

Report of **Head of Housing Management**

Report to **Tenant Scrutiny Board**

Date: **21 December 2016**

Subject: **Mobile Working Update**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Board requested a further update on mobile working and its rollout. This report gives an update to the Board on the work so far.

2.0 CURRENT PROGRESS

- Laptops have now been provided to approximately 200 Housing Officers within Housing Leeds
- MIFI units have been supplied to Housing Teams to enable remote working.
- Teams have received training on the use of the devices

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Board are requested to receive the report attached and the verbal update from the Officer in attendance on mobile working.

4.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS¹

- 4.1 None.

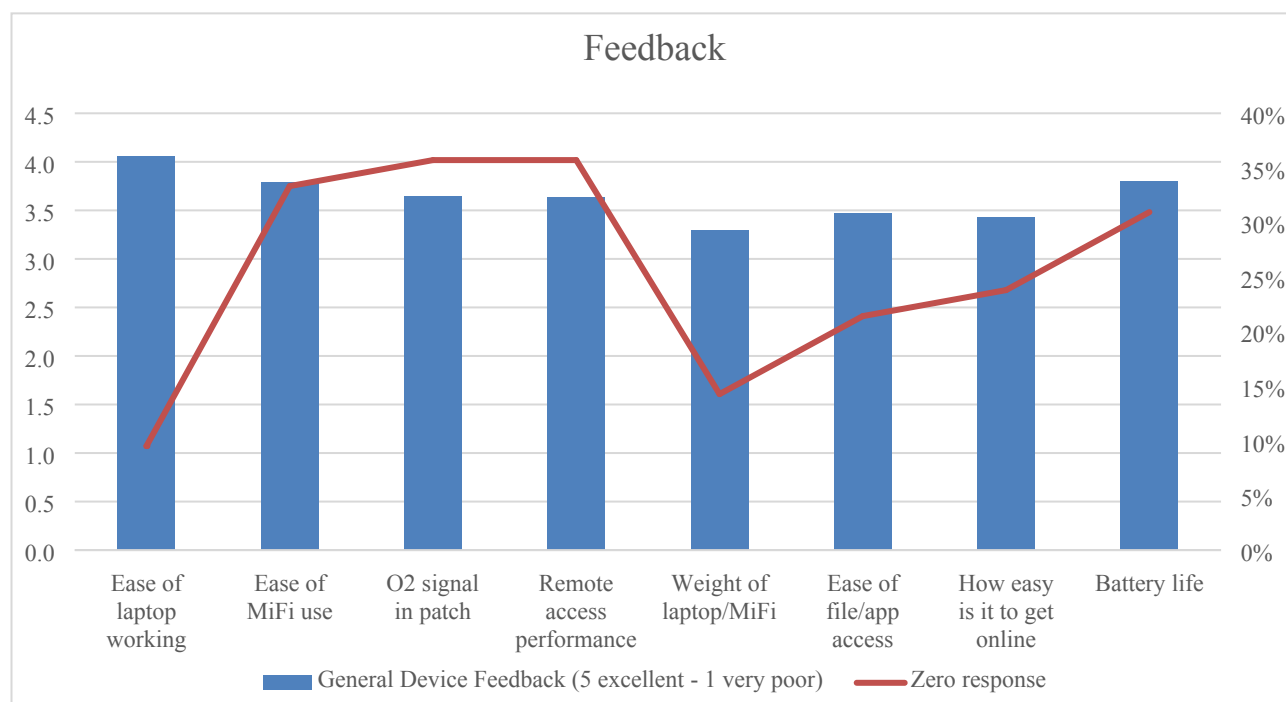
Provide an update to Tenant Scrutiny on Mobile Working

1. Laptops have now been provided to approximately 200 Housing Officers within Housing Leeds
2. MIFI units have been supplied to Housing Teams to enable remote working.
3. Teams have received training on the use of the devices

Findings and feedback

6 months after the rollout completed we engaged with staff for feedback on the laptops, MiFi units and their ability to work outside of the office environment.

Feedback was mixed as we expected it would be given that mobile technology is dependent upon where it is being used and individual use cases but never the less the overall findings when averaged out are positive.



On a scale of 1-5 (5 being excellent) none of the criteria we measured came back with an average of under 3 suggesting that overall acceptance and usability of the devices has been positive.

Specific feedback in most cases mirrored our pilot findings;

- The laptop whilst meeting all necessary H&S requirements is heavier than ideal for a device to use on the go. Future devices will be lighter and new form factors are being tested by ICT which would alleviate these concerns.
- The VPN process required to access applications and files on the go requires either a keychain or smartphone meaning another piece of hardware is required for the setup to function. Investigations are taken place to consider alternative options however this would come as part of a wider policy change outside of the scope of this project.
- Reliability of connecting to applications over mobile data connections. Orchard is hosted using Citrix technology it is designed for stable office based hardware and has little in the way of network robustness when used in this environment. Most of the applications utilized within E&H are legacy applications and are not designed for mobile use. The procurement of new systems has allowed for an increased emphasis on mobile working with offline data storage to accommodate dropped connections. It is envisaged that the new housing solution will greatly help in this aspect.
- Equipping staff with laptops has allowed them a far greater amount of freedom in terms of how and where they work. When combined with the MiFi unit a staff member can setup their office wherever is appropriate for their work. Teams such as the Income Team have particularly embraced the technology and have seen benefits both in back office and face to face functions.
- The reliability of the MiFi units has also proven to be very good with staff finding them easy to use and versatile.

Conclusion

Using the existing software and infrastructure would always prove the limiting factor in our overall goal of creating a complete mobile office that could be taken directly to a tenant or none council location.

By taking the approach of standard laptops and MiFi units we were able to support the community hub and CtW initiatives, accelerating the rollout of devices whilst also helping us to meet council wide programs such as one person, one device.

Benefits to customers are now being realised following the roll out the devices in terms of;

1. More efficient surgeries 'on site' allowing tenants to have their enquiry dealt with at their first point of contact.
2. Complex home visits can be managed much effectively in tenant's homes with reduced preparation time for Housing staff.
3. Additional support now available with tenants at their properties to assist with complex Benefit issues and Universal Credit applications.
4. Time savings for Housing Officers as a result of reduced travel to and from the office and the need to rekey information into systems previously recorded on paper allowing more time to assist Tenants.
5. Cost savings to the organisation in terms of reduced paper usage and travel expenses which can be redirected.
6. Repair requests received whilst out on the estate can be raised and appointment times agreed whilst onsite helping to reduce back office administration and at the same time providing a more dynamic and engaging customer service experience.
7. Rent account issues can be resolved more easily as officers can provide tenants with up to date visual rent statements helping them to better understand their situation.

It is still the desire for Annual Home Visits to be completed away from the office and this will need to be part of the focus for the new housing solution once it is approved.

The interest from other directorates has given us an opportunity to recoup some of the costs involved in the project. Each staff member was originally allocated their own MiFi unit. Looking at the feedback, the current infrastructure and with an increased understanding of how teams would choose to work it is felt that the number of units could be reduced by up to 50%. There has been sufficient interest from other teams and directorates that we would be able to resell these units and pass the ongoing data charges to them whilst still maintaining the improved service offering we originally intended.

We are currently reviewing how and where we would pull these units from ensuring the areas that have benefitted the most maintain their supply. It is not our intention to remove units that staff are actively utilising. A request will be placed with ICT for usage data so we can more accurately assess areas that have benefitted.

Mobile working still represents the future for large pockets of the workforce. We will continue to explore avenues and opportunities, increasingly cross council, to provide staff with the best tools for their work.