

Somerset County Council Achieves End-To-End Highways Management With Confirm® From Pitney Bowes Business Insight

UK's most advanced mobile inspection system creates cost savings and new efficiencies in the drive to 'do more with less'

Windsor, Berks, 1 December 2010 - [Pitney Bowes Business Insight](#) (PBBI) – a global leader in location intelligence, data management and customer communication management software, data and services – has announced that Somerset County Council has gone live with the UK's most advanced highways management system, based on Confirm®, PBBI's market-leading infrastructure asset maintenance and management system.

The all-electronic, end-to-end solution enables mobile-enabled management of highway defects between Somerset's highway inspectors and its highway contractor, Atkins. With 30,000 road defects reported each year, the mobilisation of the Confirm-based maintenance system has enabled Atkins' work gangs to respond quicker and more efficiently to logged faults. This has resulted in 98% of defects being repaired within their target response time – a significant improvement on previous performance.

With local authorities having to 'do more with less' in the face of public spending cuts of up to 25%, the mobile-enabled solution in place at Somerset has yielded operational cost and efficiency savings by helping inspectors to do their job faster and more accurately. Confirm has completely cut out time-consuming paper-based reports and work orders and enabled more inspections to be carried out using the same-sized inspection team.

The new solution lets inspectors report defects in situ on mobile devices and send the exact location of the problem back to Somerset's Confirm system. This information is then automatically relayed via Atkins' Inform system – which interoperates with Confirm – to the company's safety defect controllers, who then allocate the most appropriate Atkins' work gang to deal with the problem. A 'before' and 'after' photograph is taken of the work and uploaded to a secure shared website, where Somerset's highways team can 'virtually' inspect the repair and sign the job off.

The system enables highway works to be programmed and planned in advance rather than being purely reactive, with Confirm providing unprecedented real-time visibility into the state of the highway network. Improved understanding of the condition of highway assets also means that Somerset can more accurately target budgets in the right areas.

The benefits of the end-to-end management of highway works for Somerset's citizens are also clear: faster and more accurately targeted repairs mean fewer traffic jams and a safer built environment. Members of the public are also able to start the maintenance process themselves by pinpointing a defect on an interactive map on Somerset County Council's website, which then triggers an automatic inspection of the problem.

“The end-to-end nature of the Confirm-based solution means that every maintenance job stays within the electronic system right up to completion,” says Paul Winter, Confirm Manager, Environment Directorate at Somerset County Council. “By raising work orders directly from the actual location of a defect via mobile devices, we are able to understand and control the works on our highways to an unprecedented degree. We are excited to be pioneering this approach to road maintenance management, and very pleased with the cost and efficiency benefits already achieved.”

“In terms of job performance, we’re light years ahead of where we used to be with the paper-based system,” adds Simon White, Contract Director, Highway Services at Atkins. “Before the new system was in place, we had to manually process 30,000 defects a year, all with different priorities and work types. Now, that process has been streamlined considerably by the mobile-enabled system. We can plan repairs more efficiently and check our performance against KPIs in real-time, which helps us to work smarter and more productively.”

Going forward, Somerset and Atkins are hoping to extend the system even further into the public realm, by sending regular updates to individual citizens who have reported faults, including information about when the repair will occur and confirmation of its completion.

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About Pitney Bowes Business Insight

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