



Communities and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	1 October 2019
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Digital Solutions: Report It Replacement
Report of:	Ben Goward, Bi-borough Chief Information Officer
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Councillor Paul Swaddle, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Digital
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	City for All
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report is to brief the Committee on the deployment for Report It Replacement solution.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 The committee is requested to:
- note improvements to the 'Report It' application, using the 'FixMyStreet' (FMS) platform;
 - note the launch of the new 'MyWCC' authentication platform;
 - use the application and suggest areas for improvement to FMS 'Report It' functionality;
 - suggest how we improve the overall experience for residents from initial reporting to the closure of an issue; and
 - suggest how members can inform and influence the policy and scrutiny of privacy, ethical and practical issues with the launch of new tech initiatives (including artificial intelligence, facial recognition, machine learning, and fraud detection).

3. Background

- 3.1** The 'Report It' application on the Westminster City Council (WCC) website was introduced in January 2018. This allowed residents to report issues such as dumped rubbish, highways problems and noise through various online forms.
- 3.2** Customer feedback and internal scoping highlighted issues with both the performance, usability and design of those forms, resulting in an inconsistent and sub-optimal experience for the residents.
- 3.3** There was also feedback from Councillors and customers that the Report It forms were not as user-friendly as they should be. This was particularly apparent in feedback from Councillors Tim Barnes and Andrew Smith on 26 July 2018. The feedback included that other councils had implemented better solutions years before WCC had chosen to go with the Evolve platform. The areas of concern were:
- the need to register prior to using some of the forms;
 - the performance of the mapping feature, and whether it was needed for some of the forms; and
 - the look and feel, particularly when accessing via mobile devices.
- 3.4** WCC have deployed a new solution in August 2019, using the FixMyStreet platform. The move to the FMS solution is phased, and iterative. We have 'soft launched' with two services, Highways and Waste on 20 August 2019. We are monitoring user interactions and feedback to continually improve user journeys for our residents. This is part of delivering excellent local services within 'City for All'. Moving to FMS is one of a raft of actions being taken to simplify online transactions and boost user engagement.
- 3.5** The council has also taken the opportunity to replace the existing 'MyWCC' registration process with a new solution which allows login via social media accounts and will, over time, provide the ability to introduce tiered levels of authentication based on user need. The new 'MyWCC' authentication platform was launched along with Phase I of 'Report It' replacement on 20 August.
- 3.6** The new 'Report It' application provides a quicker, easier way to report issues online. It does not immediately resolve all the operational issues that sit behind the online experience. 'Report It' improvements may not address the back-office operations, resolution of issues and communications residents receive from services on progress. The large number of residents who regularly complain about 'Report It' functions, may still find their reports unanswered, or not acted upon swiftly/in the way they expect, as these functions are improved on in a more iterative basis.

4. Project Overview

- 4.1** We have adopted a new solution using the FMS platform. It offers a better customer experience as it is easy to use and mobile friendly. WCC implemented a customized and co-branded version of FMS. The new system is integrated

with the Council's Dynamics 365 customer relationship management (CRM) solution and a new 'MyWCC' authentication platform.

- 4.2** The launch has gone smoothly with minimum technical and reputational issues experienced, the feedback received so far has been positive. We have had no reports of, or evidence to show that people are struggling to use the tool. This is in contrast to the previous reporting tools, which attracted on average two complaint tweets a day to the corporate Twitter account. Post launch, there have been none.
- 4.3** We've had 1,796 cases reported via the tool between the launch date 20/08/2019 to 16/09/2019 (consistent with what we expect and historic trends).
- 4.4** Apart from providing our residents a better experience, rollout of FMS solution will help the Council save money by helping us retire an expensive legacy platform.
- 4.5** FMS is a leading national platform for reporting street-based issues and used by dozens of leading councils. Some councils have seen significant success in reducing calls and emails to contact centre, reduced clarification calls and reduced duplicate reporting. For example, Buckinghamshire County Council have achieved the following in a year 13% decrease in calls and a 40% reduction in emails, 29% drop in calls where residents are chasing progress, 59% decrease in unnecessary clarification, 19% decrease in misrouted reports.
- 4.6** We will review the data collected and feedback gathered to iteratively improve the solution.
- 4.7** During pre-launch consultation a range of further suggestions were made by our residents – these focussed on including additional agencies in the solution and using the maps to consult on potential street changes (e.g. vote for where you would like to locate a cycle parking bay). These suggestions are being followed up with the FMS providers, MySociety.
- 4.8** Success criteria:
- Easier and quicker for residents to report issues;
 - IT cost saving by moving away from the existing forms;
 - Contact centre efficiencies by automating workflows for additional journeys previously using Drupal forms;
 - Simpler registration and sign-in process along with social media logins; and
 - Reduce duplication of reports as customers can view existing reports before submitting their own.

4.8.1 Summary of the “as-is” process and how it is being altered by this initiative:

“As-is”:

- Number of different applications used for 'Report It' functionality, such as Evolve, Drupal forms, Victoria forms, providing inconsistent

and slow user interface. The journeys are complex with many screens and difficult for people to report issues;

- Difficult for users to identify the exact location or upload pictures;
- Difficult to navigate to report correct category of issue;
- The current authentication solution is limited and does not allow for social media logins; and
- Users have limited visibility of similar reports resulting in duplicate reporting increasing costs for the Council.

“To-be”:

- Single point of entry on nationally recognised digital platform with options to report street-based issues on a single screen and channel shift to digital;
- Simpler and faster authentication solution allowing social media login making is easier for residents to register and login;
- Improved transparent performance reporting and metrics available for the Council to focus on key outcomes;
- Future opportunities to on-board other services to the platform, such as housing, estate services, anti-social behaviour;
- Reports are integrated with Dynamics 365 allowing WCC to monitor and progress the fulfilment of reports; and
- The new ‘MyWCC’ authentication platform is being rolled out to other council services and applications, providing a simpler registration and login experience. This will support improving citizen engagement, encouraging switch to online services.

5. Timescales

5.1 The current timescale for the ‘Report It’ replacement is as follows:

	When
Councillor engagement sessions held	18 July
Public engagement sessions held	24 July
FMS phase one launch (Waste and Highways)	20 August
Post launch public feedback sessions	October & November
FMS Phase two launch	Late Autumn

6. Next Steps

6.1 The next steps for this project include:

- Complete deployment of remaining categories on FMS platform;
- Continually improve the solution based on the feedback and data collected; and
- Work with services, the Policy, Performance and Communications department, and the Customer Experience and Digital Programme Board to improve end to end.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Ben Goward
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APPENDICES:

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A.