

Page 04

## Dunedin Canmore goes mobile and saves £140,000 with the help of Civica

Page 07

Coastline Housing provides more responsive maintenance service with Civica Mobile

Page 08

Spending review overtakes tenant service improvement, survey reveals

Civica Housing Supplement



# A warm welcome to you...

Necessity is the mother of invention, never more so than when the Government of the day presents you with budget cuts of 25 per cent or more. Housing providers need to start thinking of ICT partners and systems as weapons in their survival armoury for the next few years.

With the right thinking, housing executives could employ technology in different ways: to streamline their business processes, drive efficiencies with business process re-engineering and sharing risk and return with their ICT partners, to transform performance outcomes from fewer resources – and there is evidence that some providers are rethinking the way they use ICT to do just that.

Two trends are emerging as the social housing sector seeks to tackle these crucial issues. First, some housing departments are gradually re-engineering business systems, speeding up processes by outsourcing some of their services to specialists. Secondly others, through new business process outsourcing (BPO) models, are removing entire administrative processes to drive down service costs and free up staff resources for tenant support. Whatever route is taken, senior management teams are acutely aware that they need to act by March 2011 to deliver outcomes as the next year's budgets are set. They will also know they are starting a process that will leave them better able to cope with reform, and reporting on the sector's post-HRA financing landscape.

Neither of these options are simple. Providers need to audit processes and identify their assets

before outsourcing. Partners also need to fully understand the client's required outcomes and the ICT systems that support core processes. The sector's best partners will take the time to sit down and understand their client's long term needs. More than that, they will accept the programme risk needed to drive a long term change in service developments and operate complex administrative needs through their own data centres.

Intriguingly, necessity is being turned into invention in other ways. Some housing providers, having invested in re-engineering their business systems over time, are planning a third option, acting as shared service hubs for other ALMOs and housing departments. They have the capacity and system resilience to host services for others. They could be the answer for small departments that lack the funding or ICT infrastructures to kick start rapid cost efficiencies that the current public finances demand.

ALMOs and housing providers are certainly starting to innovate. What providers cannot do... is do nothing at all.

**John Hood**  
Managing Director, Civica UK  
(Housing & Asset)



## News >

### CGA leads the way in customer service

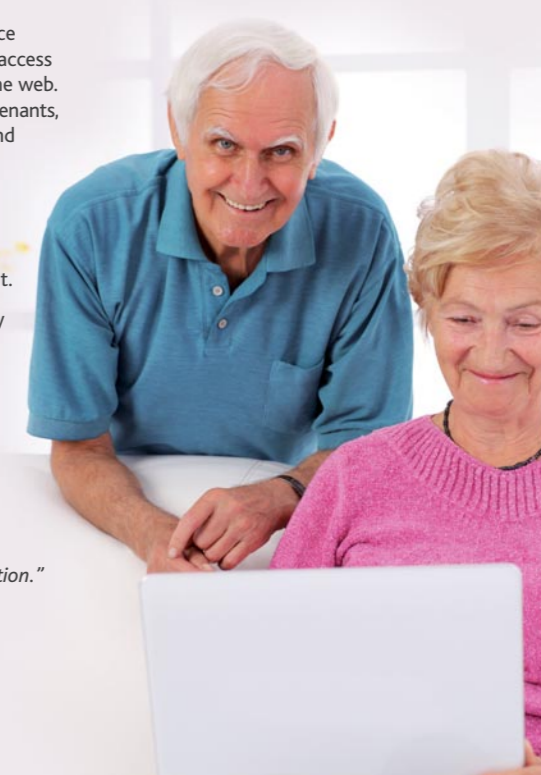
Community Gateway Association (CGA) plans to improve its customer service with a £100,000 integrated electronic document management (EDM), workflow and contact management system. An existing Civica housing management customer, CGA is a not-for-profit community business set up to meet the housing needs of people in Preston and its surrounding areas.

