

Cambridge City Council

Item

To: Executive Councillor for Housing (and Deputy

Leader): Councillor Catherine Smart

Report by: Bob Hadfield Head of Estates and Facilities

Relevant scrutiny Housing 1/10/2013

committee: Management

Board

Wards affected: All Wards

OUTCOME OF THE REPAIRS IMPROVEMENT PLAN Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The decision to implement a 2 year improvement plan for the responsive repairs and voids service was approved at the meeting of Housing Management Board on 28 Sept 2010. The Executive Councillor subsequently agreed to extend the period by a further 1 year to enable further investigation into the procurement of alternative I.T. solutions and to implement the most appropriate option.
- 1.2 The 3 year period has now concluded, and this report presents the outcomes of the improvement plan, which will enable the Executive Councillor to consider retaining the service provision in-house.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To note the progress and improvements made in service delivery over the past 3 years.
- 2.2 To agree to retain the service delivery in house subject to the following requirements:
 - A. That a report is presented to Housing Management Board in June 2014 detailing the performance of the service following the introduction of mobile working.
 - B. That an annual review takes place which establishes whether performance is being maintained and the decision to retain the service in house is still valid.
- 2.3 To approve that the contract review date for all products supplied by Orchard Information Systems and their operational partners, is timetabled to be 5 years from the point of implementation of the Direct Works and SVS applications, to ensure that any anticipated cost

savings are achieved and that the housing service is able to maintain rational service delivery across all aspects of the service.

3. Improvement Plan Outcomes

- 3.1 The improvement plan contained six key service objectives. The three main objectives were:
 - Improve service delivery
 - Improve value for money and the overall cost of the service.
 - Increase resident involvement

The main objectives were supported by three further objectives that contribute to the overall improvement of the service. The contributory objectives were:

- Improve communication within the Estates and Facilities team
- Improve technology and innovation
- Improve inter-departmental working practises

Appendix A details the changes made to the service that have resulted in the improvements achieved.

Appendix B sets out the programme for the remaining tasks required to implement new IT and enable a "go-live" date of 6 January 2014.

3.2 Improve Service Delivery

3.2.1 The key performance indicators that monitor this aspect of the improvement plan show improvements have been achieved in all areas of the responsive repairs service since 2010/11. This is summarised in the table below. Please note that the information for 2013/14 relates to the first third of the current financial year (April – July 2013.)

Responsive Repairs Service Delivery	2010/11	2013/14
Emergency jobs completed in target	96.4%	99.0%
Urgent jobs completed in target	82.4%	97.4%
Routine jobs completed within target	86.5%	97.9%
All jobs completed within target	86.5%	98.04%
Appointments made*	49.0%	54.6%
Appointments kept (information collected from	94%	99.4%
resident satisfaction survey cards)		
Number of late afternoon appointments made	47	99
Resident satisfaction with the completed	9.3	9.9
repair (score out of 10)		
Percentage of jobs where the target date is	10.5%	4.9%
extended		

The performance indicator relating to Appointments Made is based upon the Housemark definition in order that our performance can be benchmarked. Housemark top quartile performance by Local Authorities for 2011/12 was 72.0% and their median was 50.5%. Their definition excludes any jobs raised that are pre or post inspections, and emergency, planned or cyclical repairs. The remaining jobs for which an appointment can be made are therefore all 3 day and 20 day priority responsive repair works. At present we do not make appointments for 3 day priority works, or works where access can be gained without the resident being at home, such as works to communal areas. Mobile working will enable us to increase the number of appointment slots, and therefore book appointments for those works. We anticipate a substantial improvement in performance relating to this KPI following the go-live of the new IT.

3.2.2 The following service information relating to void repairs was not collected at the commencement of the improvement plan and therefore data presented is as available.

Void Service Delivery	2012/13	2013/14
The number of days taken to	12.8 calendar	12.6 calendar
carry out the repairs required in	days	days
void properties		
	2011/12	2013/14
Quality of void at final	19.93	16.86
inspection	(15 inspections)	(13 inspections)

The quality of void at final inspection is based upon the scored inspections carried out by resident inspectors. Their brief is to inspect a void after the works have been completed from the perspective of the incoming tenant. Recently, this has highlighted their expectations about the level of redecoration carried out during the void period. This key performance indicator is the only area of the overall service that has not improved as a result of the improvement plan initiative. Resident inspector concerns have been raised a number of times at the ROAM group meetings, and the relationship between reducing the average cost of the void repairs, minimising the void repair period and the extent of work carried out has been discussed. The new pressure to re-let the property quickly in order to avoid additional payment of community charge is also an important aspect of this issue. As a result, it has been agreed that the voids best practise group will carry out a review of the "5 Point Promise" through which the ongoing acceptable standard of void properties will be determined. Further training for resident inspectors will be arranged as required, to enable them to score the property in relation to the agreed standard.

