

Building a business case for process improvement

June 2007



About the Authority Forum

The Authority Forum is a quarterly focus group event for senior public sector executives involved in improving service delivery and efficiency at the local level. Selected delegates are drawn from progressive local authorities as well as central government and industry analysts, to discuss and debate a current public sector issue in depth and to develop recommendations for progress.

Taking part in the Authority Forum provides the opportunity to discuss opinions and ideas on key issues with peers. Delegates can position their organisation as a thought leader on priority areas at the local level and similarly can raise the profile of the programmes that they and their colleagues have been working hard to achieve.

The discussion and recommendations of the group are documented in the Authority Forum report, written by Dan Jellinek, editor of e-Government Bulletin. In addition, selected journalists were invited to listen and document any findings for their respective publications.

Contents

Executive Summary

1

Discussion report:

3

- **Process-led: shifting the focus of service improvement**
- **Community, citizen, business: the importance of customer focus**
- **Strong leadership: breaking out of the silos**
- **Building a business case**
- **Measuring success: how do we know when it's working?**
- **A different world? The democracy factor**

3

6

8

9

11

13

Conclusion

14

Feedback

15

Attendees

16

Executive summary

Local government's agenda is enormous, budgets are tight and there is increasing emphasis on efficiency. As indicated by the Society of IT Management (Socitm), "in order to deliver the transformed services and value for money that communities want, councils will need to challenge traditional methods of delivery".

While significant sums of money have been invested through the national programme for local e-government in implementing modern technology systems and new contact channels, the focus has shifted to the virtues of business process improvement and the integration of processes and systems around re-designed public services.

So the emphasis is now on evaluating services in the round, and looking at people and management issues alongside technology issues. The vision is to drive continuous process improvement in order to demonstrate tangible service and productivity benefits and to target future investment more effectively.

If business process improvement is accepted as the way authorities can continue to drive service transformation and efficiency, equally it is clear that councils must build solid business cases for process-led change programmes. But if service processes cut across many council departments, and are increasingly also shared between partner organisations in shared service arrangements, how can clear business cases be built? In the private sector, key indicators for a business case would be return on investment, payback period or cash flow. Although authorities can measure costs and operational metrics, measuring the efficiency and the quality of customer service remains difficult. And how can councils measure the effectiveness of new arrangements to show tangible benefits are being achieved for their citizens?



"In order to deliver the transformed services and value for money that communities want, councils will need to challenge traditional methods of delivery."



Key points:

- Business process improvement techniques can help improve services and cut costs, which is what citizens really care about.
- Any process improvement looking to achieve efficiencies or increased customer satisfaction needs to be tackled 'end to end'.
- Form follows function – let the customer needs drive process, then structure.
- Understand your existing costs and other important measures – otherwise tracking improvements is impossible.
- Corporate objectives need to be clearly stated – not everything can be a priority.
- Real change takes time, skills and commitment – starting at the top.
- Savings and service improvements will need to be shown quickly, hence the increased focus on process.
- Technology is an important enabler, but not the driver. However starting with the right technology infrastructure is critical, as different applications can then be built onto that foundation.
- Sharing services can raise questions of local democratic governance, and councils should not lose sight of their true role in the drive to become more efficient.

Discussion report

A recent survey of local authorities found that 80 per cent of respondents view Business Process Improvement (BPI) as critical to the modernisation of public services. And almost 90 per cent of those surveyed believed BPI projects carried out by their own organisations have been successful, with 70 per cent of projects generating efficiency gains.

Research also suggests that, to date, most drives to improve efficiency have focused on better performance in the back office. What is required now is to add performance improvement in the front office and at the point of service delivery.

Achieving this improvement will require a more fundamental change for structures, processes and targets, because success depends on understanding public demand better and organising structures and processes to meet it more effectively.

As highlighted in the UK's Transformational Government strategy, whilst technology is not the imperative in itself, it is an essential enabler for the modernisation of public services. Determining how service processes can be improved, with unnecessary steps and costs removed, and then automating those streamlined processes with better sharing of information, go hand in hand in delivering a transformed service for the citizen.

This means that senior managers and heads of IT need to be engaged in business process improvement projects from the outset, to ensure that any programme of change is 'joined up'. They also need to receive strong support from the top to push through real improvements.

Process-led: shifting the focus of service improvement

Colin Whitehouse, senior advisor for local government transformation and efficiency at the Department for Communities and Local Government, immediately highlighted the need to look at process improvement 'end-to-end'. Just as it is important to look at the use of technology as one part of improving an authority's business processes, so it is imperative to look at processes from beginning to end – from the very start of any service requirement through to its final delivery and assessment.