The Civica solution is fully integrated and enables information captured via multiple methods to be processed in the same way using standardised workflow. For example, a customer may request a service from a member of staff working remotely using a mobile device, via the contact centre, through a web service, by sending a letter or an e-mail. All enquiries can be dealt with consistently and in line with published standards regardless of the customer's preferred method of contact.

In addition, CGA will use Civica's MyService solution to provide self-service customer access to housing services and information via the web. This supports CGA's strategy to empower tenants, reducing reliance on the contact centre and offering a more flexible service.

CGA has recently achieved Customer Service Excellence, the Government's standard, in recognition of their drive for continuous customer service improvement.

**Phil McCabe**, Head of Finance, Community Gateway Association, said: "The customer is at the heart of everything that we do and we want to give our residents the best possible service. Initially CGA looked at the concept of digitally archiving all the documents held within some specific departments, but in reality, the benefits of encompassing workflow and CRM are more wide-reaching, not only within those departments but across the whole organisation."



### Delivering a consistent service whilst reducing costs is key for Orwell Housing Association

Civica has been awarded a five year contract by Ipswich-based Orwell Housing Association to further enhance its tenant service capabilities, reduce costs and drive efficiencies through a managed IT service agreement.

Orwell Housing Association, a not-for-profit body that manages approximately 3,500 properties of mixed tenure across Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and North Essex, took a strategic decision to move its existing Civica Housing platform to a hosted service.

To meet those needs, Civica's Housing software platform and 24/7 technical support is being provided as one integrated, managed service. The project started on November 8, 2010.

Civica will deliver its Universal Housing solution as a hosted application system that includes new contact centre software, web interface and workflow and Electronic Document Management (EDM) solutions.

By providing the housing management system as a managed service, Civica will deliver technical back-up as well as ongoing software updates and management, all included in a flat monthly fee, enabling Orwell to focus on its core duties to tenants.

Civica's workflow and EDM system will enhance staff performance and ensure services are consistently provided to all customers.

**Stephen James**, Chief Executive, Orwell Housing Association, said: "Managed services enable us to provide assured and efficient service delivery, with reduced overall cost and risk to our organisation. We chose Civica because its Housing system incorporates all the resources, including customer relations management and web interfaces, which will support our current and future business development plans, helping the association streamline core processes and provide a better service to tenants."



Public Knowledge



## Contents

CGA leads the way in customer service	Page 03	Productivity boost at Manchester Working	Page 06
Hosted service for Orwell Housing Association	Page 03	Coastline improves maintenance service with mobile working	Page 07
Dunedin Canmore goes mobile and saves £140,000	Page 04	CSR overtakes tenant service improvement survey reveals	Page 08
Civica helps Wirral Partnership Homes put communities first	Page 05		

We hope you enjoy reading the latest issue of Public Knowledge which aims to provide insights into the progress made by public organisations in achieving more efficient and responsive services for their communities.

# Dunedin Canmore goes mobile and saves £140,000

Dunedin Canmore Group recently celebrated winning the Herald Scotland Digital Business Award 2010, which recognises the work being carried out by innovative organisations around Scotland who have used digital innovation and technology to benefit their business.

Dunedin Canmore won the award for the implementation of Civica's Mobile Contractor Workforce solution to all of the Group's dedicated team of tradesmen responsible for delivery of the repairs service. The Group has seen real cost savings by utilising this technology but more importantly, has improved customer service.

#### Moving to mobile

Dunedin Canmore Group, a key provider of housing and related services in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife, has been a Civica customer for over 20 years, now using Civica's latest service delivery solution for housing management, repairs, planned maintenance, anti-social behaviour, arrears management and electronic document management.

**Robert Buchanan**, Head of IT, Dunedin Canmore explains the reasons why they decided to invest in new mobile technology. *"During the previous three years the number of works orders for tenants had grown significantly. We needed to become more efficient when processing and handling repairs work."*

Dunedin Canmore handle over 24,000 repair jobs annually, previously using a manual process. Robert explains: *"Our 65 tradesmen were given paper copies of their job lines and had to come into our workshop every morning to pick them up before starting work. They then had to come back to the workshop and hand their job lines back in with any additional work written on the back of them. Finally an administrator would have to manually complete every job on the system."*

Dunedin Canmore decided to explore mobile working solutions with the objective of simplifying and automating their processes, while also improving the accuracy of information through real time updates on how works orders were progressing throughout the day.