3.3 Improve value for money and the overall cost of the service

Responsive Repairs and Voids	2010/11	2013/14
Average cost of responsive repairs	£111.08	£109.72
Average cost of void repairs	£2,730	£1,971

The reduction in average cost of responsive and void repairs is reported on a cash basis. In addition to the cash savings, the service has absorbed increases in inflation over the period

The following information is calculated annually and therefore is reported as at March 2013.

Responsive Repairs and Voids	2010/11	2012/13
Turnover per operative	£62,472	£76,231
Value of works issued to external contractors (projected outturn for 2013/14 is £678,465)	£1,203,093	£819,204

3.4 Increase resident involvement

- 3.4.1 During the spring of 2012, resident volunteers carried out a mystery shopping exercise, to examine several areas of service provided by the front line staff. The detailed results are set out in Appendix A of the report. A further exercise is programmed for later in 2013, led by the Tenant Involvement team in City Homes.
- 3.4.2 Estates and Facilities have been working with the City Homes Resident Involvement Team with regard to increasing the involvement of residents in the management of the service. The Resident Involvement team have successfully recruited two additional volunteers and they are in the process of implementing a further recruitment drive that will, if successful, provide sufficient number of volunteers to facilitate area inspectors who can carry out a range of Housing activities. Estates and Facilities will continue to work within this new initiative in order to increase involvement in the repairs and voids service.
- 3.4.3 A new method of recording results of resident inspections in voids has been established which enables performance to be tracked over time in a consistent manner, and ensures that themes can be identified from comments made about individual properties.

- 3.5 <u>Contributory Objective: Improve Communication within the Estates and Facilities team</u>
- 3.5.1 The task of improving communication within the Estates and Facilities team has focused on the need to change the internal culture from a divided "Client / Contractor" approach to an integrated single team. This issue became apparent during a series of team workshops held in January 2011. The implementation of the Repairs Improvement Plan has given a single point of focus for the team, and the post of Operations Manager has been central to the achievement of this objective. Regular monthly meetings now take place which enables managers to inform front line staff of the current performance, and if any changes to the way in which the service is delivered are required, the reasons for those changes are explained. The meetings also enable staff to raise queries and offer suggestions.
- 3.5.2 Front line staff have been actively involved in the decision making process relating to the implementation of new I.T. Representatives of the trade operatives were included in meetings to discuss the new hand-held devices; all staff were given the opportunity to test and recommend which device to use; and a trades operative was included in the group that visited Corby Borough Council who are currently using the mobile working solution.
- 3.5.3 One of the front line staff team meetings was recently utilised to inform the frontline staff of the way in which their job affects and is affected by wider Council objectives. The meeting was presented by a cross-council group including the Director of Customer and Community, the Head of Customer Services, the Business Manager for Customer and Community and staff leading on the Lean Review. All front-line staff were present and had an opportunity to ask the presenters questions. Feedback on the meeting was positive, and it is proposed that this type of meeting is held annually.
- 3.5.4 The above approach has worked well, and is now embedded in the culture of the team.
- 3.6 Contributory Objective: Improve inter-departmental working practises
 - 3.6.1 The Improvement Plan has provided the basis on which to build better inter-departmental links and working practises. Both the project group responsible for the implementation of the plan, and the scrutiny panel responsible for oversight of the key decisions made throughout the life of the plan, comprised a cross departmental group of staff. Various regular meetings to discuss and resolve specific

