



# PUBLIC MOBILE SUPPLEMENT 2008 knowledge

THE LOCAL INSIGHT MAGAZINE FROM CIVICA



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## 1 WELCOME

# Time for the public sector to embrace mobile working

Welcome to this special edition of Public Knowledge which is intended to share information with you about some of the latest innovative mobile initiatives which are being implemented across the public sector.

The unrivalled ability of mobile solutions to enable remote working from homes, satellite sites or in the field is becoming an increasingly attractive option for public sector bodies who want to save resources, increase productivity and take the responsibility of becoming 'greener'.

In this special edition we talk to members of Sussex Police who are using advanced speech recognition technology so front-line staff can retrieve vehicle information from their handsets. Like many mobile services, it is faster, it saves time and it helps to provide a better all-round service.

Tradesmen working for the Whitefriars Housing Group are using new mobile technology to access and record their work data and have found this new way of working has increased repair operative efficiency.

In another interesting example, staff dealing with rent arrears at St Leger Homes of Doncaster have started using PDAs – linked to back office systems – to access and store information such as account balances, transaction details and benefits entitlement, during appointments with tenants in their homes.

The key benefits are that St Leger staff no longer need to remember to take the correct paper documents out with them. Working life is made much easier because officers carry a small bluetooth printer, for printing off statements, and an easy-to-use digital pen which enables tenants to sign documents on screen.

Across all of our markets, in local government, social housing, enforcement and private sector service management, Civica has specialist insight and broad experience of delivering effective mobile solutions, making the company one of the foremost providers in this area.

Reading about the mobile experiences of our customers in these pages will hopefully encourage you to consider how mobile applications could help your organisation to save time, speed up processes and protect the environment.

Please let us know if you have any comments on these mobile case studies. You can send your comments to [marketing@civica.co.uk](mailto:marketing@civica.co.uk)



**Simon Downing**  
Chief Executive of Civica



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## Oldham investigators to use laptops and tablets to tackle fraud

Civica's Mobile Authority Fraud detection system is being introduced by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council to help improve the effectiveness of local investigators when dealing with case management for Benefit and Corporate fraud investigations.



The council plans to book cases out of the main system onto laptops or tablets so they can be taken out into the field.

The aim is to improve the effectiveness of investigators when they are dealing with internal departmental inquiries, making home visits or on surveillance.

*"It saves time because you can put the notes straight into the system rather than writing them up in hand and adding them in later,"* explains Janette Parkin, Counter Fraud Manager.

The mobile system will be extremely useful for internal enquiries, when investigators go into different departments to gather evidence

and take statements. Investigators will be able to enter statements as they are taking them, and to store them securely in the system. This will ensure the information recorded is more accurate and evidentially sound.

The new system will also facilitate more flexible working arrangements, as investigators will be able to work from home by booking out cases they want to work on.

*"It saves time, you can put the notes straight into the system"*

## Canute Group turns to mobile vehicle repairs

Canute Group, the global supply chain provider, plans to roll out a new mobile application to enable field-based technicians in their Engineering Division to work remotely.

Canute Group's Engineering Division provides a comprehensive parts and maintenance service to owners and operators of vehicle-mounted hydraulic lifting and load handling equipment through a national network of workshops and mobile engineers. Canute also provides a national, 24 hour, 7 day a week emergency vehicle recovery and repair service for a number of large operators and government agencies.

Civica's Tranman Service Management is being used as the management information system to enable Canute's Engineering Division to

provide full on-site servicing and maintenance, as well as a breakdown and repair service to manage its national contracts.

Following the initial success of the implementation of Tranman Service Management, Canute hopes to achieve further efficiencies by extending the use of the application. The first priority will be to roll out the mobile solution to enable Canute's field based technicians to manage and record job information remotely. Call centre staff will also benefit from integration with GPS tracking which will allow them to monitor vehicle positions for both customers and mobile technicians using mapping software.