Dunedin Canmore chose Civica to supply the mobile working solution. Civica Mobile allows for all jobs to be automatically sent to the operatives' hand held devices. Operatives are able to clock in from home, receive daily jobs

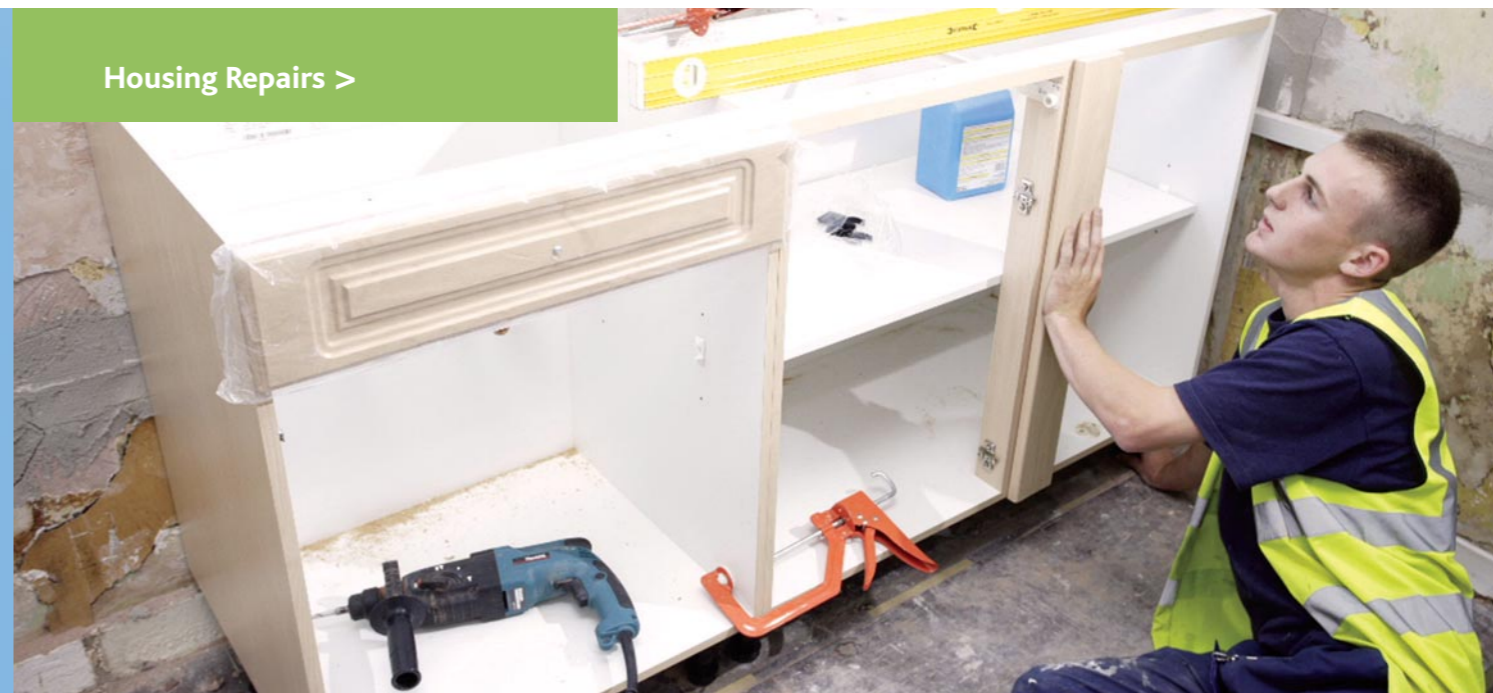
and go directly to their first appointment saving on time, fuel and travel costs. Operatives are able to manage their van stock through the PDA, additional materials can be booked to jobs and jobs can be completed, automatically updating back office systems in real time.

