CASE STUDY

Mobile asset management makes North Lanarkshire Council more responsive to residents

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Overview

In North Lanarkshire Council, east of Glasgow, the department of environmental assets is responsible for 185,000 properties. Managing the assets housed on all these properties is a massive undertaking. The council had used Siemens Confirm for almost two decades when managers saw an opportunity to improve efficiency.

Business Challenge

As an example, Steven Broadfoot, customer service and compliance manager for environmental assets, explains how the council formerly handled resident complaints about graffiti. The call center would log the call, then email information to the appropriate depot, where an administrator would print the message and place it in the mailbox of the local graffiti supervisor. The supervisor would then assign it to a crew.

When the crew had removed the graffiti, they would fill out a paper form describing their actions and hand the form to the supervisor, who would pass it to an administrator, who would log it into the Confirm asset management system.

Similar processes governed other public inquiries, such as those regarding headstones in cemeteries, play structures in parks and "fly tipping" (illegal dumping). "These were long, drawn-out processes," Broadfoot says. "The interval between receiving an inquiry and logging our response in Confirm might be three or four days."

Solution

To improve efficiency, the council deployed Confirm Connect and built a series of custom dashboards in the Confirm application. The dashboards enable managers and staff throughout the council to monitor and update in real time the status of any asset and its maintenance data.

In the graffiti example, all public inquiries that come into the contact center now immediately reach the handheld device of the appropriate field officer. "The officer sees details in Confirm Connect and can connect to a map that helps locate it," Broadfoot explains. "The officer can upload 'before' and 'after' pictures and a description of the job. As soon as the officer hits 'update,' employees across the council see that the graffiti has been removed."

Customer: North Lanarkshire Council

Challenges: In North Lanarkshire Council, east of Glasgow, the department of environmental assets is responsible for 185,000 properties. Managing the assets housed on all these properties is a massive undertaking.

Results: Most responses to public inquiries are handled within one day, down from three to four days.

Mobile capabilities allow officers to stay out in the field rather than come back to the office to file paperwork, improving productivity.

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— **John Whittaker,** Business Manager

The dashboards provide a high-level view, with the ability to drill down into details. Field officers' dashboards show what work they need to do. Supervisors can use their dashboards to make sure work is completed on schedule, and no tasks are missed.

John Whittaker, assistant business manager for North Lanarkshire Council, says, "The main benefit for me is that I can go in and see various tasks, particularly where we've got a lot of cancelled work. We can see why work is cancelled, and we can compare groups to see why one area might be getting more done."

Benefits

The Confirm Connect solution has accelerated the council's response to public inquiries. Rather than three to four days, most are handled within one day now, Broadfoot says. "There's no time lapse anymore."

Another benefit is the significant increase in staff productivity. "Using the mobiles enables our officers to stay out in the field," Broadfoot says. "They don't have to come back to the office to chase bits of paper. They're more productive, and we're saving money on paper, fuel and office space."

The council is augmenting the dashboards to present information that comes from outside the Confirm environment. Broadfoot is also looking forward to the next update of the software. "I see the map-based dashboards as a real game-changer for us," he says.

Whittaker adds: "We'll continue rolling out Confirm software, because the benefits are plain to see. I like that it's constantly evolving. The developers are forward thinking about what they can do next, and we're happy to come along."

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