

Camden Council - Case Study

Licences module provides unique Street Works Efficiencies

The Symology logo features the word "Symology" in a white serif font, with a registered trademark symbol. To the left of the text is a circular graphic composed of numerous small white dots arranged in a pattern that suggests a globe or a network.

Camden Council has reduced systems complexity and the potential for error within its highway operations by adopting Symology's Insight Licences module. A Symology customer since 1989, the council was already using Insight for Street Works and Highway Maintenance. Adopting the Licences module has created further efficiency savings by enabling faster processing of applications and ensuring the viability of every licence granted.

The Licences module provides facilities for the effective management of licence applications. Fully integrated with the Insight suite of Asset Management solutions, it provides a comprehensive, layered view of network resources in real-time.

Camden quickly understood the benefits of integrating licence applications with street works. *"As well as recording licences in the Licences module, the system records licenced activities in the Street Works module in real time"*, says **Karla Ardon-Finch, Network Systems Coordinator at Camden**. *"That means you can plan street works and other licence applications around existing licences with minimal risk of conflicts. Symology is the only system we found that does this and it eliminates our previous reliance on team members to either reference against multiple databases or rely on their memories."*

Efficiency Savings

"It's a really big benefit. We've had occasions where we've stopped licence applications because we've had resurfacing works scheduled in the same road. Any works that could potentially create conflicts flag up on screen when we process a new application and our maintenance engineers can see potential problems with other street works and licences when they are raising works orders."

"There have been occasions when we have used these early warnings to negotiate start and end dates for works on behalf of engineers, utilities and building contractors who want to work in the same location at the same time. Without the Licences module we would have to manually reference other systems. Now, it happens instantaneously and you can see everything on the screen right in front of you."

Ease of Use

Karla continues: *"It's easy to plot licenses on the map and you can turn layers on so you can see Licences plus Street Works. Being able to see a visual picture of what's planned is great. Lists of potentially conflicting works also pop-up as each licence is processed and you can drill down if you want yet more information."*

"It's also possible to include photographs to assess whether any damage was caused by works. We've started linking photos, application and indemnity forms to records within the Licences Module for some of the licences we issue".

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Off-The-Shelf Implementation

"Symology engaged with Camden at an early stage in the development of the Licences module, as they profiled various councils' processes while developing the software. This made the buying decision easier. "When we first looked at the system we also got involved in testing. We were highly impressed and it looked immediately like a really beneficial route to take", continues Karla.

On top of managing a highways team of six and her other every-day duties, Karla was given sole responsibility for implementing the off-the-shelf software. Camden didn't commission any formal Symology Licences module training, although Karla did have good existing knowledge of the system and also made extensive use of its integrated help facility and Symology's technical helpdesk. The project started in August 2008 and went live in April 2009.

"We reviewed every single building licence process and all documents – licence documents, invoices, receipts, letters, monitoring reports, etc. – were created as Crystal reports. We conducted user-testing and produced very detailed manuals and process maps. It was a lot of hard work, required lots of patience, analytical thinking and planning, with many calls to the helpdesk. And although they always came back, the helpdesk sometimes didn't know the answer immediately, since we were one of the first to implement this module. But if I can do all that on my own in just eight months, a dedicated IT team could do it easily."

Integration, Innovation & Integrity

"There were no real technical problems during installation. Every time I encountered a problem, I knew why from my notes and went back and resolved it. Plus, the helpdesk are excellent and really hands-on. We also commissioned Symology to write code for us to import the data from our old databases. Having all our data in the system at the start was great because it ensured a smooth transition and will really help with handling future third-party claims."

Camden is active in the Symology User Group and Karla particularly appreciates the potential for steering functional development. "We're increasingly focused more on how we can use the system for practical advantage and Symology do listen. During the initial consultation, we suggested several features including 'special licence conditions' functionality and the ability to take deposits and processing fees, and all are now included."

Full licence information is already published on the council website as part of Camden's online Street Works Web-Register and the council also hopes to fully integrate a Web-based applications process with the Symology system over the next year. Camden is also currently putting additional types of licences onto the system and has plans for mobile deployment.

Karla Ardon-Finch is Network Systems Coordinator – Highways Management, Public Realm & Sustainability, Culture & Environment at Camden Council.



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Key Features

- Efficiency savings through streamlined process and error elimination
- Real-time recording of licence applications in Symology's Street Works module, as required by the Traffic Management Act 2004
- Comprehensive, real time view of licences and network resources
- Drill-down capability, with site location photograph facilities
- Embedded GIS facilities enables all activities to be viewed
- Straightforward off-the-shelf implementation
- Strong reporting capabilities
- Future-Proof Solution: free regular software upgrades cater for requirements changes
- Open technology standards for easier integration with legacy systems
- Knowledgeable consultants who understand customer business processes
- Helpful, highly available, well-trained technical support staff
- Symology User Group enables customers to guide software development
- Privately-owned, financially independent company that values its customers