DataSpace Live Articles

'Sharing and Consulting in Local Authority Building Control today'

Consulting on local authority building control applications has meant the never-ending scanning and printing of pages of documents and plans which then have to be posted to various different consultees. More recently it has meant trying to compress and attach documents to emails that were either too large and had to be sent in batches or unopenable due to incompatibility or over-zealous server protection that rejected them completely. Basically, building control application consultations have been a hassle, have been expensive, time-consuming, inefficient and that's without even mentioning the trees that had to be chopped down to supply the enormous quantity of paper used, which is coincidentally, one of the biggest administration costs that councils are trying to cut down on.

But surely in this modern day where everything and anything that can be achieved electronically over the internet is steadily moving onto the web, these problems that local authorities have to contend with must be a thing of the ancient past right? Well no, not really. Still many local authority building control departments are struggling on with the limited and restrictive options available to them, but now we may finally have a way of being able to relegate these problems to the past where they belong.

PlanShare as its name suggests is a new solution for sharing documents and, you guessed it, plans. PlanShare aims to revolutionize local authority building control consultation by enabling it to share and consult with the ease, simplicity and efficiency that is generally expected and taken for granted by most in today's web savvy and speedy world. Because we too feel that quick and easy sharing of documents is more a basic business necessity than a luxury, PlanShare has been developed right into our existing DataSpace Live web-system. To those authorities who use DSLive on a daily basis to process and approve their applications, the integration of PlanShare into DSLive itself should immediately make sense. Alongside their applications users would never have to switch to their email or other sources to share and consult on their documents but are able to do so from the same solution they are already working in. By simply adding a new folder in an online application and dragging and dropping documents into it, exact copies are deposited which can be shared with individual or groups of email addresses.

Not only is sharing documents as easy as sharing a folder, but the very act of sharing that folder creates a shared online environment that is attached to the application in DSLive and with the ability to easily switch viewing between the two. Here the authority and recipients can assess and comment on documents together online, from any location with internet access, so gone is the need to send multiple copies of applications by email or post and all feedback assessments and decisions which were one scattered between them are now recorded all together in one single place. With the ability to upload and download documents, make use of our advanced document viewing, measuring and calibration tools, respond to and filter comments and protect your confidential data with our different sharing options, application consultation has simply never been so easy or efficient.

There is yet another further reason that PlanShare may be the answer to some of the problems local authorities face when it comes to consulting. With tight budgets meaning more and more council employees are having to work from home or in partnerships where the team is divided between different sites, authorities are finding that their usual methods of sharing and consulting on applications together and also with outside consultees are quickly becoming unpractical, imprecise and problematic and they are having to rethink the way in which they go about this. With PlanShare local authority officers will now find they have a shared online space where they can login to share and consult on applications together and with other consultees. Colleagues can liaise on and stay updated on applications being handled by their department, they can invite and monitor the assessments of numerous experts all in one place, they can respond to inquiries for information and requests for documents. PlanShare may even prove an invaluable tool for busy local authorities who need ever simpler and more efficient ways to share the provenance of applications and inspections with new home owners, builders and housing developers. And all this they can do from outside the office, at any time with a simple internet connection.

Upon its release we very much hope to see authorities embrace PlanShare as a solution to their mounting obstacles, a new way of working for their remote and home-based workers but also, ultimately, to consign those ancient sharing and consultation problems to the past forever.

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Why not contact us for a chat!

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