Brightly

Government

Client Success Story

Bristol City Council turns to Brightly to streamline flood defence inspection data

Client

Bristol City Council (BCC)

Geography

Bristol City, South Wales, England, UK

Vitals

- Population of 472,500
- 34 Wards
- A total of 70 councillors
- Area of 110km^2
- Eleventh most populous urban areas in the UK

Challenges

As a Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA), Bristol City Council must maintain a register of all their flood risk assets. BCC was hand-recording asset condition data and then transposing this information onto Excel spreadsheets.

Results

The use of Brightly ConfirmConnect allows BCC upload asset pictures in real time while on site and these are uploaded directly to the asset record in Brightly Confirm. They are saving time and can have much more confidence in the accuracy of the records they're keeping, with Confirm as central source of information for all assets.

Concerns

It is important for Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) to have an understanding of what flood risk assets are located within their geographical area of responsibility and for their condition to be monitored over time. This is essential, not only as it is a statutory requirement under the Flood and Water Management Act for all LLFAs to maintain a register of all their flood risk assets, but also because it facilitates effective management of flood risk assets. Asset condition monitoring means necessary repairs can be made to assets in a timely manner before asset failure occurs, which can present an unnecessary and unexpected increase in flood risk to the surrounding area.

Bristol City Council (BCC) LLFA is a long-term user of Brightly's Confirm asset management software solution, with all of its flood risk assets on the Confirm asset management system. However, the associated asset condition data was not held on the system, nor was there a method for this data to be directly input into the system whilst out on-site assessing asset condition.

BCC was hand-recording asset condition data and then transposing this information onto Excel spreadsheets to calculate and record overall asset condition scores using a standard, but complex, Environment Agency (T98) scoring process.

This system therefore involved double handling of data, allowing ample opportunity for human error. It was an inefficient use of time and meant asset condition scores had to be individually calculated each time, for each asset.

Site photos of assets were taken on smartphones and then had to be manually transferred across to relevant files held on the council's own servers, segregated from the asset register. This was a time-consuming process and having to double handle data meant that there was not a single source of truth for all asset information. Photos were stored in files; condition information was stored in Excel spreadsheets, while only general asset information was stored on Confirm.

Our Approach

Seeking a more efficient way of managing the entire process, BCC turned to Brightly, to see if there was a way for the Confirm system to manage it all.

"The team were able to assist us in devising a way for the data to be input directly into Confirm," says BCC Flood Risk Officer, Jenna Angle. "Brightly technicians were able to write code which allowed the system to automatically calculate an overall condition score for each asset, based on more granular condition data for each asset element input by officers on site. They were also able to advise on functionality and system requirements."

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Jenna Angle
Bristol City Council Flood Risk Officer

The Results

The entire procedure has now been revolutionised.

"There's no longer any double handling of data," Ms. Angle continues. "We're able to input it straight into the user interface on ConfirmConnect, via a tablet whilst on site, which is far more efficient than our previous process of recording on paper and then later transposing to digital records. We also no longer need to do time consuming calculations to determine overall asset condition scores, as this is now done automatically when the user inputs the breakdown condition scores of asset elements, to then get an overall asset condition score."

"We're also able to review changes to asset conditions over time, as Confirm allows the storing of records over long periods without overwriting the previous record against the asset. The use of ConfirmConnect means we can also now upload asset pictures in real time while on site and these are uploaded directly to the asset record in Confirm. Overall, we're saving a huge amount of time and can have much more confidence in the accuracy of the records we're keeping, with Confirm as central source of information for all assets."

Nick Vague, Senior Consultant at Brightly adds, "Bristol City Council has been gradually migrating more and more of its assets to Confirm over the years. When they came to us with the challenge of recording flood risk data, we were determined to find a way to process and store that information within the Confirm system for them as well. Asset management software is never a one-size-fits-all—there's always a degree of bespoke adaptation required. We were delighted to be able to work with BCC to find a solution that's improving accuracy and freeing up huge amounts of staff time to devote to other priorities."

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