

“Our partnership with Pitney Bowes MapInfo enables us to communicate, inform and manage our public services, delivering exceptional efficiencies through a seamlessly integrated infrastructure” Keith Cadman, Partners & Contracts, Liverpool City Council

Introduction

As Liverpool takes up the mantle as Europe’s City of Culture 2008, its evolution from ‘seaport to e-port’ reflects an unprecedented achievement in delivering efficient and accessible public services.



The Challenge

With a change in its political leadership in 2002, Liverpool City Council set itself an ambitious vision to turn around the dated perception of the old, fading seaport through a £3 billion regeneration programme, an overhaul of its operational infrastructure and the prize goal, of being chosen as Europe’s City of Culture 2008.

The Solution

Liverpool City Council had been using Confirm asset management since 1995, which was successfully rolled out across the spectrum from grounds maintenance to highways, and used as an interim corporate call centre. Identifying the value of integrating Confirm, in 2005 the Council introduced GDC geospatial technologies and most recently integrated a corporate gazetteer. Pitney Bowes MapInfo has worked to seamlessly integrate its technologies to deliver unparalleled internal efficiencies and public self-service via the internet, through its expertise as leaders in location intelligence.

Pitney Bowes MapInfo worked closely with Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Direct, a joint venture established between the Council and BT in 2001 (www.liverpooldirectlimited.co.uk) to meet the objectives of the new administration in delivering e-services for customers.

By integrating the established Confirm asset management infrastructure with the geospatial technologies of GDC and a corporate gazetteer, Liverpool City Council has developed a highly sophisticated, yet simple-to-use, map-based system for departmental users, call centre staff and the public. Critically, it has proven to provide a unique integration of strategic decision making tools with Street Scene operations.

How it works

Today, residents in the city can report a street scene incident – say, fly-tipping in a passageway, by identifying the location on a simple map interface on the Council web site. Bypassing the call centre, this report is immediately registered with street-based services, which are able to identify and arrange the correct contractor (passageway refuse separate from highways), to ensure a swift and efficient response. The accuracy of this system cannot be overstated; the cost of the wrong street light being changed or the inappropriate contractor being deployed are familiar to all local authorities.

Location Intelligence

The geospatial technology allocates a unique ‘XY’ coordinate to pinpoint the location of the reported incident, providing unprecedented accuracy, which leads to significant service efficiency and cost savings.

“As the City of Culture 2008, Liverpool has to be operating at its level best,” says Keith Cadman, Partnerships and Contracts, Liverpool City Council. “We have to operate to maximum effectiveness, and demonstrating efficiency in dealing with street-based services is paramount.

“The integration of Confirm and GDC within our Neighbourhood Information Services and contact centre is a real triumph in underpinning our goals as an international city of excellence. We are making great strides in reducing costs, which we are witnessing through a dramatic reduction in call centre time and processing on street-based services like inspections and call outs.”

Significantly, Liverpool City Council did not elect to deploy a corporate CRM system as the core to its IT strategy. By honing and integrating Pitney Bowes MapInfo technologies, growing them from the ground up, so to speak, the organisation has developed a customised information and service solution second to none. Interestingly, the team at Liverpool Direct is now considering integrating a corporate CRM system into the established infrastructure.

“Our partnership with Pitney Bowes MapInfo has helped the Council meet the objectives of the new administration and is now paying great dividends.” Brian Jones, Geodata Team Manager, Liverpool Direct.

Today, the spatially enabled Confirm system manages Council, partner, contractor, public and all stakeholder interaction with grounds and highways maintenance, tree management, street-lighting, bridges, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, cleansing and waste services and mobile-working.

The Council has a dedicated ‘Confirm Champion’, and 400-500 staff work daily with the Confirm CRM system. The integration with GDC geospatial technology (Plan Access among others) and gazetteer facilitates front office access to essential location-based information, delivering efficiencies derived from swift and accurate call centre response and online self-service.

Keith Cadman summarises in saying: “Liverpool City Council now boasts a truly efficient self-service public system. By harnessing Confirm, which now manages 30 of our street-based services, and integrating it into the mapping and gazetteer technology of Pitney Bowes MapInfo, we have achieved unprecedented data management, which helps to drive efficiencies across the organisation.”



Most recently, Pitney Bowes MapInfo integrated a ‘Supported Living System’ using GWS2, a social services project requiring country-wide gazetteering, which enables the Council to track people in and out of the area.

City of Construction

Billions of pounds are being pumped into the Liverpool economy through development schemes that are transforming the city’s landscape in the run up to the Capital of Culture events in 2008 – and beyond. Known as ‘The Big Dig’, the planned construction activity is already estimated at between £4 and £5 billion over the next few years, and aims to create more than 14,000 new jobs.

In recognition of the impact that such a massive construction is likely to make on businesses, traffic and the lives of residents, the Council web site, using Pitney Bowes MapInfo Plan Access and a web-based GIS viewer, runs an up-to-the-minute ‘Big Dig’ information service with images, links to specific construction areas, traffic news and useful updates.

Pauline Crabtree, offered a compelling retrospective when she said: “A few years ago, a resident could only reach the council by phone, between 8.30am and 4.45pm. Many didn’t get through, and those who succeeded could only provide the sketchiest details of their problem. Significant losses were made in that antiquated process, and relationships with citizens were often damaged.

“Thankfully, that is a legacy we refused to adopt; we’ve made a real step-change by carefully and accurately evolving the organisation with the help of our valued partnership with Pitney Bowes Business Insight.”