matters at the Attorney's General Office, Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and residual matters of the Government Property Lawyers following its closure in September 1999.

### A. CAPITAL STOCK SURVEY

TSol only has a small asset base consisting of office furniture, computer network infrastructure and IT development expenditure with related software licence expenditure. The net book value at 31.3.07 was £6.03m (tangible and intangible assets). These assets, together with future capital investment planned, are essential in ensuring TSol meets its business objectives.

Fixed Asset Categories	Net Book Value at 31.3.07£'000
Development under construction	1459
Development IT in use	1266
Computer Network	893
Furniture and Fittings	1943
Intangible - Software licences	469
Total	6030

TSol relocated to leasehold premises at One Kemble Street in 2005-06 (see below) The objective of the move was to deliver a "long term, flexible and adaptable solution to the accommodation needs of TSol staff in OKS that portrays an updated image of a professional, efficient legal firm in a welcoming environment for clients." The project's business case identified three high level benefits which have been delivered by the move:

- Improving the quality of the working environment
- Removing the blockage to cultural change that QAC presented
- Providing the capacity to deal with further business growth.

The relocation required capital investment in office furniture and computer equipment with spend of £3.9m in 2005-06.

As part of implementing Phase I of its IT Strategy to "Fix the Basics" TSol has invested in the following during 2005-06 and 2006-07:

- Improved time recording (Carpe Diem)
- Datix upgrade to v6.0
- Electronic Records Information and Knowledge (eRIK) for non-litigation parts of the business

Following the expiry of the lease on the Attorney General's Office's premises at 8/9 Buckingham Gate on 5 April 2007 it has relocated to 20 Victoria Street having taken a new lease. Treasury have approved the business case for the relocation. The new accommodation is more suited to modern styles of working and has space to accommodate the expanding organisation

The recent investment means that the condition of the asset base is good and fit for purpose.

The fabric of the recently refurbished accommodation at OKS is good. The refurbishment achieved a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method rating of "very good". Contracts are in place for the ongoing maintenance of mechanical and electrical plant and cyclical maintenance plans for the building fabric and internal decorations

Physical IT assets. Users in OKS have access to good quality, reliable IT kit and there is a regular cycle of desktop upgrades [DN Is this correct?]although further investment in new systems will be required to support changes in the way TSol works.

## **B. ASSET DISPOSAL**

TSol disposed of the freehold and long leasehold interest in Queen Anne's Chambers (QAC) in 2005-06 and relocated to leasehold premises at One Kemble Street (OKS). The disposal has been accepted by HM Treasury as a contribution to the Government's Target for asset disposals and TSol will not be set any further disposal targets

## **C. FORWARD INVESTMENT PLAN**

Phase I of TSol's IS Strategy has concentrated on "Fixing the Basics". This was a short term strategy which drew to a close in March 2007. TSol is now changing rapidly to meet the challenges of the modern business environment. The Government's modernisation agenda, the technology revolution and changes in legal services all need to be addressed whilst maintaining business as usual. Phase II of the IS Strategy has been developed, with a three year planning horizon with the theme of "Preparing for the Future". It will aim to bring our technology platforms right up to date

The Executive Board have currently endorsed some £6m, excluding on going maintenance costs, for an ambitious programme of new investment, which will support our Corporate and business plans up to 2012. Over the next three years we have identified the following projects:

### **Enhanced Remote Access**

This project will bring TSol's remote access services in to the 21st century. The current system is limited by its dial up technology and has been in place for more than 5 years. This means it is slow and only allows 12 users at any one time. Phase I of this project will deliver broadband access to the 100 or so existing laptop users.

It will support:

- Improved and more flexible work-life balance
- Better communication
- Potential savings in accommodation space

Expansion in the *range* of services offered remotely will then be developed in Phase Two. We will need to update our remote working policies and support arrangements in the light of early experience.

### **Optimise Client, Case and Practice management systems**

Currently we have a mixture of systems across teams and divisions supporting this core business activity. This impedes the provision of integrated information delivery, good client management and operational efficiencies.