Commenting on the success of the project to date, Chris Broom, Group Support Manager, Canute Group said, *"The greatest benefit for Canute has been a marked improvement in business intelligence. We now have tangible,*

*more transparent data, which allows us to measure our key performance indicators, highlight areas for improvement and make strategic decisions. This will help us to maintain the highest professional standards and focus on service performance."*



### 3 HOUSING

St Leger Homes of Doncaster predicts savings of £20,000 per year as well as improving arrears collection with Civica Mobile.



# St Leger Homes Supports Tenants with Mobile Working

Staff dealing with rent arrears at St Leger Homes of Doncaster have begun to use Civica Mobile linked to back office housing management systems to access and update information such as account balances, transaction details, benefit entitlement and repayment agreements during appointments with tenants in their homes.

*"The real strength of the system is that officers are able to access up-to-date, real-time information from the back-office system,"* says Martin Musgrave, Chief Executive of St Leger Homes – an Arms Length Management Organisation created by Doncaster Council in October 2005 that manages just over 21,000 council homes.

*"They are also able to update accounts. As they enter data into the PDA, it is immediately updated in the back office system,"* he adds.

Ordinarily, officers must visit the office before and following visits, to synchronise new data with office systems. Now, mobile staff are able to access payment information as current as that morning's cash office figures without the need to come into the office, saving time and travel costs.

Additionally, St Leger Homes' staff no longer need to carry paper documents or risk taking the wrong information with them. Instead, officers are provided with a small bluetooth printer for printing statements and a digital pen enabling tenants to sign documents on screen.

The technology works around the common problem of an unreliable or lacking indoor mobile signal, as users can download the data they need before going into the tenant's home. They are then able to work offline and, when the signal returns, the PDA automatically synchronises any entries made.

The system supports improved customer service and debt management – new payment agreements can be established on the spot and officers can visit tenants without appointments if opportunities arise. Overall, this increases the likelihood of arrears resolution and makes best use of officers' valuable time.

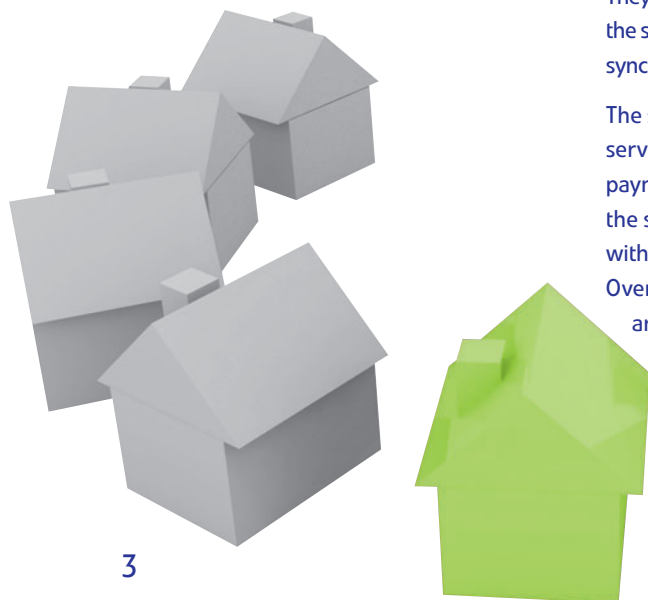
Steve Taylor, Special Project Consultant at Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council predicts the system could save St Leger Homes' arrears operation in the order of £20,000 per year as well as improving arrears collection. The extended use of the solution to cover areas such as Estate Management is also being considered and it is anticipated additional annual efficiency savings will result.

*"The aim is to provide a Mobile Working solution for Social Landlords covering all disciplines through a single system,"* says Erika O'Brien, Account Manager at Civica.

*"Many of the available packages tend to cover just one area, such as DLO or stock condition surveys. Civica Mobile has been designed to meet all of our customers' needs, avoiding a situation where multiple systems need to be maintained to support different departmental requirements."*

The capacity to tailor services to the tenant is proving extremely useful, too. *"If we need to report a repair, we can capture that,"* added Martin. *"We have recently collected personal information from tenants, for example, details of preferred languages or mobility difficulties,"* he continues. *This is available to staff using the Mobile Solution, ensuring we provide a more inclusive service."*

*"The aim is to provide a Mobile Working solution for Social Landlords covering all disciplines through a single system"*



## 4 PUBLIC PROTECTION

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council embraces mobile working for pest control officers, giving up paper records to improve accuracy of information and take control of service requests.



