

Delivering services for citizens more cost efficiently

Serco

The Challenge

- Improve the operational efficiency of Peterborough City Council

The Benefits

- Anticipated cost savings of tens of thousands of pounds
- More efficient data collection in the field
- Improved collaboration with partners
- Enhanced employee productivity

Serco is delivering tens of thousands of pounds in savings for Peterborough City Council, following the development of a suite of mobile, web-based and desktop ArcGIS solutions. Across multiple departments, council employees are now saving time, collaborating effectively and working more productively in the field to deliver high quality services for citizens.

The Challenge

As Peterborough City Council's appointed supplier for outsourced ICT services, Serco is constantly implementing new initiatives to improve the quality and cost efficiency of the council's services for citizens. Many of these initiatives are focused on improving single business processes or introducing new services. However, when Serco decided to upgrade the council's legacy geographic information system (GIS) technology, it quickly recognised that this particular IT project could deliver significant business improvements across the whole council.

At the time, Peterborough City Council used GIS in several departments, both for operational management and for strategic data analysis, but its existing GIS system didn't have the flexibility to adapt easily to new requirements and could not be used on mobile devices. Notably, the legacy system could not be tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of users, so council employees often found it too complex and needed frequent support from the GIS team.

The Solution

Working with Peterborough City Council's GIS users, Serco drew up an extensive list of requirements and selected Esri's ArcGIS platform following a detailed evaluation of competitive products. Then, Serco appointed Esri UK's Professional Services team to undertake the implementation of ArcGIS, including setting up servers and integrating ArcGIS with property gazetteers. "Esri UK took on responsibility for getting the ArcGIS platform up and running, which gave us complete peace of mind," says Tim Newcombe, GIS Business Manager at Serco. "With something as ubiquitous as GIS, everything has to be put together in the right order, in the right way, and this can take a considerable amount of time. Esri UK knows how to set it up in an optimum way and how to do it quickly."

Serco subsequently also engaged two of Esri UK's Embedded Product Specialists to provide hands-on assistance with building web apps and solution templates. "Working with Esri UK's Professional Services team put us a step ahead on our learning curve and enabled us to roll out a wide range of cost-saving applications for Peterborough City Council very quickly," Newcombe says. "Even when they weren't on site, I could email the Embedded Product Specialists and they came back to us quickly with answers."

Using the knowledge and skills it acquired from working alongside the Embedded Product Specialists, Serco delivered thirteen ArcGIS apps for Peterborough City Council in just twelve months. These apps included ArcGIS mobile, desktop and web-based solutions, which transformed processes in multiple council areas, ranging from managing demand for health services to recording drainage assets and analysing archaeological finds.



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Tim Newcombe, GIS Business Manager, Serco



An ArcGIS app for highways enquiries creates cost efficiencies for Peterborough City Council

The Benefits

£15,000 cost saving from just one app

The ArcGIS web apps that Serco has developed have automated manual tasks and streamlined processes to create significant cost savings for Peterborough City Council, estimated at tens of thousands of pounds. In one pivotal project, Serco has delivered an ArcGIS web app to improve the exchange of information between the land charges team and highways team. This ArcGIS-led process alone has removed over 15 hours of manual paperwork per week and is, as a consequence, expected to deliver annual savings of £15,000.

More efficient data collection in the field

Several of Serco’s ArcGIS apps have created tangible time savings for council employees working out and about in the city. For example, one app, based on Collector for ArcGIS, enables planners to gather detailed property information for the council’s Local Development Plan far more quickly, in the field, improving the efficiency of the local planning process. Another mobile ArcGIS app allows the council’s drainage team to check and edit the locations of culverts in the field, improving the accuracy of council data and removing the requirement for information to be transferred manually from paper to screen.

Improved collaboration with partners

The flexibility of ArcGIS allows Serco to create web apps to support specific projects and improve collaboration with partners. For example, it has created a web app that enables Peterborough City Council to share information about mineral and waste sites with the local county council, parish councils, landfill owners and waste services suppliers. Serco has also produced an Esri Story Map that presents opportunities to regenerate Peterborough, create a circular economy and improve sustainability. This Story Map will be shared with local businesses and citizens to help build a shared a vision for the future of the city.

Enhanced employee productivity

Most significantly, Serco has been able to improve the productivity of specific teams, by giving them access to web apps that are tailored precisely to their needs. “The ability to construct an app for a specific group of users, and roll it out quickly, is a real benefit of ArcGIS,” says Newcombe. “Before, there was one GIS system that did everything for everyone, but it was overwhelmingly difficult for most council employees to use. Now we can give teams, and even individual employees, exactly the functionality they need to do their jobs, so they can work more productively. We also have fewer support calls to the GIS team as a result, saving us as much as half a day a week.”

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