

ICT - Working with Oldham Partners

Case Study: Recycling & Waste Management – Contract Monitoring

Unity ICT has developed a Contract Monitoring System for Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA) to enable inspectors to use mobile technology when carrying out waste and recycling site inspections. This allows inspectors to report back on findings and facilitates closer monitoring of the service contract.

Background

GMWDA is the largest of the English waste disposal authorities and undertakes the waste disposal services for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford. GMWDA serves approximately 973,000 households (AGMA 2009), handling 1.1 million tonnes of municipal waste each year. In April 2009 GMWDA and Viridor Laing (Greater Manchester) Ltd (VLGM) signed a £3.8bn contract – Europe's largest ever waste management Private Finance Initiative (PFI). It is the most complex recycling and waste management contract of its kind in Western Europe and involves major capital investment. This Contract develops a sustainable solution to maximising resources from municipal waste, providing much needed recycling facilities and a welcome boost for the economy. The Contract addresses real local issues in terms of recycling and waste management with an array of environmental, social and economic benefits.

The Problem

GMWDA have contracted VLGM to provide waste management services across Greater Manchester,

developing and maintaining standards at over 26 operational sites to a level agreed within a performance framework. GMWDA therefore have a need to monitor the level of service being delivered by VLGM and employ a team of contract monitoring inspectors to monitor performance against 90 operational criteria such as container capacity, staffing and safety levels, cleanliness of the site etc. As a result, GMWDA require a system in which contract monitoring inspectors can monitor against these criteria and report their findings. Waste sites not meeting performance criteria have a direct impact on customer service and therefore non compliance is closely monitored.

The Solution

Unity ICT were commissioned by Justin Lomax, Contract Manager at GMWDA to undertake the development of a new Contract Monitoring System so that they could keep a closer track of the service being received and to facilitate quicker resolution of issues.



[Christine Ball of GMWDA is pictured here using the new handheld devices on site at Union Road Household Waste Recycling Centre]

By utilising a Joint Applications Development (JAD) approach, Audrey Gray (below left), one of the Unity Applications Officers has been working in close collaboration with Danielle Williams (below right), the GMWDA Contract and Data Monitoring Inspector to design and develop the system.



The new development incorporates two parts:

- An Administrative System written in VB.NET and SQL Server 2005; and
- An internet browser based application designed for Blackberrys, for use by the monitoring inspectors and written in ASP.NET

As monitoring inspectors visit waste management and recycling sites, they record incidents of non compliance against the performance framework, by entering details into a simple browser application on their Blackberry. Records are supported by photographic images as evidence of non compliance. Once logged, these incidents, are then automatically emailed to VLG (and GMWDA) providing a clear audit trail to all parties. Each issue is allocated a unique reference and a specific rectification period. Details are simultaneously remotely written to a database within GMWDA who then monitor all incidents logged, and the subsequent rectification undertaken by VLG

The database also allows for further reporting and analysis of issues being recorded against the

performance framework criteria. This enables GMWDA to be proactive in their monitoring, identify recurring issues and improve service to the public. Following a parallel run with the existing system for 6 weeks, the system went live at the beginning of the 2010.

The Benefits

The Contract Monitoring System provides a robust means to monitor the largest recycling and waste service contract let in Western Europe, with the key benefits to GMWDA being as follows:

- Ease of use for inspectors
- Reliability of incident email delivery to VLG
- Audit trail of all reported incidents
- Improved control of the Service Contract
- Improved service to the customer
- Faster resolution of issues
- Ability to report and identify trends

The system does exactly what it was required to do and the GMWDA team are now planning to further enhance the system by providing additional reporting and extended analysis capabilities and have already commenced further development of the system and continue to work with Unity ICT. They have the following recommendation:

"Working with Unity ICT has enabled GMWDA to develop a bespoke system that provides a user friendly platform for our monitoring needs which meets all our service requirements" - David Taylor

(GMWDA – Director of Contract Services)

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'The ICT division has made many improvements, and we plan to continue to improve the services we deliver in Oldham and for other customers.'
- Trevor Slade (Unity ICT Services Director)

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