#### Return on investment

Moving to mobile working has delivered a number of benefits for Dunedin Canmore, including substantial cost savings through reduced administration and environmental benefits from reducing paper and printing usage and in minimising fuel consumption. Dunedin Canmore are now able to keep tenants better informed, delivering excellent customer service through improved visibility of how work is progressing throughout the day.

Dunedin Canmore use GPS tracking to allocate emergency jobs to the nearest operative, improving response times for tenants as well as being able to monitor the safety of their operatives.

Robert quantifies the benefits achieved: *"The biggest saving we made was eliminating the collection and return of paperwork to our workshop; we estimate that this saves over £140,000 per year. The automatic completion of jobs on the PDA has saved one full working week in administration time per month."*



## Civica helps Wirral Partnership Homes put communities first

Wirral Partnership Homes Limited (WPH) is committed to delivering an excellent and continually improving service and selected Servitor from Civica to improve the efficiency of their responsive repairs and maintenance function.

Servitor provides WPH with an integrated housing repairs and maintenance solution to manage appointment scheduling using Opti-time, mobile working, job management, stores and purchasing. The Servitor solution has helped WPH to deliver a better level of response to its tenants through the optimisation of resources, increased productivity of operatives and accurate management information to inform decision-making.

**Trevor Jones**, Managing Director, Wirral Partnership Homes (Building Services Division) said: *"The system has improved the efficiency of maintenance technicians by providing staff with faster information about repairs. When a tenant makes a request, Servitor can automatically allocate the job to the best-qualified technician and link to WPH's stock management system to ensure the right tools and parts are on the technician's van. This means people aren't constantly coming back to the office because they need a new part."*

**Floyd Adams**, Business Support & Improvement Manager, Wirral Partnership Homes (Building Services Division) joined the business targeted with improving existing business processes and efficiencies. He comments: *"Wirral Partnership Homes is a not-for-profit organisation so it is a constant balancing act between helping the local community and running a commercially astute business."*

#### Mobile working

WPH identified Servitor mobile as a way to transform the provision of responsive repair and maintenance services to tenants, delivering operational efficiencies. Servitor mobile allows operatives to receive work request details in the field via mobile devices. Jobs are sent to the operative one at a time thus maximizing the benefits of the auto scheduling functionality. Customer information can be accessed and the status of work requests updated in real-time by connecting over the GPRS network to Servitor. WPH has a responsive team of over 40 operatives using PDAs to provide real-time visibility of the repairs process.

**Floyd Adams** explains: *"The driver behind implementing mobile technology was to prevent technicians from frequently returning to the depot, therefore losing both time and money."*

*"To implement the new way of working wasn't easy, we had to look at terms and conditions and the working environment. We also had to go through a consultation process with the unions, but in the long term it has been better for everyone and important for improving customer service. Actually the workforce has taken to it really well."*

Mobile working and remote data capture enables organisations to improve productivity through optimal utilisation of their workforce. Handheld devices specifically designed for the housing repairs management process provide tangible improvements in business performance through increased speed, accuracy and consistency of data.

WPH are already building on the success of the mobile roll out by further improving the functionality available to operatives. **Floyd Adams** explains: *"As we introduce additional features on the mobile it will build on our aim to provide the right tools to enable technicians to complete the job right first time."*

**Floyd Adams** concludes: *"We now have a system capable of adapting to changes in policy, procedure and customer needs. WPH realise that without our tenants we don't have a business, so we want to achieve positive feedback from our customers to secure funding for programmes which in turn improve the quality of life for local people."*



## Productivity boost at Manchester Working helps improve tenant services

Manchester City Council has addressed its goal of providing Decent Homes for its 50,000 housing properties by establishing a series of local housing providers. In North Manchester, this work is now managed by the Northwards Housing ALMO and Morrison in the Manchester Working (MWP) venture, which now looks after 13,000 properties and over 70,000 repair jobs annually.

