

## Press release

May 15<sup>th</sup> 2006

### **One stop shop for housing services**

**What if housing services were as straightforward to access as a cash machine and you could find what you wanted, in your language at whatever time of the day?**

Soon you'll be able to do just that when each neighbourhood office will have a Housing Information Point installed. These will look like cash machines and be used in the same way with touch screens.

While Hackney isn't the first to install these information points we are one of the first to programme them with a number of language options including French, Somali, Chinese and Turkish. This will prove very helpful for residents as we can't always guarantee multi-lingual reception staff!

The information points are just part of a whole array of options to make housing services more accessible to residents. The information points will contain information about housing services, up to date community information and links to certain parts of the council website although it will not be a direct portal to the web.

Residents will also be able to pay their rent from them, report repairs work and check when planned maintenance and Decent Homes work is due to be carried out on their property.

Hackney Homes has worked hard to ensure that the machines are as user-friendly as possible so residents won't have to be expert web-users to be able to navigate around them. There will be simple instructions to follow.

Eventually we would like people to be able to use them even when the neighbourhood offices are closed like a 'hole in the wall' or bank machine. They may even eventually be put into libraries and supermarkets. In the future they will also have Gujarati and Vietnamese added to them. Phase two of the project will see them fitted with handsets so people can find a number then touch the screen to dial it and talk to staff. Following this, phase three, will include video conferencing abilities so residents can have face to face contact with someone who speaks their own language or an expert with a translator on line.

Ends

**Press queries to Chloe Goddard on 0208 356 3528 or email [housingeditor@hackneyhomes.org.uk](mailto:housingeditor@hackneyhomes.org.uk)**