- stakeholder issues have been established and will continue following the completion of the Improvement Plan itself.
- 3.6.2 The implementation of new IT has provided a focus for the relevant internal stakeholders to work together to identify ways to improve efficiency, reduce duplication and ultimately to provide a more effective service going forward. A specific cross departmental Project Board is supervising this element of the Improvement Plan.
- 3.6.3 The customer service centre and repairs operation team have trialled a new initiative where a skilled surveyor has been made available to support staff when dealing with enquiries. The team have responded well to having an on-site surveyor supporting what we do in the customer service centre and have benefited from the Assistant Surveyor's local knowledge. This has been very helpful for specific questions about estate layout; for example he has been able to give locations for outside taps of properties and valuable information in relation to mutual exchange time scale. Customer Services staff have been able to ask technical questions about jobs while the customer is on the line, allowing the customer to receive an answer and appointment without the need for them to be called back. He has also been able to give advice on any specialist parts that are required, thus ensuring correct timings when booking tenants appointments.
- 3.6.4 As part of the commitment to cross council collaboration, Estates and Facilities are working with Customer Service Centre who are leading on a 'Lean Systems Review'. Lean Systems looks at processes from a global perspective. That is, it examines the process from 'end-to-end' across all different departments, and identifies ways in which duplication and other wasteful procedures can be eliminated without reducing the service level to customers. The on-going Lean Systems Review is therefore an excellent example of how cross-council collaboration will continue to be embedded within the repairs and maintenance service, and the recommendations of the review will be used to build upon the improvements already achieved through the Improvement Plan project.
- 3.7 Contributory Objective: Improve Technology and Innovation
 - 3.7.1 The Improvement Plan contained three specific tasks in relation to improving technology. These were:
 - Investigate the potential for the implementation of fault diagnostic software

- Implement a single integrated software system that meets the needs of both the asset management and operational sections of the service
- Introduce a mobile working solution

3.7.2 The aims of this part of the improvement plan are to provide increased value for money and customer satisfaction by

- The ability to respond to customer enquiries directly via mobile real time updates,
- The reduction of operational costs through efficient use of operative time.
- The capitalisation of efficiency gains by extending the use of the repairs service to other Council departments
- The reduction of duplicate tasks through the use of a single integrated software system,
- Minimising manual input of data
- More efficient data management and increased knowledge of customer satisfaction.

The three elements of new IT being delivered through the collaboration between Estates and Facilities at Mill Road, the Strategic Housing Business Team and the Customer Service Centre are:

1: Repairs Diagnostic Software - Locator Plus

The installation of repairs diagnostic software was initially considered in order to help Customer Services Centre (CSC) staff to define repairs in a consistent manner which enables work to be completed on the first visit to the customer. This software uses the National Housing Federation (NHF) Schedule of Rates to define the works, estimate the time required to complete the job and set quality standards for day-to day repairs. This is fast becoming established as the national standard for repairs. This software went live in July 2013 since when 54% of jobs have been raised using the system. Analysis of the jobs entered during the period 12 – 23 August 2013 showed that 79% of all jobs were raised using this software. The move to utilising schedule of rates is a requirement for mobile working, and therefore this software is a key part of the overall improvement of I.T. for the service.

<u>2 Implement a single integrated software system – Orchard Direct</u> Works.

The decision to cease using OPENContractor for managing the operational area of the team was approved in January 2013, along with the decision to purchase Orchard Direct Works module as a replacement. The implementation of a single, integrated system will streamline work processes for how we purchase and manage

stock, invoice and make payments, allocate jobs and record time and materials used on repairs, as these will be managed in one system. In addition, appointments for works will be rationalised using the "auto appointments" function that automates the process of identifying the most appropriate operative while simultaneously minimising travel time between jobs. Any updates will be made by a planner / scheduler who is able to monitor and organise the operatives if a change is required. Current data has been collected and a working system has been configured to allow users to test the system and make improvements in configuration.

3: Mobile Working solution (SVS Mobile)

The implementation of mobile working will introduce technology to replace the current paper / manual allocation of works to operatives. Jobs will be issued to operatives via a smart phone. They will be able to receive and update jobs in real time and communicate with the planner should the need arise. Information held on the system will be updated immediately, providing Customer Service Centre and managers with reliable and accurate information on a daily basis. 'Mobicontrol' software will allow the phones to be supported remotely, ensuring that problems can also be dealt with in real time. Finally, the introduction of managed and audited van stock will reduce time spent collecting materials, and increase the level of productive time spent carrying out repairs. In turn this will create the capacity to further improve productivity by expanding the service to incorporate the needs of other council departments.

- 3.7.3 The implementation of mobile working and Direct Works module are being delivered as a single project. SVS mobile is the preferred partner of Orchard, and the two companies have extensive experience of collaborating to produce a working system for clients.
- 3.7.4 It had been envisaged that the new IT would be operational by the summer 2013 and evidence of the projected efficiencies likely to be achieved would be available as part of this report. However, the decision regarding the best option to purchase took longer than anticipated, and resulted in delays within the original programme. The project to deliver this technology started on the 31 May 2013 and is currently on target to go-live on Monday 6 January 2014. Workshops with Orchard and SVS Mobile are progressing well, testing of the software is underway and at the time of writing there is no reason to believe that further delays will be experienced.
- 3.7.5 To ensure that the authority is able to get the best from the new aspects of the Orchard applications, alongside the existing Housing Management system, it is recommended that the contract review

dates for all products supplied by, or re-sold in conjunction with, Orchard Information Systems, are aligned, and set for 5 years from the implementation of Direct Works. This will ensure that the authority reviews all of the key aspects of IT support for the housing service in one go, facilitating a whole scale move to an alternative supplier, if this is deemed best value at the time.

