

Case Study

Vale of Glamorgan Council

» The increase in productivity and efficiency has been astounding. We are working smarter with fewer people and saving money at the same time «

Steve Morris, Head of Service, Vale of Glamorgan Council



The customer

The Vale of Glamorgan is Wales' most southern Unitary Authority. It lies immediately west of Cardiff between the M4 and the Severn Estuary, covering 331 square miles. The Vale of Glamorgan Council has 47 elected members or councillors, each representing an electoral division, or ward.

The challenge

In 2003 the Council commissioned a study to consider whether it should transfer its housing stock to private landlords. Included in the study was a review of the building maintenance service which identified critical areas that needed addressing. It found that there was low productivity, high overheads and no appointment system to make the process more efficient. As a result, the Council put together a five year business plan to upgrade the maintenance service and introduce new mobile working capabilities.

"We realised we needed to accomplish a number of tasks to make the service fit for purpose. The first priority was to update our existing green screen ConSol system. The second was to enable more efficient mobile working," explains Steve Morris, Head of Service, Vale of Glamorgan Council. *"Our existing way of working was incredibly inefficient and involved lots of duplication of effort so we were keen to undertake a radical overhaul of all processes."*

Under the old system, tenants would ring the housing department to report needed repairs; these would be entered into the ConSol system and printed out to be handed to tradespeople at the start of the working day. They would then make the repair, write up the detail and then hand it back in at the end of the day when it would go to administration to be entered back into the system.

"It was a paper-based system and, as such, was ineffective and subject to human error. People would often lose tickets – sometimes deliberately if they didn't like the look of the job," adds Morris. *"And because there was no appointment system, we had people travelling long distances even when there were other repair jobs in their vicinity. We needed a joined up view of all the necessary repairs and a way to elegantly allocate repairs that would be the most time and cost-effective."*

THE CUSTOMER

Country: United Kingdom
 Industry: Public Sector
 Website: www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



THE CHALLENGE

The Vale of Glamorgan Council wanted to upgrade its outdated system for managing building maintenance and introduce a flexible, mobile way of working for increased efficiency and lower costs.

THE SOLUTION

Working with Fujitsu, the Council updated its green screen ConSol platform to a new Windows-based system integrated with OptiTime. It also equipped tradespeople with PDAs to enable a more productive mobile workforce.

THE BENEFIT

- Productivity has increased by 38 per cent, allowing the Council to reduce its head count and save £280k per annum
- Emergency repairs are carried out 86 per cent faster and routine repairs 42 per cent faster under the new system, representing better value and service for tenants
- Management recharges have reduced by £340k
- Operational and transport costs have reduced by £39k

As a long-time customer of Fujitsu, the Council invited the company to propose a road map for developing the existing platform and incorporating a mobile strategy. It also looked at other vendors but found that the solutions on offer were mostly off-the-shelf versions that were not tailored to its needs.

"Fujitsu had a deep understanding of what we wanted to achieve and offered the least costly solution into the bargain," comments Morris. *"It was the ideal partner to bring our maintenance services system into the 21st century."*

The solution

Fujitsu first developed an enhanced version of the ConSol platform known as e-Plus, which is a Windows-based system tailored specifically to the needs of the Council. It incorporates a mobile working element which has streamlined the repairs process.

The Council has established a contact centre to manage all inbound calls from tenants. When a repair is reported, there is a diagnostic tool so the agent can raise the correct job. This information is routed into the OptiTime application which shows the diaries and availability of all the relevant tradespeople. The agent can then book a convenient time while the tenant is still on the phone. OptiTime optimises resources by allocating jobs to people who will already be in that area, filling their schedule for the week.

Each tradesman is equipped with a PDA which is linked to the e-Plus platform. When they log-on in the morning, it shows their schedule for the day. As this has been prebooked, their vehicles will already be stocked with the appropriate tools and equipment removing the need to visit the council depot.

"This system is remarkably smooth. Our people no longer need to come in first thing to pick up jobs and stock. It's all automatically allocated, saving us all a lot of time and effort. It also reduces the amount of time spent on the road between jobs because it keeps people working in the same areas. As a large rural council, that is important," continues Morris. *"Even if one of our people needs to buy some equipment for a specialist job, they can raise a purchase order on their PDA. Previously, they would have had to come back to the depot to get it signed off. It's another way in which the new solution is saving us time and delivering a more effective service to our tenants."*

The benefit

The system is responsible for numerous benefits across the organisation. Having done a comprehensive audit of performance, the Council has found that productivity has increased by 38 per cent. Thanks to the introduction of more efficient mobile working, there has been a reduction in head count by a third, saving £280k per annum. In addition, transport costs have been reduced by five per cent.

These significant results are mirrored in the service received by tenants. Emergency jobs are now completed within 0.13 days – an 86 per cent improvement – while routine jobs are turned around within eleven days – a 42 per cent improvement.

"The increase in productivity and efficiency has been astounding. We are working smarter with fewer people and saving money at the same time," says Morris. *"We have also become a lot more accountable and transparent which is critical in these economically straitened times. And as a practically paperless solution, we have reduced our carbon footprint too."*

The project has raised the standing of the maintenance division within the Council and made it a showcase for innovation. It has also been recognised in the wider industry and featured as a leading innovator at InMotion 2012.

"Fujitsu has fully supported this project from day one and has often gone the extra mile to ensure it went smoothly. It is the best service delivery I have ever seen. The Fujitsu team is embedded in our organisation and really feels like part of the family. As we continue to evolve the solution and introduce new functionality, Fujitsu will be intrinsic to our future success."

About Fujitsu

Fujitsu is the leading Japanese information and communication technology (ICT) company offering a full range of technology products, solutions and services. Over 170,000 Fujitsu people support customers in more than 100 countries. We use our experience and the power of ICT to shape the future of society with our customers. Fujitsu Limited (TSE:6702) reported consolidated revenues of 4.5 trillion yen (US\$54 billion) for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2012. For more information, please see www.fujitsu.com

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