



Environmental reporting review

The Web Services team has been looking at the process for environmental reporting, or Love Clean Streets (LCS), with a view to seeing if there are ways to:

- a. improve the process, both for the user and for officers managing the back end systems
- b. save time and money for the service

LCS is currently integrated with Civica APP Flare, but there appear to be areas where the integration is incomplete, or at least insufficient. The highways service volunteered to be our 'test dummy', showing us the process they have to go through to take a LCS report through to job completion, enabling us to identify areas for improvement.

Over the last seven months, **480** reports have been made to highways using environmental reporting in MyAccount, which includes **153** street light faults, **98** potholes and **73** cases of overgrown plants or trees. If we can get the LCS process right for highways and other departments, we can look at taking a digital by default approach for all reporting, saving a lot of time and money for the council.

There are obvious advantages in reporting through LCS for the customer:

- making a report online means they no longer need to queue on the phone or in the CSC
- they receive immediate confirmation their report has been sent
- they can see status updates when they log into MyAccount
- they receive an email notification when the report is closed

For the customer to receive some of these benefits, certain tasks have to be performed by officers. As the LCS/Flare integration is not as smooth as we would hope, this often doubles the workload as notes have to be copied between systems. Updates to the customer are not automatic and need the service to click an 'email user' link. This is currently not part of the process used in highways, so will form part of an updated process document to be compiled by the Web Services team.

There are also advantages for the service:

- some reports may prevent the need for an inspector visit, for example, a pothole report where the attached photo shows it is not deep enough to qualify for repair
- enables easier contact with customer
- LCS online shows a history of updates
- access to user profile to look at report history, contact details etc
- new functionality in LCS (due to go live soon) will display a 'live map' - if users check this first it may prevent repeated reports of the same issue

However, there are also disadvantages. These are examples discovered when monitoring the highways process.

Empty fields after LCS integrated with Flare

Fields such as 'premises' and 'detail' are not completed in Flare when a report is made in LSC – this means officers have to take time to copy and paste notes from one system to the other.

Location

When a LCS report is made via a device, it automatically registers the GPS address, ie where the phone is at the time of reporting. If the customer has left the report until later and is no longer in the same location as the issue, this can cause problems when an inspector is despatched. This often results in time wasted as inspectors are unable to find the correct location.

Phone number

There is no option to leave a telephone number on a LCS report – this means an email must be sent to the customer when further details are required, eg correct location of issue. This can delay an inspector visit and may be dangerous when a report is an emergency that needs to be dealt with in a set time.

Action diary

An action diary is added to Flare when a report comes in – this is a set list of tasks that the inspector has to carry out for that particular type of job type. It was suggested that we could add this list to the auto-email that is sent to the inspector when a job is assigned to him. He would receive a notification and could check all job details online, then add updates via the app or website. Only one update would go to Flare automatically but if it was being checked in LCS, not Flare, the full history of actions would be in the report.

The trouble with this is that highways run Flare reports based on those actions - each one has a code and they run KPI etc reports based on each code. It is unknown if/how these could be set those up in LCS but is something the service cannot do without.

Letter templates

There are currently 85 letter templates for highways alone set up in Flare. These are for the customer, suppliers, other councils and organisations such as gas companies. LCS have informed us that a database of email templates cannot currently be created so that these templates could be sent via email instead. This would have saved in money in printing and postage and time for service, but as the functionality available in LCS, we would still have to go between the two systems.

Assigned to wrong department

Not all departments are on Flare or LCS. For example, a report of overgrown vegetation on council housing property should be assigned to housing but housing are not on either system so these are often assigned to highways.

Highways have to take time copying and pasting content from the report into an email to housing, and then close the report in LCS. This notifies Flare and the user that the report is closed. Often this will lead to calls to the CSC as the customer is chasing progress of a closed report*.

Updates to customer

A similar process occurs when a job cannot be completed for some time. The service may close a job in LCS, making a note that, for example, a part has been ordered and the job will be completed in six weeks. This again notifies the user the job is closed but no note is attached unless specifically sent by an officer.

LCS will only send these updates to the customer automatically:

- report received (shows red flag in LCS)
- report closed (shows green flag)

In addition, LCS will only send a specified number of updates to Flare:

- job open (creates Flare report with different job code)
- first update (shows orange flag in LCS only if job set to 'in progress')
- job closed

Subsequent updates do not show in Flare so the service continually has to copy and paste updates from one system to another.

Short-term solutions

At the short term there are a number of options we can, and will be, working on to improve both the user and the service journey. These are:

1. add tailored auto-replies to each report type
2. use new functionality which allows us to ask additional questions – request phone number
3. add content to the pages that lead to environmental reporting, reminding customers to use the location of the issue, not their own address or GPS location
4. create a process document so services know how to manage reports through LCS, including how to ensure customer is updated and reports are approved for inclusion on the website/live map
5. training, if required, so that departments, including Customer Services, are aware of how to correctly make/progress a LCS report correctly

We hope that these relatively simple changes will make a difference to the service:

- having a phone number will save time having to wait for email replies
- having the correct location will save inspectors being sent to the wrong address
- tailored email replies will set up realistic expectations for when an issue will be looked at, minimising the number of calls into the CSC
- training will prevent reports being logged/assigned incorrectly

Long-term solutions

In the long term, and in an ideal world, investment would be made into customising and improving Flare/LCS to improve the user journey for the service. These changes would include:

- improved integration from LCS to Flare so that all fields are completed with correct information
- all departments, eg housing and street lighting, are added to both Flare and LCS, or LCS at least so that reports can be(re)assigned to the correct department
- customise LCS to include a database of email templates to replace letter templates in Flare
- look at creating KPI reporting option for service in LCS

In addition to the above, all departments should be added to LCS, enabling reports to be correctly assigned. For this to happen, a huge amount of work is required to:

- add every report type per department
- add all back end users and assign job roles
- add all inspectors to enable job assigning
- set up email responses for each report type
- set up auto emails to inspectors including details of report and action diary
- set up report notifications for all report types
- ensure inspectors have access to LCS while mobile, eg app installed

If all the above was achieved, we could look at using just one system – Love Clean Streets – negating the need for integration with Flare and enabling all reporting to take place online, either by the user or by a CSA.

* Calls to chase progress account for 11% of all calls to CSC