Manchester Working has made the difference to results because it has been able to harness new software platforms to further boost staff productivity and tenant service. This was achieved with expert help from Civica's Social Housing division, which provided vital system consultancy and technology integration skills.

Manchester Working's renowned expertise in managing and repairing properties is being enhanced by integrating its front line service and back office property data, allowing work teams to give real-time updates through each day using Civica's Housing and Contact Manager CRM and workflow software platforms. Through the updates, management is scheduling daily work assignments and materials purchasing more effectively.

Morrison's new contact centre's 28 staff handle all calls and emails through Civica Contact Manager with a virtual private network providing 24/7 security and resilience. In addition, Civica's integration of the OptiTime mobile solution, enables Morrison's very experienced workforce of builders, plumbers, joiners and suppliers to enter completed repairs and maintenance details for each job using PDAs.

Using the integrated Civica software platforms, Morrison's call centre staff can allocate work at a property and check there is no repair work outstanding. Contact staff use a diagnostics package, with on-screen checklist of the property's facilities and the tenants' priorities. This process helps generate a detailed job ticket, so repair teams know exactly which materials and tools to take on site.

The connection of contact centre, housing database and OptiTime scheduling system enables all repair tasks to be 'intelligently scheduled.' This connected process assigns work to operative teams and appointment for the tenant, with advance SMS reminders for residents with mobile phones. If problems arise, controllers are notified and reallocated to other operatives. Repair operatives all carry PDAs to report their work completion and update the main database, then a separate message is sent to the tenant, informing them of the job completion, improving overall customer service.

John Burton, Northwards Head of ICT, explains: "When housing officers or contact staff are contacted individually, they can call up on screen all interactions with a tenant for the first time. Departmental managers can look at data sets from Civica Housing and Contact Manager to identify any problem areas. They can analyse new reports from tenants such as anti-social behaviour incidents. Our staff can act on any issues while still improving overall productivity."

The Manchester Working joint venture has delivered a flexible repairs and maintenance service to tenants hitting tough, near 100% monthly repair completion targets. The joint venture's headline performance figures have been enhanced by Civica's integration of front line customer service and workflow management that together have further improved its response to tenants' needs and made optimum use of its field workforce's hours.

John Burton of Northwards explains: "The joint venture was always going to improve repair services but through the contact centre and workflow changes, we are achieving even better service performance with faster call handling. We're answering 98.5% of calls which is well ahead of our service standard. We're handling repairs generally much faster because the software allocates work teams' jobs automatically, depending on priority."



Coastline services

www.coastlinehousing.co.uk

t. 08452 700 720

WLO3 LZV



## Coastline Housing provides more responsive maintenance service with Civica Mobile

Based in Cornwall, Coastline Housing is an independent, not-for-profit housing association that owns over 3,700 homes. Its subsidiary company, Coastline Services, undertakes responsive and planned repairs for Coastline Housing, together with outside contracts such as repairs for properties belonging to Penwith Housing, Habinteg and Restormel Borough Council.

As with all housing associations, Coastline has been put under increasing pressure to achieve 'more with less', but also faces the inherent extra operational cost of a property base spread over a large, relatively rural area. The association offers its tenants a full range of services including scheduled and reactive repairs, grounds maintenance and property insulation projects.

The main challenge faced by Coastline Services was to create an efficient team of workers that could maintain properties scattered across the entire county. At the same time the tenant experience still needed to be timely yet cost effective, with a strong focus on customer service.

Beth Lawton, Head of ICT, Coastline Housing comments: "Many of our mobile operatives live and work a long way from Coastline's offices. We were essentially in a situation where our mobile maintenance team was making time-consuming journeys back and forth to head office, as well as commuting considerable distances between tenants' properties. We felt that there was certainly a more efficient way to deliver the service."

As such Coastline began exploring mobile working solutions, to create a more flexible and efficient environment, connecting its mobile team directly with tenants' needs as well as corporate databases at the Coastline head office.

