COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 6th March 2024
Report Subject	Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) - Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview and update on the Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) software, the changes made to the service during the pilot testing stages and the new measures implemented to improve our overall customer satisfaction rates with regards to the service we provide.

The procurement and investment of this software was seen as a catalyst for delivering a more customer focused housing repairs function which provides strong potential for payback.

The work outlined in this report is fully aligned and complementary to the work presently being undertaken to improve the online offer from the housing service, to make it easier and simpler for customers to diagnose faults and report repairs and support the preference from customers for a convenient appointments service to complete outstanding works.

The report focuses on what has been delivered to date and outlines the next phases of the DRS pilot.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the pilot stages and next phase of the DRS testing before the Council moves into a fully functional and fully live DRS environment.

1.00	**DYNAMIC RESOURCE SCHEDULER (DRS) SOFTWARE**
1.01	**Overview of DRS** The Council is implementing a customer centric 'digital first' approach which will provide a more focused and convenient way to access the services it provides. In procuring the DRS software, the Council have remained focused in its aims and objectives of the digital strategy and shall provide for a step change in the quality of service provided to its customers. The DRS system has a number of benefits for customers and our operatives, along with the Council, which can be summarised below: - A faster repairs service enabling the service to significantly increase the number of jobs completed each day. - An enhanced customer experience through an appointment service and enabling follow-up works to be scheduled and completed more easily. - Supporting and enabling customer independence through linking into self-serve and 'self-appointing' of responsive repair requests. - Reduced traveling times for operatives. - Reduced operational costs. A key benefit of implementing a DRS system is the opportunity to shift the focus of the Repair Team Leaders to monitoring the quality of work undertaken, utilising performance reporting to improve the productivity and efficiency of the service, championing and improving customer care across the service. This will provide greater capacity for the Team Leaders to undertake a more proactive approach, focus on post-inspection of completed works and facilitate customer feedback to address areas of under-performance.

	The introduction of a text messaging service, which will notify customers when a job has been ordered, provide a reminder to them the day before the job is to be completed, and send a text message immediately following the repair in order to ascertain the customer's feedback on works undertaken, will help to improve the customer experience and overall customer satisfaction of the service the Council provides. Performance improvement will be achieved through utilising the detailed analytics and performance reports provided by the software (the system can generate over 100 different reports relating to performance and planning activities). This provides the service with the ability to drill down into significant detail the performance of the repair team member and the jobs which are being generated. Health and safety will be improved by raising awareness, undertaking spot checks and updating processes and practices. By spending more time out on site, checking works, ensuring that repair team members are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and adhering to risk assessments, the supervisors shall ensure operatives are complying with safe systems of work. Promoting digital inclusion shall be supported through encouraging and facilitating the use of online options to report a repair and arrange an appointment for the repair to be completed.
1.02	**Planning Team and Customer Contact Centre** A new planning team has been established within the Business Performance Service. The resourcing in the team was determined using historic data including the number of repairs completed each year and number of operatives available through the scheduling system. The resource of the team will be reviewed following full implementation and analysis of intelligence provided by the system. It was critical to have the lead job planner in post to work with colleagues in the Contact Centre and responsive repairs team ahead of UAT (user acceptance testing) and delivery of the training programme to ensure the successful implementation and utilisation of the dynamic resource scheduling system. Vigorous testing and training to gain a clear understanding of the system has been undertaken and included a wider range of staff including the call centre team, planners, administration, system auditors, team leaders and operatives from the responsive repair team. The training and testing allowed live scenarios to be tested before implementation. The system has been uploaded with key data to ensure it has the required intelligence on the workforce, i.e., home addresses, skill sets, working patterns and Flintshire's social housing stock. This allows the system to identify the most efficient geographical work areas and routes to enable the first and last job of the day to be scheduled as close to the operative's home address as possible.

	Currently the primary route for repairs reporting and logging is via telephone through the call centre and, as such, it is vital the lead job planner and call centre team leader meet regularly to identify any concerns in respect of business rules.

The description of the job logged, and schedule of rates (SORs) used, defines the priority of the job, time, trade and materials required to complete. The scheduling system indicates the most efficient operative for allocation.

The job planners can schedule and reschedule to different operatives throughout the day to ensure improved productivity of workforce and customer satisfaction.