Improving one part of a process, perhaps because it is the most obvious part or the part over which the council has the most control, will not deliver the real benefits of process improvement, Whitehouse said, nor the best value for the taxpayer's pound. The involvement of many departments in delivering a service – other public sector bodies, private sector suppliers and partners, for example – must all be factored in to properly assess and improve a business process.

Richard Steel, chief information officer at the London Borough of Newham, said a focus on improving processes was far preferable to a focus on technology.

"When we examined our business processes for dealing with fly-tipping, for example, we found 57 problems. Just 12 of them were fixable through IT – the vast majority were process management issues.

"There is plenty of scope for efficiency improvement, but too often we have had to skew our development to match the latest dogma and targets. We should have started off with BPI, and this was a process we were beginning in 1998, but then we were presented with the e-government programme. We have



always tried to improve efficiency, so you have to ask if the e-government targets have been a help or a hindrance. There are still old problems behind the veneer of electronic government.”

Steel said that new performance indicators published by the Audit Commission to measure councils’ progress with IT were also of limited use. “They are unimaginative and don’t measure IT factors very well, but more than that it should not be IT itself that we are measuring but how effectively we are using it, for example looking at database quality, and the outcomes we are achieving. But we are still talking only about efficiency issues such as measuring the cost of a workstation, which is completely irrelevant to issues of process.”

Colin Whitehouse said the DCLG’s Business Improvement Package (BIP) for local authorities builds on the former national programme for local e-government that had laid solid foundations for change, despite its focus on technology rather than process.

“When I worked in local government there were often initiatives that we were told were going to change the face of local government, when in fact they made little difference to me as a manager,” he said. “But e-government has made a difference. In any case, if we hadn’t made the £675m investment in e-government, we would not be able to have this conversation at all today. While there may have been flaws, the e-government programme was essential.

“On the other hand, citizens are not concerned about technology. All citizens are concerned about is the quality of the services they receive, and what they pay for them.”



“Citizens are not concerned about technology. All citizens are concerned about is the quality of the services they receive, and what they pay for them.”

Colin Whitehouse

The BiP (www.bip.rcoe.gov.uk), published in March by local government minister Phil Woolas, reflects a key commitment made in the Local Government White Paper, namely looking at service delivery from the customer viewpoint, Whitehouse said.

“It is based on solid research, not on what we think customers want. The aim is simultaneously to improve services and reduce cost. We used to think this was implausible, but we’re tracking what’s going on and we’ve seen time and time again in local authorities that by reviewing processes and reducing the number of steps, services do improve and efficiency increases at the same time.

“I can’t stress enough that in process improvement, it is vital to look at end-to-end processes, not just one part of the process. A classic example is the use of off-shore call centres. A few years ago these were deemed to be a fantastic way to cut costs. But then it was found they were not working tremendously well, and so it just moved higher costs down the line.”

Whitehouse agreed with Richard Steel about the role of modern technology. “I wholeheartedly support the view that technology is just one part of it: the biggest savings are from improving processes and management practices, not from technology.”

However he said central policy drivers could not be ignored, especially with a spending review to come, rather they should be aligned with local priorities. “The Local Government White Paper says more power and responsibility should be devolved to a local level. We are trying to help local authorities to develop as best they can, to develop common tools that can fit with local priorities. There are a range of drivers for process work, such as local service partnerships, and national drivers such as CSR07, so councils need to get their ducks in a line in terms of what their main drivers are, and the overall approach needs to be clearly understood and articulated by senior management.”

Andrew Withey, business change manager at Reading Borough Council, commented: “We all know that further service efficiency is not going to come by crudely cutting chunks of cost out of services, rather it is going to come from better targeted business improvement. It seems we hear all the time that the technology is the easy bit however, but actually this is not my experience – if you are looking at transforming services end to end, then joining up systems is difficult.

“There is a rapid growth in the amount of service based business process review and process mapping going on across councils at present, and this is good. What I believe remains to be fully addressed is the means by which the often very high level process redesign work is best translated into sufficient detail for hand off to the technical teams, so that there is not a chasm between the outputs of the initial process review and what IT needs in terms of a proper specification of requirements.”



“The biggest savings are from improving processes and management practices, not from technology.”

Richard Steel

Community, citizen, business: the importance of customer focus

Eric Woods cited increased focus on the citizen as a key part of the Transformational Government agenda. This entails a step away from traditional back-office ways of improving service efficiency, to taking a holistic view of a council's services as delivered to their customers, he said. Any drive for process improvement must align itself around the customer.