Coastline looked to Civica Mobile, which offers one system for use across the organisation. It easily interfaces with existing databases and contact management systems, while also crucially offering online and offline access.

Beth Lawton comments: "We did consider providing our maintenance team with laptops, but as well as being cumbersome to carry, remote working on a laptop requires an always-on data connection, which isn't possible in some parts of Cornwall. Instead, we worked with Civica to implement PDAs. As well as being small and

portable, the battery life is also much better and these devices do not require a working data connection to operate."

At the same time as introducing PDAs, Coastline also opted to integrate all its back office functions into the mobile working solution, so effectively its mobile maintenance team could receive maintenance requests in real time and also provide updates remotely. The next step is for the system to be interfaced directly with building materials specialist Jewsons, so that the Coastline maintenance team can pre-order materials before they arrive at the store. This again saves time and also avoids wasted journeys.

Beth Lawton comments: "Introducing a true mobile working solution has really changed the way we tackle tenant maintenance schedules for the better. Now that the system is fully deployed, we have noticed far better staff utilisation, better staff morale and more robust back office procedures, as our mobile team can provide real time updates to tenant case files. From a tenant perspective, the service they receive is more responsive and we are also able to react to last minute changes in a more flexible way."

# Spending review overtakes tenant service improvement, survey reveals

**According to new industry research, nearly two-thirds of social housing ICT managers are actively working on service re-design strategies as the Government's Spending Review has leapfrogged tenant service improvement needs on the corporate agenda.**

Civica surveyed 100 delegates at the IT in Housing exhibition in London in November 2010. Nearly half (45%) of respondents stated that dealing with the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was their top priority. This concern with the CSR outweighed their focus on housing benefit withdrawal – cited by 16% – and the 30% who thought front line service improvements were their main area of concern. This finding was significant, particularly as the survey was conducted before the Government announced on 30th November 2010 that it would delay housing subsidy withdrawal until 2012. When asked about their preferred strategy to meet the spending squeeze, 63% of ICT managers said they would transform service delivery rather than adopt economies of scale through mergers with other groups, which was cited by 33%.

Delegates' responses acknowledge the growing importance that social housing is placing on financial planning alongside tenant service delivery: over half (53%) of respondents say they report directly to their financial director, easily more than for CEO (26%) and perhaps surprisingly 17% to their housing director.

Housing providers appear to be relying more heavily on technology to bridge tenant service expectations and demands for reduced costs – with the vast majority (94%) saying they have or are in the process of implementing technology programmes.

With an increased need to sustain local outcomes while spending less, managers are however being challenged to bring about the full benefit from their corporate ICT and housing management systems. Over a third (35%) said that project definition and training issues remain the biggest obstacles to gaining optimum results.

This suggests that IT systems and tools pre-configured to deliver proven processes and best practice are needed to accelerate the move to deliver more with less and to extract the most from current investment in resources and technology.

**John Hood**, Managing Director, Civica Housing said: *"The Spending Review's severity will lead to sustained change in local service provision. In such an uncertain and fast-changing environment, technology remains a key enabler of increased productivity and cost savings. However, innovation must be properly aligned with organisations' objectives and supported by effective change management if it is to deliver the service reforms that executives need. In these unprecedented circumstances, Civica has developed new and lighter approaches to technology deployment that can provide the answer."*



Public Knowledge is published by Civica Group Ltd. For more information on any of the projects or services mentioned in this magazine contact us at [marketing@civica.co.uk](mailto:marketing@civica.co.uk), visit our web site [www.civica.co.uk](http://www.civica.co.uk) or call us on:

London, UK  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7760 2800  
2 Burston Road  
London SW15 6AR

Leeds, UK  
Tel: +44 (0) 113 244 1404  
Vanguard House, Dewsbury Road  
Leeds LS11 5DD

West Midlands, UK  
Tel: +44(0)1384 453400  
Castlegate House, Castlegate Drive, Dudley  
West Midlands DY1 4TD