Review meetings have taken place with the lead planner and the operatives currently working on the pilot. This has provided an opportunity to receive feedback on areas that have worked well and areas that require further improvements. This feedback has proved vital during the pilot.

Good working relationships between the planning team and the call centre have been crucial to support the pilot and highlight any additional training requirements. |
| 1.03 | **The Assets Service overview - Repairs & Maintenance Dept.**

The Housing Assets Service is responsible for ensuring our Council homes and related assets are in good condition, free from disrepair and comply with the various standards, regulation and guidelines.

The service is a multi-disciplined technical service for responsive repairs and planned maintenance works.

The objective of the service is to continue to keep the Council's housing stock and related assets in good, maintainable condition and state of repair by planning maintenance to those assets and components efficiently and effectively based upon robust stock condition surveys which identify need, priority, efficiency and cost, offering a more customer focused approach to delivery.

The system will assist us to schedule and coordinate our repairs service in an efficient manner and to further develop our specific policies and strategies such as our tenancy contracts, communication strategies, compliance policies along with our home energy conservation and fuel poverty strategies designed to conserve energy usage for our tenant's homes.

The implementation of the DRS system will assist the service in delivering its aims and objectives with regards to efficiently and effectively allocating work to our operatives and offering an appointment-based service for our contract holders / customers.

Moving forwards the DRS software will also enable the Council to schedule our day-to-day inspections and other planned repair and |

| | maintenance works in real-time, allowing us to optimise our resources as the working day evolves.
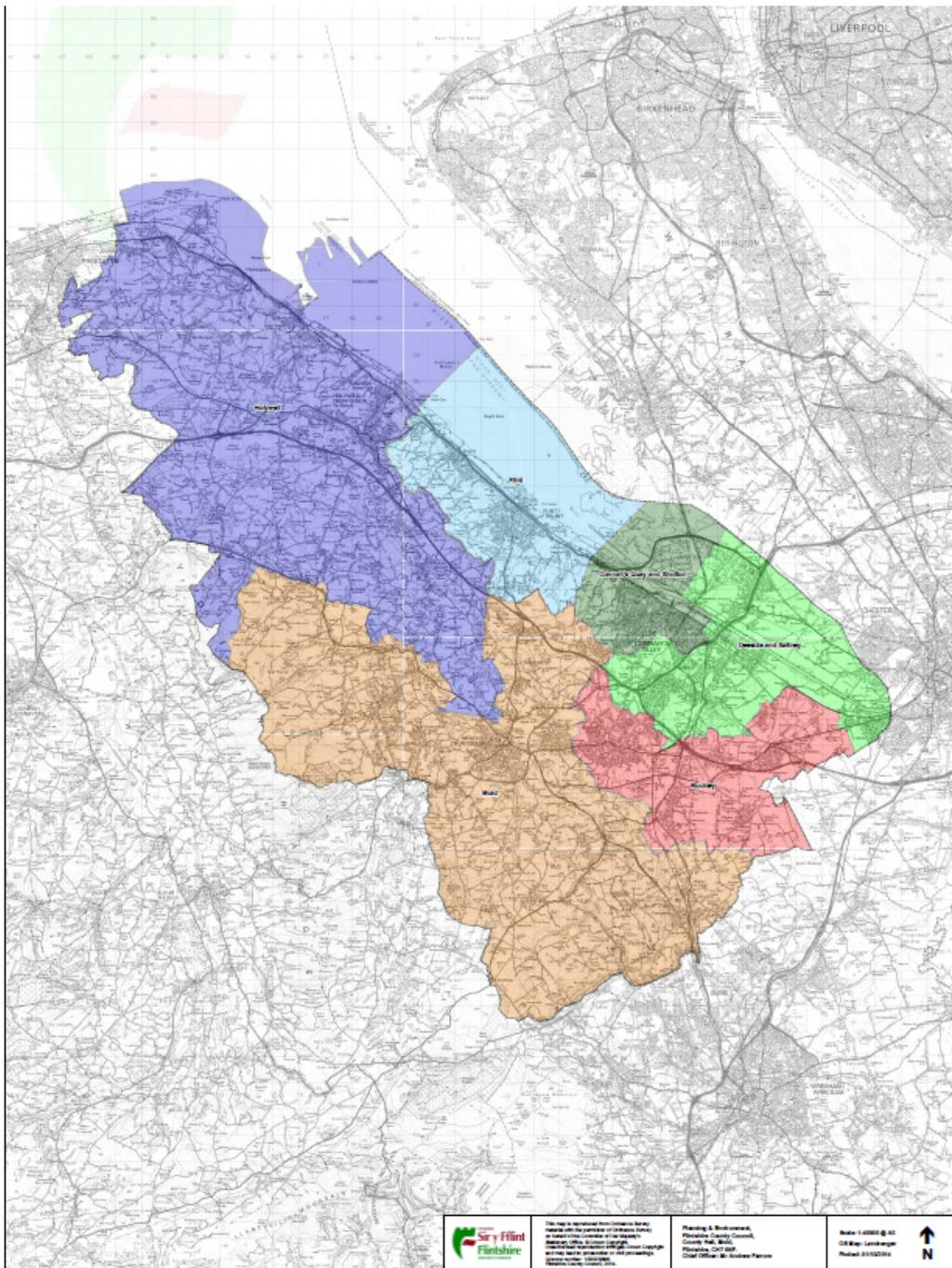
We have progressed with the pilot, working on any barriers or system issues in the background that have arisen.