"We've started looking at services from a customer point of view, and to try to structure them around community, citizen and businesses," said Sharon Perks, head of customer service & change at Melton Borough Council.



"One problem with process improvement is that it is traditionally built around services and not customers ... and customers cut across many services."

Sharon Perks

"One problem with process improvement is that it is traditionally built around services and not customers. Customers cut across many services; for example fly-tipping can involve grounds maintenance, waste control, environmental health and social service issues. Tackling it is aimed at improving people's quality of life, and they don't care about the internal organisation of the authority.

"Rather than getting easier, it has become more complex and more difficult to combine processes. In a small council area, perhaps, we can tackle these issues together more easily but I can imagine it being much more difficult for a larger council to do it."

Richard Steel said: "There are also tensions between the various services that interact. Again, for example in areas like fly-tipping, environmental services want the rubbish off the street quickly, while crime investigation team may want it left there so that they can investigate further."

Andy Wynne, head of public sector technical issues at the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, replied: "The problem with looking at business processes is that local government is not a business. Who are the customers in respect of fly-tipping? You can try and learn from the private sector, but there are fundamental differences: local government is about community, democracy. In terms of efficiency, we can define it, but whether that achieves your objectives of improvement in quality of life is questionable."

Colin Whitehouse said: "But the evidence says that a business approach is effective. The fly-tipper is not a customer, but the person who reports fly-tipping is a customer, and quick removal of the rubbish will improve their life. And if the time for payment of benefits claims can be cut, for example, the process is a lot cheaper, and it also does improve life for the citizen and increase customer satisfaction.

"On the other hand, corporate objectives need to be clearly stated – not everything can be a priority."

Andrew Withey added: "What is most important is to keep a clear understanding of the desired outcomes for the services we deliver, ensuring that these are informed by customer demands and help meet local needs."

Val Earle, senior consultant at Civica, agreed. "Customer orientation is fundamental, even if the public sector differs from the private sector. A number of authorities, such as the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, have done some excellent work in segmenting and understanding the users of their services, and then using that information to design new organisational structures.



“No one is saying one size must fit all. However if you understand the customers and their needs better, you can then design different delivery models for the various groupings, that is those who need lots of high touch support, those who want to serve themselves and those who just want a request or complaint sorted quickly. When you drive process improvement from that understanding, it’s very powerful.”

In developing stronger customer orientation, performance measurement needs to keep in step. Richard Steel said: “It is true that we operate in a lot of areas no business would choose to be in, and also that these are often the most important areas for us. It is hard to measure success of our services in simple business terms like the private sector 'bottom line' of financial performance. Our bottom line has to deal with multiple factors such as the health of our communities, the cleanliness of the streets, educational performance and timely processing of benefits for all who are entitled.”

A particular complication of measurement is a consequent skewing of activity, added Iain Lynch, corporate director at Waverley Borough Council. “In the planning arena, we have had sector-specific targets for a while, such as dealing with an application within a set time. Problems can arise, however. If authorities refuse applications that are missing a required piece of information, that refusal is an outcome, and it means we have reached it in the target time. But this is not always best for the customers!”

But Colin Whitehouse argued that this problem need not arise. “For example, with benefits claims, most councils don’t refuse applications without the proper paperwork, but take a better approach and accelerate those that do have the proper paperwork at the outset. Why is one service area doing that and another not?”



“No one is saying one size must fit all. However if you understand the customers and their needs better, you can then design different delivery models for the various groupings.”

Val Earle

Strong leadership: breaking out of the silos

Focus on the customer and improving end-to-end processes across multiple services is clearly desirable, but how do organisations resolve the inevitable tensions that result – differing priorities, multiple points of contact with customers, problems with data sharing, or with ownership and governance?

Success is only possible with strong leadership. Process transformation needs to be backed from the top of an organisation, and driven through by management teams with the relevant range of skills and understanding. This is by no means a given.

Eric Woods said: “No one would deny the benefits of process improvement, but it does raise perennial issues of central/local government tension, and of breaking down service silos within councils.

“To deliver change management and business change, you need management know-how and capacity. Often consultants are engaged, but do not fundamentally change things. And there are issues in how far private sector examples can be applied in the public sector.”

Iain Lynch said: “One of the biggest issues holding up business process improvement is that many managers have not been given the necessary skills or tools to progress with significant change programmes – to transform services we need the leadership that is able to adapt to new ways of working. This is even more pronounced where service improvement is focused around the customer rather than the service. And this work must take place not just within local authorities but across the public sector, involving the health service, the police and so on. We are only just beginning to take that sort of journey.”



“We are currently looking at priorities for transformation, working with chief officers and members to generate efficiencies through a strong customer focus.”