3.8 Improvements for consideration in future

- 3.8.1 During the course of the Improvement Plan, several additional improvements have been identified that are outside of the scope of the current plan, but could be considered in the future. They are listed here for reference.
- 3.8.2 As the service expands, consideration should be given to the purchase of the full Opti-time works planning and scheduling software. This software was considered for purchase as part of the current IT changes, but advice was that this system is best suited to organisations with a higher turnover, and in the current environment it would not be possible to achieve sufficient cost savings to offset the capital investment.
- 3.8.3 Within the Orchard suite of modules, there is now the potential to consider software for Asset Management (that could replace Codeman) and Asbestos Management (that could replace Micad). These software systems are currently under review, and it is recommended that in making the decision for future provision Orchard modules are considered, in order to integrate these management requirements within the Orchard system, and further enhance the single integrated system approach wherever possible.
- 3.8.4 The repairs and maintenance service could consider pursuing an external excellence rating. However, the cost of achieving this, along with the on-going cost of maintaining the award needs to be weighed against the benefit any such award may bring to the organisation.
- 3.8.5 At present the Customer Service Centre does not have the ability to confirm appointments by text or e mail. This functionality would create savings in time, paper and postage. Orchard can supply an application that would operate within the repairs module and this would enable the appointment to be confirmed by text at the point of booking and also send a text reminder 24 hours prior to the appointment day.

- 3.8.6 Mobile working could be rolled out to incorporate the functions carried out by surveyors and housing officers. This would enable those staff to raise jobs and book appointments for works while in the resident's home, or during site visits. This initiative would save time and improve the service from a customer perspective.
- 3.8.7 The mobile working solution to be implemented affects the responsive repairs service only as it is ideally configured to deal with a single job carried out by one operative. The void service is not included in this initiative at present as the I.T is not yet fully compatible with the team approach that is used for void repairs. Any future developments that enable voids to be included in the mobile working approach should be implemented in order to enable a fully consistent approach to the delivery of the overall service.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The initiatives identified within this report will be funded from the capital budget allocation of £200,000 identified for this project, with the on-going revenue costs met from existing budgets, including an additional £50,000 per annum approved as part of the HRA budget process at the outset of the project.

(b) Staffing Implications

The recommendation is to retain the service in house, utilising the existing workforce. If the Executive Councillor does not accept the recommendation to retain the service in-house and decides to explore out-sourcing this service, TUPE would apply to the transfer of staff from Cambridge City Council to an external contractor.

(c) Equal Opportunities Implications

The impact assessment did not identify any major issues that cannot be resolved through training etc.

(d) Environmental Implications

Climate Change Rating:

- Impact assessed as Positive Low (+L)
- There will be a positive impact resulting from the introduction of mobile working technology and improved scheduling of the works which will reduce mileage associated with the responsive repairs service.

(e) Procurement

There are no procurement issues related to retaining the service inhouse. However, if the Executive Councillor does not accept the recommendation to retain the service in-house and decides to explore out-sourcing this service, a major procurement exercise would be required, incorporating an OJEU notice.

(f) Consultation and communication

The mobile working project is listed under Estates and Facilities on the intranet. At successful completion and go live of the new IT, articles will be included in Open Door to inform residents, the intranet will be updated to inform staff and a press release will be issued to inform the general public.

If the Executive Councillor does not accept the recommendation and decides to explore out-sourcing the service a new communication strategy will be required.

(g) Community Safety

There are no direct Community Safety issues arising from this report.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

EqIA Mobile Working and Direct Works

Repairs and Voids Key Performance Indicators 2010/11 – 2013/14

Report to Housing Management Board 28 Sept 2010

Report to Housing Management Board 3 Jan 2012

Report to Housing Management Board 18 Sept 2012

Report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee 11 Oct 2012

6. Appendices

Appendix A Changes made to the Responsive and Voids Service Appendix B Remaining Timeline for the Direct Works / SVS Mobile

project and illustration of administrative efficiencies

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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Appendix A: Changes Made to the Responsive and Voids Service.

