



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

BACKGROUND

Established in April 1998, Herefordshire Council is the local government authority for the county of Herefordshire in England. It is responsible for social care, neighbourhood services including libraries and waste collection, and provides some aspects of transport, housing, and education.

THE CHALLENGE

With 72 sites in the Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water area including council buildings, industrial estates and depots, smallholdings and some schools, the billing process was previously very complicated. With bills sent by post to each building and processed individually, there was no ability to centrally manage the council's water bills and usage.

Belinda Wilson, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer at Herefordshire Council, had started to manually centralise water bills across the council's sites. However, this still relied on inputting individual bills into the system, which created lengthy processing times.

The council was also keen on finding a better way to manage usage of water and waste services. A tracking system to identify patterns and anomalies had been developed, however this was labour-intensive and took a long time to recognise unusually high usage and therefore potential leaks.

The council was looking for a new automated billing system that would integrate into its existing energy management software and give it far more intelligent usage analysis and quicker payment processing times.

THE SOLUTION

We offered Herefordshire Council Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) as it enables billing data to be sent directly from one computer system to another; it eliminates paper, speeds up processing times and cuts the costs associated with manual processing.

For Herefordshire Council, this means that rather than bills being posted to 72 different sites, we now electronically send one combined monthly bill straight to the Sustainability and Climate Change team. Not only that, but rather than it taking days, it now takes less than two minutes for the council's EDI bill to arrive, so Belinda has almost instant access to the billing data. They now have one point of contact in our billing team, who can help them to pick up on any spikes or anomalies and query them immediately.

This is then fed directly into the council's energy management software, enabling them to analyse the usage and share one billing file with their finance team for payment.

Previously, the council might only find out a site has been using unusually high amounts of water weeks or months after it had happened. Now, instant access to usage data across the estate means they can ensure their water usage is as efficient as possible, and rapidly take action on the data and identify leaks as quickly as possible.

BENEFITS

The new solution has transformed the way Herefordshire Council manages its billing and water efficiency:

- **Over a 50% time saving** – so the council can be more proactive in its approach to utility efficiency.
- **Eliminated paper from the billing process** – This is helping to limit the council's impact on the environment.
- **Able to spot leaks quickly** – This ability reduces the amount of money unnecessarily spent on water lost through leaks and increases overall water efficiency.

“ The whole process of setting up EDI was really straight forward. It enabled us to sort through our entire water utility set up and get the whole thing working better. We knew what we wanted to do and where we wanted to get to and the result is a much more effective and efficient way of working. ”

Belinda Wilson

Sustainability and Climate Change Officer at Herefordshire Council

“ Our work with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water feels far more like a collaboration. The system now works much better, and the support from Welsh Water has been superb. ”

Geoff Perrott

Former Principal Energy and Active Travel Officer at Herefordshire Council



Dŵr Cymru
Welsh Water



Herefordshire
Council