# PDAs help Neath Port Talbot tackle pest control

With around 5000 pest control requests annually, resulting in approximately 10,000 pieces of data, and with a small administration section, the team was buckling under the strain, particularly in summer.

It was important to improve the accuracy of data received and updated, this combined with a need to move with the times led to the decision to implement technology to enter data whilst out in the field. *"If you're standing still as an authority, you'll be left behind,"* says Jason Clark, Senior Pest Control Officer at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

Each officer in the Council's pest control team now uses a PDA to receive and record information on incoming jobs and job status using the Civica Public Protection system.

A member of the public contacts the administration team with service requests and their name, address, complaint type and location data is entered onto the main system. By docking the PDA on a receiver 'cradle', officers can capture this information on the device, which takes around 10 seconds.

*"When we are at the job, all the information is on screen for us,"* says Clark. Once finished, officers update the PDA with their new data, return to the office and dock the PDA to transfer the information to the main system. *"The accuracy is tremendous,"* he says.

This has had important effects. To receive funding for sewer baiting (eliminating rats from their habitat), the team must prove the problem to the Water Company. *"It is essential our data regarding rodent complaints is accurate. We need to send a GIS map of the complaints for the work to be carried out. If the data is not accurate, we can't get funding,"*

says Clark. *"If the wrong information was typed in, we wouldn't be able to prove there is a problem."*

Overall, implementing mobile technology has reduced the department's costs, according to Clark and also fits in well with the Council's plans to reduce office accommodation and introduce flexible working.

Additionally, the Council is beginning to share its experiences – the team recently met with another Welsh Council. *"They wanted to roll it out as soon as possible,"* says Clark.

*"We used to write down codes and tick boxes on a sheet of A4 paper,"* says Clark. *"We are now in full control of the service request."*



*"We are now in full control of the service request."*

## 5 ENFORCEMENT

Sussex Police's pilots of advanced speech recognition technology have allowed 400 front-line staff instant access to the Police National Computer (PNC) to query and retrieve vehicle information from their radio handsets.



# Sussex Police Voice Portal helps crack down on crime

The Police Voice Portal (PVP) has been developed by Civica in partnership with Cobalt Telephone Technologies. Once connected, officers are prompted to read out vehicle registration numbers and voice recognition technology matches this data with PNC information, such as whether the vehicle is stolen or the vehicle's colour. The handset is sent a text message summarising the PNC information for offline review.

Traditionally, officers would access the PNC via the control room using in-vehicle mobile data terminals; or by phone, via the Airwave handset (Airwave is the digital radio communications network). But the PVP is less demanding on airspace than traditional checking methods, because it uses a separate channel from the talk group to allow officers to make checks, thus freeing up controllers' time.

*"It aims to really fulfil the potential of Airwave, – traditional PDA access cannot use Airwave as a carrier due to bandwidth limitations,"* says Sean Janczak, Software Development Manager at Civica. *"Officers' training requirements are low due to the familiar format experienced through similar automated telephone payment services."*

The PVP also enables officers to maintain eye contact during questioning and remain compliant with Police personal security regulations. Crucially, Sussex Police can more quickly respond to situations. *"The technology could be extended to other areas,"* says Janczak.

Chief Inspector Merv Wyeth, seconded to the National Policing Improvement Agency from Sussex Police, says: *"Key advantages are that PNC checks do not require a controller to be available but can be achieved at any time. This is particularly important when the radio talk group is congested, for example during*

*peak times. It is always available even when other channels are busy."*

Consequently, the system makes better overall use of officers' skills. Officers can make more checks, it saves them time and there is less demand on controllers, enabling front line and control room staff to provide a better all-round service, and more checks ultimately mean more arrests.