Objective: To Improve Service Delivery

- Emergency repairs are now carried out by front line staff in the voids team. This change has been made without affecting the length of time taken to repair a void, and has provided the environment to complete the responsive work within its priority target.
- Within the responsive repairs team, separate sub teams focus on completing jobs with appointments and jobs that do not require appointments. This is a temporary arrangement until the introduction of mobile working and new technology to improve the appointment making process.
- Changes to the ways of working have enabled more appointment slots to be created. Substantial further improvements in this area are expected with the introduction of mobile working.
- If appointments have been missed due to the failure of the service, these works are prioritised to minimise further waiting time for the resident.
- ❖ Improvements in resident satisfaction have been evidenced through the substantial increase in satisfaction survey cards returned. The card is now handed to the tenant by the visiting tradesperson along with an envelope. The tenant is asked to complete the card and the tradesperson returns this to the back office. The result of this change has increased the returns from an average of 62 per month (April December) to an average of 364 per month (January March) in 2012/13. This data is manually input into Orchard and the post room staff has helped with this additional workload. This is a temporary measure until the introduction of mobile working, when the survey will be completed by the resident via the handheld device. An option to request a telephone survey will also be part of the new procedure. It is envisaged that the high rate of return currently experienced will continue when the procedure is automated.
- The responsive repairs service has been extended to offer late afternoon appointments to residents on a Tuesday and Thursday. This is staffed through the on-call team who deal with emergency jobs.
- Front line staff have been trained in basic energy awareness and can offer advice to residents while in the property.
- ❖ The time taken to carry out repairs to void properties is now captured on a comprehensive spread-sheet which enables analysis of the information on an area (north / south) and property type (standard / temporary housing) basis.

- ❖ To reduce calls from new tenants to Customer Service Centre, an emergency contact information card is now left in all void properties, which also documents the position of stop cock, gas isolation unit and electric consumer unit or fuse box.
- Regular "Handy Hints" article in Open Door, identifying ways in which residents can prevent the need for some repairs (eg blocked sinks).

Objective: To improve value for money and the overall cost of the service

- ➤ The use of external contractors to support the service has been substantially reduced, and the work they previously carried out has been absorbed by the in-house team. Further reductions are anticipated during 2013/14.
- ➤ The increase in volume and value of works arising from the reduction in the use of external contractors has increased the productivity of staff and the turnover per operative.
- ➤ The number of invoices received from external contractors has been reduced, and further gains are expected from changes in procedures that will arise from the introduction of the Orchard Direct Works module.
- ➤ The in-house electricians have been trained in Portable Appliance Testing and now carry out this task in house.
- ➤ The introduction of mobile working will reduce the manual input required in order to financially complete individual jobs and this will enable a review of existing resources within the back office finance team.
- ➤ Following the merger of City Services and Technical Services, an internal audit of the void administrative procedures was carried out and areas of duplication have been eliminated.

Objective: To increase resident involvement

Detail of the mystery shopping exercise carried out in 2012.

Question	Result
Did the operative attend on time?	82%
Did the operative return when they said they would?	100%
Was the operative wearing a council uniform?	100%
Did the operative show their I.D badge?*	0%
Did the operative check that you were satisfied with the work?	85%
In your view, did the right number of operative attend?	100%
Did the operative explain the problem?	76%

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Did the operative offer to help you with anything	22%
else? **	
When asked, did the operative help with another	50%
job / query?**	
Was the work completed in one visit?	90%
If a return visit was needed, was this explained	100%
Overall, were you happy with the attitude of the	100%
operative?	
Overall, were you happy with the repair?	100%

Notes: * Although the operatives did not show their ID badge, the feedback was that as they wear the council uniform, and arrive in a van that carries the council logo, this issue was not as important as it is with external contractors.

** The offer of help to resolve a problem that has not been reported is dependent upon the operative's workload for the day. Although this is an initiative that is helpful to the individual tenant, it is overall more important to ensure that the work that has been reported is completed on time and that existing appointments are met.

<u>Contributory Objective: Improve Communication within the Estates and</u> Facilities team

- Monthly team meetings with front line staff where performance information is shared.
- Notice board dedicated to display of annual and monthly performance information, compliments received, and any other information relating to service delivery.
- Monthly meeting held between Union shop stewards, Operations Manager and Improvement Plan Implementation manager to facilitate exchange of suggestions and progress information.
- o Front line staff trained in conflict management skills.
- Annual focus groups, concentrating on the issues and themes identified by staff as concerns at the team workshops held Jan 2011.

