1st Touch unveils V6 digital & mobile platform

1st Touch is due to release its new V6 digital and mobile platform during the fourth quarter of 2017 following a multimillion-pound investment in its development by parent company Aareon.

The company said that the new system will deliver a complete digital transformation and mobile workforce ecosystem for the housing sector. With full SaaS functionality, V6 will allow housing providers of all sizes to access commonly-used modules and forms in the cloud, so that the latest best-practice modules and apps can be shared by customers. It will also provide a marketplace for users, partners and third-party vendors to trade and exchange apps.

In preparation for the launch of V6 and expansion into Europe, 1st Touch is now aligning itself more closely within Aareon's

group structure to give customers a unified contact centre and administrative organisation.

As a result, 1st Touch customers will be able to plug in a range of digital solutions from Aareon including CRM, contractor systems, ASB and asset management, while integrating only once with their Aareon housing management system.

Greg Johns, CEO, 1st Touch, said, "V6 is an exciting development for both companies because it recognises the market momentum of the 1st Touch brand to date and provides a catalyst for sharing a strong management team in the future. It also gives us access to highly-skilled resources from the well-funded Aareon group, part of Aareal Bank."

PARADIGM OPTS FOR LANSA'S LOW-CODE DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM

Paradigm Housing has delivered the next phase of its digital transformation programme, a tenant portal and mobile workforce solution, using LANSA's 'low-code' development platform. These latest additions integrate with Paradigm's existing LANSA-built housing management system.

By choosing to build in-house, using LANSA's single-language solution, Paradigm said that it had created the specific business applications it needed in a fraction of the time and cost of using packaged applications or of building with traditional development methods. Using only two developers, Paradigm's IT department has delivered back-office, mobile and web-based applications.

Mike Silk, head of IT, Paradigm Housing, said, "I've tried lots of third-party app-development tools for mobile and they're fine for simple apps, but if you really want to build anything reasonably complex, they tend to fall apart. You very soon have to drop out of the tool and start coding. With LANSA, we could do it all with one skillset."

Paradigm's tenant portal was built in just 20 days. Tenants can now review their account balances, pay their rent (the LANSA-based solution is integrated with Capita's payment system), provide feedback to Paradigm, and request property repairs. The portal uses LANSAs 'responsive design' capabilities, so that whichever device the portal is accessed on, the app presents appropriately for the screen size.

The mobile solution, built in only 15 days, delivers fully-optimised job schedules to 100 mobile workers. They can log

completed jobs, either online or offline, and report back to Paradigm's back-office systems using LANSA's out-of-the box integration modules. Other integrations include those with a customer text-messaging system, bank account verification software, postcode look-up software and an out-of-hours support system run by Mears.

Paradigm's core systems, comprising full property management, from building and acquisition, through to property rental and accounts, are all written using LANSA.

Silk said, "To deliver the cost savings and efficiencies promised by digital transformation, the solution had to be end-to-end, and with no smoke and mirrors. Relying on email communication to plug gaps between systems would significantly degrade the benefits. We needed to break down silos and streamline processes between ourselves, our customers, and our supply-chain partners.

"As for the LANSA development environment, we initially chose the product to improve developer productivity and to provide a development environment that would enable us to easily migrate to other back-office databases, should the need arise. Not only has it achieved that, but it has kept pace with new technologies, allowing us to deliver business solutions and integrate with third parties without having to re-skill in the different technologies, particularly for web and mobile applications."