

Case Study: Northamptonshire County Council



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Northamptonshire Becomes First Council to Successfully Collect on TMA Fixed Penalty Notices

Exor System enables Northamptonshire to Become First Council to Successfully Collect on TMA Fixed Penalty Notices

The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) has allowed Local Authorities the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) to works promoters that fail to correctly inform the Authority of the status of any piece of work planned or being undertaken on any of the roads within the Authority's area. Northamptonshire County Council has been a principle organisation at the forefront of TMA delivery in the UK and is the first Local Authority to successfully enforce an electronic FPN using specialist Street Works software from Exor Corporation.

Les Clarke, NRSWA Team Leader at Northamptonshire County Council, explains the importance of the TMA for Northamptonshire and the fact they are one of the first UK authority to successfully issue an FPN, "In the current climate it is increasingly important to deliver against public expectations and also that of central government with regards to TMA legislation. FPNs are a key tool in our armoury and allow us to enforce and/or fine a works promoter who disregards the essence of the Act."

Parity

Clarke continues, "What's also important here is the Act applies to our own works, and whilst we technically can't fine ourselves, we have to show a level of parity between us and the works promoter. And in order for us to deliver against the Act we've invested significantly in our IT software and business processes to get to the stage we're at."

Northamptonshire has been working closely with the UK's largest provider of Street Works systems, Exor, to deliver one of the most advanced Street Works management systems in the country. Clarke adds, "We worked very closely with Exor on this deployment as we were keen to have a solution in place that would not only deliver in terms of TMA compliance but also reflect the way our engineers and inspectors work on a day-to-day basis."

Return On Investment

"Engineers and surveyors are very spatially-minded and as such, the software interface needed to have a graphical element that provided staff with an engineering-friendly interface. The Exor system does just this, enabling us to view a plotted history of each works order on the same screen. All historical data is now amalgamated on the system, allowing users to follow a notice transaction on one page, making a substantial difference by not having to flick from one area to another to see what we've done. We were one of the first organisations to use the solution in earnest and have seen significant returns on our investment."

Les Clarke, NRSWA Team Leader, Northamptonshire County Council

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A Decade of Trust

Northamptonshire began working with Exor over a decade ago to develop a geographical representation of the data stored on its central database.

Using Exor's graphical engineering mapping software, every piece of data that exists in the core highways information database, both historical and current, can be mapped onto a single geographical screen to suit each engineer's or user's requirements. It allows users to set up the system to display symbols which represent what is currently occurring on the highways. For example a traffic light symbol when maintenance is being carried out on traffic lights, or a no entry sign if the road is closed. Users can view a street or area to see what work is proposed or in progress and apply traffic management accordingly. Traffic sensitive areas are highlighted in red so users can see if work will have a greater impact on traffic flow.

Best Practice

Following the development of the graphical interface Northamptonshire was able to realise further benefits by utilising the system in order to streamline its Fixed Penalty Notice process as part of the TMA. As Clarke explains, "To make possible the requirements of Part 2 of the TMA we have to coordinate all ongoing maintenance work and for this to happen correctly we need to be presented with accurate and timely information which includes the notice of proposed, current and finished work. Before implementing the Exor system this required numerous phone calls and site visits to clarify the status on individual tasks. Since the implementation we can now view all the necessary information on one screen, and know immediately which works providers are late in completion or have failed to provide the correct notice information."

The system is not only used to monitor third party contractors but also to ensure that the Council itself adheres to best practice standards. Clarke says, "It is not always the case that incorrect notice information will have come from external contractors and so it's important that we practice what we preach when it comes to network management. A number of different contractors and works promoters are relying on the information we provide so if the Council is at fault in entering the wrong information then this is publicly available and goes against our KPI target measurement."

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