

# SUCCESS STORY

## POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL Business Intelligence



Achieving efficiency gains, data quality and governance improvements through improved business intelligence

### The challenge

Powys is one of the largest and most geographically dispersed counties in Wales. The rural nature of the region is reflected by a dispersed population and for Powys County Council this brings a range of logistical challenges in delivering services. To understand how and where it can improve and also, in line with reducing budgets, save, it is important for the authority to have a clear and accurate picture of its entire delivery performance.

The Council recognised that their Business Intelligence (BI) needed to move from a focus on technology and a domain of specialist analysis, towards a flexible platform that could easily be used by stakeholders across the organisation. This would also enable the provision of self-service and dashboards to support internal and statutory reporting requirements.

In Children's Services, for example, manual processes were taking two staff, thirty days to produce thirty departmental reports. With information flowing so slowly to senior managers, they were only able to provide a slow response to highlighted issues, which at times could mean that costs could build up before a resolution was found.

As part of the transformation they had an ambition to streamline and speed up production of reports, in particular reducing the manual input that was required when extracts needed to be reworked in Excel.

Powys County Council sought the BI skills of a partner with the necessary experience and resources to work with their business and IT teams to achieve results in a short space of time.

### Key points

- Efficiency gains and better cost control from faster, more accurate reporting
- Integrated reporting across departments, specifically integrating to financial reporting
- Reduced reliance on specialist analysts for reporting
- Data quality and governance improvements
- Cross training and up skilling to enable the Council to expand the success of its initial projects

## Our solution

Firstly, a Business Intelligence Maturity Scan was conducted by Sopra Steria consultants working with business stakeholders across the organisation. To position where the Council was in relation to where it wanted to be, a roadmap was created. This also detailed how the Council could get to its end goal in terms of data architecture, standards and governance.

Once this long term BI vision had been determined an initial priority area, Children's Services was identified to begin the first BI re-engineering project across the Council's departments. The task was to streamline the existing manual steps to free up the performance officers to start to develop new reports while also being able to find new insights from the data. To increase stakeholder engagement Sopra Steria also worked with the Council to deliver new dashboards and self-service capability.

## How we worked together

The project provided an ideal opportunity to relook at the current reports to ensure they fitted more seamlessly with the business processes. New reports were designed with end users in mind and these addressed user feedback such as the need to avoid manual manipulation in Excel.

Working closely with the onsite IT team and Children's Services officers, Sopra Steria developed an updated set of reports into a mixture of Microsoft SQL Server 2012/14 Reporting Services (SSRS), Excel and Power BI reports. These are easy for the users to produce and access as and when they need them.

To ensure a successful launch of the new reporting capability, the team undertook operational and user acceptance testing to ensure the new environment was fully functional before going live. Knowledge transfer was built into the activities throughout, giving the BI and IT teams thorough insights into the development process to enable them to perform changes, such as tailoring, integrating or adding new reports.

## Results and benefits

In Children's Services the Council has seen an increased speed of reporting from 30 days to 1 day and subsequently this has reduced headcount from two full time, to one part time analyst.

The new reports have met the Council's objectives on a number of levels, leading to service improvements and savings. Firstly, that the data is available in a more timely manner and secondly that the information is more accurate and actionable.

Now, with the information made available earlier, managers are able to respond more quickly to issues such as identifying 'out of area' children's cases and redirecting them to the appropriate authority in a more timely manner. This has had a direct impact on cost savings whilst supporting governance and statutory reporting requirements.

Overall, Powys County Council has seen measurable improvement in the quality of data now available as a result of the reduction in manual processes, data cleansing and improved and automated governance procedures in reporting.

“ Sopra Steria are working with Powys County Council to create a business intelligence solution for the whole organisation. This includes users and managers receiving timely management information, business capabilities improved by utilising the latest techniques to provide informed business analysis and improve the effectiveness of our strategic planning.

We have found that Sopra Steria not only bring excellent skills and knowledge to support our business intelligence vision but they also bring a wealth of experience of working in the local government environment. This not only aids the development of a fit for purpose solution but also improves the speed of delivery.

We are constantly impressed with the skills, knowledge and support Sopra Steria provide from a truly customer focused organisation.”

Diane Reynolds,  
Business Intelligence  
Programme Manager,  
Powys County Council



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