LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SHINING A LIGHT ON SERVICES IN PLYMOUTH

ENCOURAGING RESULTS ARE REPORTED FROM A RECENT PROJECT BY PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL TO DIGITALLY TRANSFORM AND ENHANCE KEY PUBLIC-FACING SERVICES

Plymouth City Council (PCC) in Devon[1] wanted to improve the quality of services it delivers across a number of areas including playgrounds and trees, with street cleansing to follow. At the top of its 'to do' list was to improve its response rates to citizens, as well as deliver value for money and manage public expectations.

At the same time, the unitary authority wanted to ensure public safety was prioritised by keeping accurate, up-to-date records of inspections, maintenance and repairs, including dates, times and locations of work done. This would not only ensure these activities took place when they should – reducing the risk to public safety – it would also furnish documented evidence to defend against liability.

In replacing existing paper-based procedures, the fully digital approach had additional benefits in making service delivery more efficient, accurate and proactive:
● It would eliminate the need for inspection teams to visit the office to collect and return work plans and make hand-written notes.
● It would automate the processing of reports from residents and minimise the delay between reporting and action.
● It would offer a better way to document historical information about service delivery issues, or simply to capture and record what work had been carried out by which operative and when.

Solution and implementation
To this end, PCC worked with IT provider, Delt Shared Services[2], and selected Yotta's Alloy asset management solution[3] to deliver the anticipated benefits – all from a single system.

The implementation process was fast and efficient. The project team worked closely with the council to provide a streamlined platform for asset management and data capture, teaming-up with each service area to tailor the approach to both their needs and the requirements of end users. Frontline operatives were supported throughout.

Across both playgrounds and trees, PCC has equipped its team of inspectors with the Alloy Mobile app, which is fully integrated with the main Alloy platform. Using Alloy, customer enquiries and service requests are captured and digitally logged; work tickets are automatically created, prioritised, and sent to field repair/maintenance teams together with detailed location maps.

The teams are now using Alloy Mobile to collect and record information from inspections in real-time and append photos and a date/time-stamp before relaying it back to the administrative team, all without visiting the office. Added to this, alerts, and responses about the work are automatically sent to service users, thereby improving communication and transparency.

The results
PCC and Delt have currently imported around 260,000 trees into Alloy and created almost 2,000 individual polygons, each representing individually-managed clusters of trees. Displaying the information in this way enables the council to view its natural infrastructure across the city and quickly see the current status of work. The final stage of the project around litter bins and street cleansing is well underway and to date more than 1,000 street litter bins have been mapped and configured with attributes such as capacity, waste type, category, and strategic location, enabling the council to have a clear visual picture of its litter bin assets.