

Scottish Roads and Lighting advisory group

Minutes 10 November 2017

Ruthvenfield Depot, Perth

1. Introduction and welcome

Cllr Frank Anderson of West Lothian Council welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Attendance and apologies

Please see attached.

3. Minutes from previous meeting held on 25 August 2017

The group agreed the previous minutes were a true and accurate record.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

5. West Lothian's experience of Mobile Working

Kenneth Brown, the Senior Engineer for Maintenance at West Lothian Council, gave a presentation on Mobile Working in West Lothian, aimed at councils who were thinking of beginning their own Mobile Working projects. Whilst West Lothian uses Confirm and ConfirmConnect for their system, Kenneth mentions that the lessons learned from West Lothian will be helpful to all councils, regardless of system they use or choose. It was also noted that councils are quite far behind when it comes to utilising mobile technology.

First, Kenneth highlighted the importance of the database that serves the mobile working application, and how this fits in with the code of practice on information management. As it recommends that information is required to be collected and made available for a number of purposes, it makes most sense to have this information stored digitally in a system that is interconnected with the workflow, rather than on an excel spreadsheet, scanned documents or other such methods. An asset management system is more clearly called for later on in the code of practice.

In West Lothian's case, they built their Mobile working process on top of the asset management system they had been using since 2005, which required a massive upgrade to get working. Kenneth mentioned that developing a good relationship with their supplier was key to successful implementation. Confirm then became used in a number of different departments, though it took a long time to achieve this. He also stressed the importance of committing to the system and working hard at the start so that people engage fully with the product and utilise it to its full potential.

Kenneth then went through some screenshots of the desktop programme. After going over these screenshots, there was then a discussion on some the limitations of the program. These included that it looked dated, had no mobile functionality, there was

often double handling of data and that data was then difficult to extract from the program.

West Lothian sought to address these limitations when procuring the mobile working element. To assist with this, they visited City of Edinburgh, who had already awarded a contract for mobile working. After the procurement process, which resulted in the incumbent being awarded the contract, they then worked together with the supplier to move as many processes to Connect as possible.

Kenneth shared another set of screenshots, this time of the new functionality and design. At this point there was a number of questions from the group as they queried some of the more technical aspects of the program. Kenneth drew attention to new features, such as the improved reporting now offered.

The presentation then focused on ConfirmConnect, which was the element that allowed for Mobile Working. Kenneth discussed some of the benefits this offered, such as increased efficiency and reduced the paperwork, real-time, bi-directional information flow which allows managing enquiries, inspections and work crew activities on site. All relevant asset data is sent to the mobile device for safety and condition surveys. Photography and mapping are fully integrated meaning that all the data recorded is time stamped and locations are recorded using the mobile device.

West Lothian chose two Samsung Galaxy devices to give to employees. A phone, and a tablet, which were generally given to inspectors. These were secured by IT and only allow for the specific apps needed for ConfirmConnect, and email. The app allowed for the following jobs to become mobile.

- Safety Inspections
- Condition Surveys
- Customer Enquiries
- Defect records
- Raising Works Orders
- Jobs
- Gully cleaning

Kenneth then outlined the process of using the app, using screenshots to show how the app works. There was again discussion on how the app works.

6. Digitisation of the customer reported road defect process

Emma Carruthers, Business Improvement Officer at Dumfries and Galloway Council, provided a presentation on the implementation of Totalmobile in Dumfries and Galloway Council, focusing on customer reported road defects.

Emma began by outlining the process that D&G used to use, highlighting the various points in that process that people were carrying out manually, and the feedback that they had received about the process from customers, stakeholders and staff. The main issues with this process was its length, due to the number of manual elements, the duplication of data across many different systems and a lack of consistency between offices. Customers were also frustrated at the lack of an appropriate response and being unable to feedback on the service.

The changes in the service were intended to simplify and automate the process, and bring consistency across the service. It would also provide better data, assist with customer interactions and allow for the more effective use of time and reduce non-activity time. Emma then showed a diagram that illustrated how the majority of the Road Defect Reporting and Repair Process has been digitised.

Emma discussed successes of the project, including that it met all its intended benefits. Real Time updates are now provided to customers, and there is also now information on Customer satisfaction being captured. The new system allows for supplicates, trunk and private reports to be dealt with at the first point of contact, and the process has a cost of approximately 91 pence per interaction, with the average interaction taking 13 minutes and 20 seconds.