This project aims to improve these management and operational processes.

As a matter of urgency, TSol will review its requirements by team, with a view to implementing the number of case management systems needed to properly support the business.

Systems will be individually selected to meet local needs, but each must work to an agreed set of common standards in order to minimise support costs and maximise information abstraction. Once areas of commonality are agreed, a low risk strategy of incremental change, by team, will be planned.

### **A Client Care Database**

Our client information is spread over many systems that are maintained locally and characterised by time-consuming update processes and poor accessibility. Some work is in hand in this area, primarily related to assessing data held, which is relevant to management information.

The quality and availability of our information will improve as the measures outlined in this strategy are implemented. There is also a short-term need to address the quality of our client information in advance of other improvements. For this reason a short-term tactical Client Database project is retained within this strategy

### **Rollout a Records Management system across TSol.**

We do not have comprehensive electronic record management systems. We need this for efficiencies, and to comply with the central requirement to ensure that all records should be capable of being held electronically.

Currently, we do not manage documents corporately and are missing out on the benefits provided by modern search engines. This situation will be addressed within this strategy. eRIK, subject to feasibility, should be rolled out across all of TSol. If it is not feasible, then a complete replacement programme will be needed.

Records management underpins knowledge management and supports remote working.

It must link with other tools - particularly case management. Scanning will become an integral part of this environment. Benefits include:

- Having a secure, auditable repository of all documents
- Version control and audit trails on documents
- Powerful search and retrieval capabilities
- Ability to develop accessible knowledge bases
- Time savings
- A reduction in physical document storage needs
- Significant annual savings

This project will potentially interact with other organisations in the criminal justice arena, in particular liaison with the Ministry of Justice who are progressing aspects of standardising inter-agency communications. Document standards and information models will be required.

### **New Scanning Feasibility Trial**

Scanning is now becoming part of the culture in many large law firms. It can be an important part of Records Management and Case Management, provide access to documents via Remote Access and could also help manage the bulk input of case material.

Substantial operational changes occur as scanning is integrated in to businesses. TSol needs to address these issues, and define its own business approach to inform the changes that will be accommodated within the Case Management, Records Management and Remote Access projects. TSol will initiate a new scanning feasibility trial to illuminate the issues and help quantify the benefits.

This new trial will assess costs, investigate process changes, quantify benefits and prepare a plan for further work. Part of the work will include reviewing best practice amongst peers for example, SFO who use scanning in a comprehensive case support system. It is envisaged that this feasibility trial will take 9 -12 months from initiation.

### **Exploit our investment in the new HR system**

The HeRMeS shared services project was initiated in 2006 with the immediate objective of providing additional functionality for HR staff and enhanced management reporting. The objectives for the next phase(s) include:

- Removing the need to re-key staff information e.g. (absence)
- Improving quality of management reporting
- Providing internal recruitment, resource allocation and training tools
- An integrated payroll function
- Delivering an accessible repository containing all staff data

This will save money on re-keying, improve the accuracy of staff information, improve management reports and further facilitate the decommissioning of local databases. In the longer term there is a need to review the location and ownership of all staff information, some of which is embedded in Intranet functionality

## **Upgrade of our Finance systems**

Both TSol and Bona Vacantia systems are several years old and may become due for replacement within the timeframe of this strategy. Upgrade of both systems will be considered and provision is made to implement an upgrade later in the plan period.

## **Enhance the IT infrastructure and support**

The efficient and effective delivery, support and maintenance of technology are the platforms upon which this strategy is built. The Executive Board has already agreed that TSol should retain an in house IT support function. The following changes have been agreed:

- Implementation of IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) procedures to enhance service levels.
- Adjustment of the balance of permanent to contract staff in order to reduce costs. Delivering a single IT strategy, to standardise platforms and guide the future selection, delivery and support of technology.
- Implementation of all of these changes and delivery of the benefits is expected to take up to 3 years and will include moving to Microsoft technology (Outlook email).

