

Shropshire Council

Working with Idox to deliver mobile working and greater efficiencies



Deliverables at-a-glance

- » Cost and resource savings – reduced journeys to and from the office
- » Boosted productivity – officers access and process information and cases in real time on site
- » Decreased paperwork costs – paperwork is viewed online
- » Increased efficiencies – all files are accessed electronically
- » Increased morale – improved internal communications and working flexibility



Challenge: Ensuring citizen satisfaction across a vast area

Shropshire Council is one of the largest authorities in England covering an area of 1,235 square miles. The Council is home to 307,000 residents and oversees more than 3,000 planning applications every year.

As a vast, rural authority with five area offices located in market towns across the county, the Council has always recognised the need to provide remote working for its officers.

Faced with the continued challenge of increasing efficiency across some of the authority's key service areas, the Council commenced a trial of running the existing Idox Uniform Planning and Document Management Solutions on iPads using thin client technology. The trial complemented the Council's Business Transformation Project which commenced in 2010 and which increased morale.

Improving internal communications and delivering work flexibility was thought to be an effective way to drive further efficiencies.

Solution: Partnering with Idox to explore the benefits of mobile technology

Following the successful pilot, the Council has now provided iPads to all of its planning officers who enthusiastically use them to view planning applications while on-site, instead of having to take the paper plans with them.

The flexibility of Idox's software has transformed the planning officers' working life by using mobile technology instead of a PC to complete daily tasks. The connection to the iPad securely grants full access to Shropshire Council's back office system and allows the planning officers to conduct full searches for case details and documents.



“The use of iPads has immensely improved internal communications between the planning officers, as all enjoy using FaceTime to immediately discuss on-site issues with their colleagues in the office and our Building Control Site inspectors use the tablet devices that enable them to complete inspections on site and update the back office system directly.

“Idox played an important role with helping us to transform the way we work. The successful outcome has created a dynamic work environment for our planning officers and helped us to achieve vital cost-savings, while increasing productivity during financial challenging times. Our planning officers can now complete their work remotely, which grants them the flexibility to start their day on site, instead of having to travel to the office to retrieve paperwork.

“We are very happy with the end results and we would definitely utilise Idox’s expertise again.”

Susie Jones
Operational Team Leader
Shropshire Council

Furthermore, the integration of Idox’s Enterprise, has delivered a dashboard enabling senior management to oversee tasks, workflow and performance performance, as well as address workload imbalances. By doing so, the Planning department has boosted its efficiency in travel time alone whilst also ensuring that new queries can be responded to immediately.

Outcomes: Delivering cost savings and increased morale

Increases in team agility and flexible working practices have been achieved, as planning officers can now input and update information during a site visit, making it immediately available for their colleagues to view. In return, this reduces operating costs.

Moving the Idox Planning solution to a mobile device has:

- » given planning officers real-time access to Shropshire Council’s back office system allowing them to familiarise themselves with work already undertaken without having to travel to the office to retrieve paperwork or type up notes
- » facilitated savings of 40% office floor space as the team no longer need access to a PC and desk usage

- » significantly reduced storage space as all paper files are now stored electronically and are easily downloadable
- » decreased print costs as all appropriate paperwork can now be viewed online without the need to print large documents
- » improved internal communications and staff morale as planning officers enjoy the flexibility of completing their duties without having to make repeat journeys throughout their working day
- » assisted the set-up of hot desks throughout the regional offices

“All local authorities are under significant pressure to reduce their expenditure and it is encouraging to work with suppliers, such as Idox who understand our business needs to provide technology that is flexible and accessible to suit our ever-changing needs.

“Shropshire Council prides itself on spending taxpayers’ money efficiently and providing services to meet local communities’ needs, and mobile working has exceptionally met these requirements.”

Councillor Mal Price
Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