Emma, during the presentation, also discussed some of the challenges faced when implementing the new process, chief of which was staff being resistant to changes. There was also an issue where estimated time until completion was automatically reported to the customer, but that had to be stopped due to budget restraints. Emma noted that there is perhaps too much focus being put on potholes, driven by elected members primarily, and that services need to look at roads a little more broadly.

There was a discussion following the presentation focusing on some of the more technical points of the process, including how the Totalmobile platform works specifically. Emma gave an open invitation for other local authorities to visit Dumfries and Galloway to see the program in action. There was also a discussion about whether there was a dedicated team in place for projects such as this, whether budgets could afford it, and what advantages having a dedicated team would bring.

Kenneth concluded by outlining the next steps for the project, which included improving Strategic Asset Management, Reporting and introducing a module that assists with planning.

There was then a wide-ranging discussion on mobile working, including on how jobs are assigned, the timings of workflows, and the effect it is had on staff's office time. Kenneth remarked that the number of desks needed for surveyors had been reduced to two among the team, rather than each one needing their own desk. It was also discussed that the improved data collection will help with APSE Performance Networks, as the data will be easier to find and also be more reliable.

7. Process benchmarking update

Colin McInnes, APSE Solutions, gave a short update on his recent work with process benchmarking. He apologised for the delay to providing a full presentation, however he has returned to working in Scotland full time so will be able to get back on track.

Colin discussed responses received on enquiries about flooding, which currently sat at 12, and noted that each response was very different to each other and there were no immediately apparent common themes. One thing that did stand out was that local authorities were having increasing difficulty with local flooding that was happening in various different locations, rather than known problem areas that recur.

Colin ended by calling for guidance from the group on what areas they wanted him to focus on. There was a short discussion, which centred on mobile-working, and particularly how it works in a multi-trade environment. One possibility was that Colin could work on providing an overview for the various different mobile working solutions there are, and how these have been adopted by local authorities.

8. SCOTS / APSE Performance Networks update

Dorothy Reid from Falkirk Council gave an update on SCOTS. The SCOTS Year-on-Year report is now available online, and the report will now be sent to the CEOs of each Council in Scotland.

Dorothy also encouraged the group to complete the performance network questionnaire and leave comments.

9. APSE update

Iain Scherr drew attention to the APSE website, which provides information on the current work of the Association, including the latest briefings, the recent APSE publication 'Accountability and Scrutiny', the APSE/ITN 'Redefining Neighbourhoods' programme, recent advocacy work, network queries, deadlines for Performance Networks data returns, upcoming APSE Energy and APSE Training events in Scotland, the work of APSE Solutions and upcoming Scottish and National seminars.

10. AOCB

A member asked the group a question about a specific type of Cat's Eye, Surface Mounted Roadstuds, and whether they had experience for it. An example of it was passed around the room, with generally positive feedback from those who had experience with it.

11. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 2 February 2018 at Ruthvenfield Depot in Perth.

Attendees

Angus MacIver	Aberdeen City Council
Stuart Young	Aberdeen City Council
Bill Lennox	Aberdeenshire Council
S. Pattison	Angus Council
Iain Scherr	APSE
John MacCormick	Argyll & Bute Council
Antony Kamau	Ayrshire Roads Alliance
Eric Garry	Ayrshire Roads Alliance
Paul Clarke	Ayrshire Roads Alliance
David Dickson	City of Edinburgh Council
J. Watson	City of Edinburgh Council
Sean Gilchrist	City of Edinburgh Council
Lisa Chiles	Dundee City Council
Liam Greene	East Dunbartonshire Council
Glen Kane	East Lothian Council
Ryan Robertson	East Lothian Council
Jane Corrie	East Renfrewshire Council
Dot Reid	Falkirk Council
Bill Liddle	Fife Council
Chris Burns	Glasgow City Council
Cllr Stephen Dornan	Glasgow City Council
Elizabeth MacIver	Highland Council
Brenda McDonald	Inverclyde Council
Stewart Walker	North Ayrshire
Steve Ervine	Scottish Borders Council
Kenny Snedden	Stirling Council
Ewan MacNaughton	Tayside Contracts
Stewart Ormind	West Dunbartonshire
Cllr Frank Anderson	West Lothian Council
Kenneth Brown	West Lothian Council

Apologies

Joe Smith	Aberdeen City Council
Scott Walker	Clackmannanshire Council
Derek Crowe	Fife Council
Tim Alsoft	Scottish Borders Council
Dougie McKay	Tayside Contracts
Graham Malcom	West Lothian Council
Kevin Hamilton	West Lothian Council