There have been many operational changes made relating to the way works are logged and delivered, and testing is still underway. |
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| 1.06 | **DRS District Sectors**

The map below identifies the sectors / areas the DRS software utilises in order to plan the work requests before allocating to an operative.

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1.07	**Milestones achieved and Next Steps of the Pilot**
	The Council will be progressing with the next steps of the pilot before the system is placed into a fully live environment / position.
	The pilot is currently running in two district sectors with the third due to go live imminently. This will allow us to ascertain if the DRS system works effectively and specific processes and reports can be tested and reviewed.
	The next step of the plan is to open up further sectors of the County and to integrate these sectors into the pilot until all sectors and all operatives are allocated and utilising the DRS software.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	**Staff Support** There are concerns about the retention of staff to support delivery of the project. IT support is critical alongside staff in key support and delivery teams (Planning Team, Customer Contact Centre and Repairs). The Asset Service Team have made changes to the structure of the team to increase resilience, succession planning and robustness to the delivery model and departments risk register. Other teams have similar resilience plans in place.
2.02	Ongoing and early engagement with the IT department has ensured that the internal IT resource requirements beyond the Housing team can be built into resource plans as part of the Councils broader Digital Strategy. The associated costs will be funded from the HRA.

3.00	**IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**
3.01	The Council is looking to utilise a tried and tested system with a track record of delivering efficiencies and new technologies as it has done over many years. There is a risk that should the Council fail to fully implement the DRS software, then it shall lose the opportunity to secure significant efficiency savings and to transform its approach to improving our customer focus, productivity, performance and health and safety.

4.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT**
4.01	Prior to the DRS going live, the service consulted with all operatives via a workshop with invitations to Trade Union representatives. The service also consulted separately with the Trade Unions, teams across the service and portfolio along with the Tenants Federation.

	The portfolio held a Member workshop, where the service presented a report covering DRS and some of the challenges it was working through in late 2022.

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	N/A

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	N/A

7.00	**CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS**
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Sean O'Donnell, Service Manager - Housing Assets **Telephone:** 01352 701642 **E-mail:** Sean.O'Donnell@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
8.01	**Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS):** DRS is a scheduling software solution which allows the client to seamlessly integrate appointed, planned and responsive, last-minute work across a field-based workforce. It will enable the Council to meet its commitments, deliver excellent customer service, reduce travel time and costs, and ensure more tasks are completed in a single day. **Information Technology (IT):** An IT organisation (information technology) is the department within a company that is charged with establishing, monitoring and maintaining information technology systems and services. **Capita OPEN:** The Council's Housing System utilised to record assets, repairs, tenant details etc. **HRA:** The Housing Revenue Account **RAMS:** Risk and Method Statements used in construction works to enable a Contractor to safely plan and identify how any risks will be mitigated or complied with. **Financial Year:** the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April **PDA Solution:** Mobile hand held device used for capturing stock data directly linked to our asset database.

	Schedule of Rates (SORs): is a list of staff, labour and plant hire rates that a company or department will use for pricing cost reimbursable instructed day-work or work tasks.