Contributory Objective: Improve technology and innovation

- Introduction of Locator Plus repairs diagnostic software completed.
- Implementation of a single integrated software system for managing the responsive repairs and voids service is in hand.
- Mobile working technology for responsive repairs front line staff is in hand.

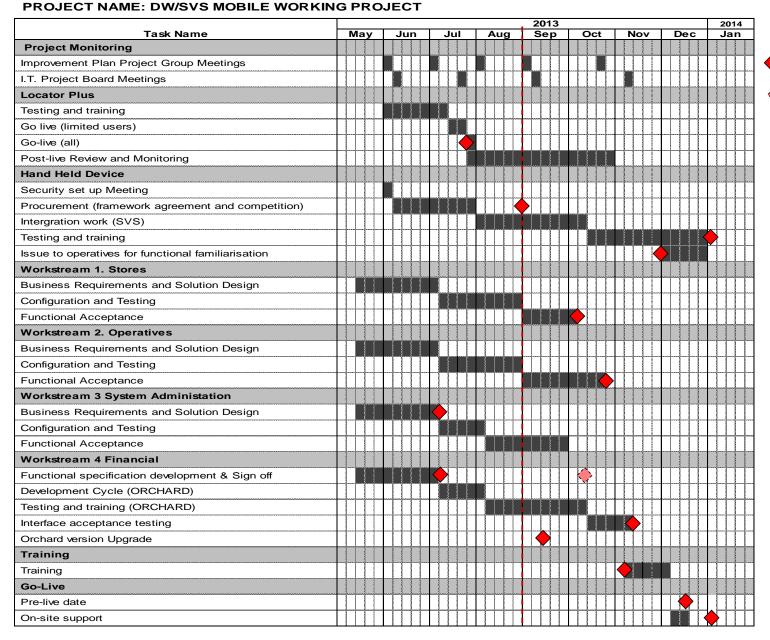
Contributory Objective: Improve inter-departmental working practises.

- Regular meetings with City Homes to address issues of shared concern.
- Regular meetings with Customer Services Centre to address issues of shared concern.
- Regular joint meetings between Estates and Facilities, City Homes and Customer Services Centre to address issues of shared concern.
- "Concern Card" introduced enabling front line staff and staff employed by external contractors to document issues they believe should be investigated within the property by City Homes Housing Officers.
- □ Voids Best Practise group re-instated.
- Assistant Surveyor now spends two afternoons per week at Customer Service Centre to provide advice as required.

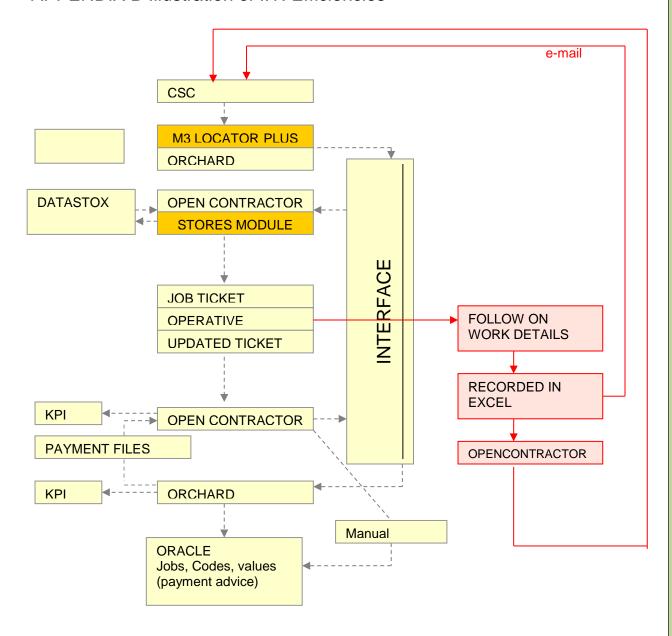
Appendix B – Remaining Timeline for Direct Works / SVS Mobile Project (at Sept 2014)

Project Milestone

Financial Interface part complete



APPENDIX B Illustration of I.T. Efficiencies



M3 LOCATOR PLUS
ORCHARD REPAIRS
ORCHARD DIRECT WORKS
SVS

OPERATIVE
FOLLOW ON WORK
DETAILS

DATASTOX
KPI
ORACLE

IMPLEMENTED

SVS MOBILE WORKING

AND

DIRECT WORKS

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