A second generation solution is under consideration, allowing users to speak their location. The Airwave Terminal's Automated Personnel Location System does not currently receive a consistently adequate GPS signal to confirm an officer's location, which is essential in maintaining a robust audit of enquiries made. *"Experience gained from the trial is proving to be invaluable in developing this facility,"* says Wyeth.

***"Key advantages are that PNC checks do not require a controller to be available but can be achieved at any time"***



## 6 HOUSING

Whitefriars Housing Group has increased repair operative efficiency using Civica's Servitor Mobile solution integrated with an appointment scheduling system.



# Whitefriars Housing Group saves time with mobile repairs

Civica's Servitor Mobile, delivered via PDA, enables a majority of Whitefriars Housing Group's reactive repair jobs to be added to an appointment scheduling system, Xmbrace's Opti-time, which allocates a job to an appropriate tradesman and updates any information they enter in real time on back office systems.

Without needing to report to the depot as before, tradesmen are sent their jobs one at a time, via the device. As they begin and finish a job, so they update the job status on the system. "At the back end we see the job, despatched," says Sohail Karamat, Whitefriars' Home Works Business Support Manager.

*"The back office now sees real time information on all jobs."*

If a job is overrunning, the system figures this out – because each job is allocated an average completion time – and the next job is automatically assigned to another tradesman. This is all possible because of the real time mobile data system working alongside a dynamic scheduling system.

33 of Whitefriars' tradesmen are using Servitor Mobile, following pilots with smaller groups where half-day training was provided and a 'super user' was selected from the team to assist colleagues during work time.

*"Mobile working, along with an appointment system, has allowed*

*managers an instant view of what is happening with the workforce in real time, so that they can manage workloads simply and quickly," Karamat concludes.*

*"The back office now sees real time information on all jobs."*



Remote working – from home, satellite sites or in the field – is an increasingly attractive option for public sector organisations endeavouring to make more efficient use of resources, increase staff productivity and become ‘greener’ by reducing the distances staff have to drive to a physical location to work.

# Remote workers reduce carbon emissions

*“As councils seek to reduce the amount of property they manage, they are challenged with providing communications infrastructure to remote sites and the issue of providing voice communications to home workers,” says Kelly MacMillan, Markets Specialist at IP communications solutions provider Mitel. “The cost of leased lines can be prohibitive.”*

Forward-thinking Pennaf Housing in Wales, has already taken a big step towards achieving these goals, working with Civica who recommended and supplied Mitel’s Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providing a single source of delivery for all customer correspondence, telephone calls and emails plus free calls for the company when using broadband. The initiative included the set up of extensions to 15 remote office locations.

Location independent technology offers limitless opportunities for workplace location. Johnnie Johnson Housing wanted to provide a more efficient service to their callers, improve their carbon footprint and reduce costs. *“In fact one member of Johnnie Johnson’s staff wanted to work from France over Christmas. Civica’s Mitel technology has allowed him to do this*

*seamlessly from abroad”, says David Rowlands, Director of Civica Connect.*

According to Rowlands, advances in technology such as Fixed Mobile Convergence and PDA telephony that allows such ‘extension mobility’ are key drivers to remote working. *“Growth is driven by cellular phone manufacturers who are producing phones that work on a wireless or GSM network,” he says.*

‘Presence’, which shows staff availability status on the desktop and allows users to set up conference calls and transfer calls is also maturing. If someone is in a meeting, Presence may save a receptionist 30 seconds per call. *“Shave off all those 30 seconds in a year and you’ll see business savings,” Rowlands adds.*

Increasingly, public sector employees are working flexibly to reduce their impact on the environment. *“Employers are looking at equivalence of days working from home to carbon saved,” says Rowlands. Server-side technology like thin client demands less energy than traditional computing models. “Thin client uses 9 watts of power, rather than PCs which use 90. More organisations*

*are sharing PC workloads at data centres,” he says.*

One pitfall in implementing remote working however, is a fear of reduced communication with colleagues. Staying part of the team can be partly overcome by deploying localised video. But prior to deployment, strong internal communication is called for, says Rowlands. *“Human resources and customer services have got to be more involved with the IT team. It’s changing – but not fast enough.”*



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