*At the end of this period we expect the business to be better prepared to provide the best service for our clients and our staff.*

In addition we currently spend in the region of £0.5m per annum to maintaining our asset stock with the replacement of IT equipment on an annual basis.

## **D. ASSET MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

*How do we ensure that assets are maintained in a suitable condition and that there are integrated maintenance and investment plans?*

In 2005-06 there was a review of TSol's overall IS strategy to produce a basis for considered, co-ordinated and agreed additions to the existing IS programme which would support TSol's business strategy in both the short and longer term.

The resulting IS strategy is governed by a number of key principles:

- TSol will always seek to adopt Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) solutions.
- TSol will avoid bespoke solutions if affordable COTS exist and will seek wherever possible to amend its processes

- In seeking COTS solutions TSol will look first at solutions which are in common use in private sector law firms of comparable size where that is appropriate.
- OGC and other government framework agreements will be used where possible to procure solutions.

Applying these principles TSol has adopted an incremental strategy to meet specific business needs. The first phase “fixing the basics” has given priority to meeting TSol’s strategic themes and client expectations; putting in modern business facilities and action to ensure compliance with external standards.

Phase II of this strategy has the theme of “Preparing for the Future”.

#### *Exploitation of Wider Markets Opportunities*

This forms part of our Efficiency/Transformation programme. OKS has obvious potential to generate income and two alternatives are currently being pursued – the use of Café 15 as “event” space for TSol linked or sponsored events, recouping costs where possible, and marketing of the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference & Training Suite within government. The latter is already proving to be a success and there have been a number of bookings.

#### *Asset Management Framework:*

- Governance Framework

The Executive Board (EB) is the main decision body and supports the Chief Executive in delivering the Agency’s objectives. Until recently the Business Systems Group (BSG) which focused on IS and other business systems reported to the EB. The IS Strategy Programme Board and Efficiency Programme Board both reported to BSG. There are currently a number of initiatives and projects running in TSol and more are planned for next year. From 1 January 2007 EB agreed a new governance structure to manage one programme of change in TSol. A Change Board now reports to the EB and the ISSPB and Efficiency Programme Board have merged to form a new Change Steering Committee reporting to the Change Board. A Change Programme Office has also been created. The outcome of these changes is a clearer picture of all change activity, along with the costs and benefits attached, dependencies, deliverables, risks, capability and capacity of each area of change. Further changes to the governance framework are planned..

- Financial Management Framework

TSol is developing its Finance Strategy to support TSol’s delivery of Value for Money services to its clients by providing excellent professional financial services and ensuring TSol can live within its means. Value for money will be a key tenet of this strategy.

- Delegation and Accountability

TSol’s delegation from Treasury for capital projects is £1m. This was increased from £0.5m in 2000. We will be approaching HMT in 2007-08 to seek a review of this limit and the scope for an increase.

TSol's Capital budget is delegated to the Director of Corporate Strategy. All applications for capital funding need to be made through the Director of Corporate Strategy to the Change Control Board and the Executive Board (EB) and should be supported by a full business case. It has been made clear in delegation minutes to other Directors and budget holders that any request for capital funding must be made through the Director of Corporate Strategy and, where actual expenditure is anticipated to exceed the initial approved costs, they are required to seek re-approval from the Director of Corporate Strategy or, where the increase is more than the lesser of 5% or £50,000, the Executive Board

AGO's Capital budget is delegated to the Legal Secretary to the Law Officers. If any capital provision is required above the delegated budget it has to be discussed with the Director of Corporate Strategy who may ask for a business case to be prepared in support of a request for an increase in capital funds. Any capital requirement in excess of £100,000 needs to be agreed in advance with the Director of Finance.

- Investment Appraisal and project scrutiny systems

Standard templates for project documents are used to ensure project management best practice is adopted throughout the Agency. They also add to the robustness of the task lifecycle by ensuring proper justification and clear definitions at every stage. These include a standard template for the business case – to justify the project based on the estimated costs, risks and benefits/savings to be gained. Project documents are scrutinised by the appropriate Boards/Committees within the Governance structure.