Sally Partridge



“No one would deny the benefits of process improvement, but it does raise perennial issues of central/local government tension.”

Eric Woods

Sally Partridge said: “Part of the problem is getting the right people to realise there is a capacity issue. Members must recognise we need to dedicate resources to this, not just have service specialists in each area looking only at their own services. We are fortunate at Buckinghamshire, in that there is a drive from high up to be customer-focused. We are currently looking at priorities for transformation, working with chief officers and members to generate efficiencies through a strong customer focus.”

Val Earle added: “Service transformation certainly is easier in a small council; it’s easier to bridge the silo mentality. But there is still the issue of management capacity, since change has to come from within.”

Richard Steel agreed. “The kind of experience that government does not have in sufficient amounts is in management, which is different to professional experience. We need people who know what it means to deliver major change programmes, how to instigate and achieve cultural change and new ways of working. This is a fundamental issue for the transformation agenda.”

Colin Whitehouse explained: “Our goal in Communities and Local Government is to build capacity within local authorities; we don’t want to just build a huge market for consultants.

“In this regard we are supporting development of a level 2 NVQ on Business Process Improvement alongside the North East Centre of Excellence to help senior managers drive through process improvement.”

Richard Steel highlighted a further issue. “The way the back office is perceived can be a problem,” he said. “It is often seen as an overhead rather than adding any service value, whereas in the overall process it is a fundamental component of service delivery. In Newham, we are pursuing a ‘One Council’ approach that challenges front line departments to use support services effectively, as well as developing support services’ appreciation of the challenges that services face. As a result they start to become more important to the service, and improvements are achieved. It’s about dealing with underlying causes, and not just symptoms.”

Val Earle agreed. “It’s also about understanding your work flows through the organisation and how both costs and delays build up. Once the process has been streamlined, modern technologies such as contact management, workflow and electronic document management systems that sit across individual departmental systems can integrate front and back office operations to deliver notable gains. The City of Edinburgh, for example, is on target to achieve £2 million savings through exactly that approach.”

Building a business case

A tough financial climate in the near future means that authorities will not hit efficiency targets by tightening up. Rather a fundamental need to do things differently is emerging. However, business process improvement will only be sanctioned if there is a strong business case pointing to greater efficiency and productivity. While investment may be found to get things started, results will need to be shown quickly in terms of cash savings or major service improvements.

But in an area as complex as local government, drawing in many parts of the organisation and often involving partnership with external providers, what are the indicators of a meaningful business case?



Colin Whitehouse said there was evidence that local authorities that have undertaken BPI have shown savings. “Further efficiencies are not going to be achieved by cut-backs. Unless you know how much a service costs, and how exactly it is delivered in the first place, it is difficult to find a way forward.”

However Andy Wynne pointed to a problem. “We’re talking about implementing fundamental changes in services, but can this be done alongside a 3% cut in budget, annually? Surely we can’t have both. Finding one example where it’s possible does not mean it’s possible anywhere. It may even be possible in thousands of cases. But there may well be cases which need an increase in spending now, in order to realise savings in years to come. We are going to miss those opportunities.”

Colin Whitehouse said: “There is evidence in high spend areas that there are massive savings to be had. And the best authorities are finding ways to put money in.”

Eric Woods said: “Maybe a 10 per cent spending rise can be found from 20 per cent of initial savings elsewhere – what is needed is a broader view. It’s certainly true that this is the only game in town – but the challenge most authorities face is delivery on this agenda, and getting some support for delivery.”

Richard Steel said: “Newham has already tried many ways of balancing efficiencies with service quality, for example comparing answering an incoming call in fewer rings versus having the caller wait a little longer in order to have the call handled in one go.

“But of enormous importance is an overall programme management structure. We now have a programme called ‘Ideas to Innovation’, which captures ideas that can then be nurtured and checked throughout their lifecycle, before being either supported or scrapped.

Steel continued: “For business process improvement, we adopt a challenge approach, working closely with ICT. If we see an opportunity for savings, we put a team onto it and run workshops that include everyone involved in the whole service process.



“Any business case should include a clear statement of predictable service improvements and/or efficiency savings to be realised.”

Andrew Withey

“It is often a revelation to people to find someone they’ve never met before has a large bearing on a service for which they are responsible. From the workshops we build a business case, and then feed it into the ‘Ideas to Innovation’ process.”

Andrew Withey said: “Any business case should include a clear statement of predictable service improvements and/or efficiency savings to be realised. With the business case for technology infrastructure projects however, there can be a tendency to fund infrastructure projects with little or no benefits analysis as the technology is rolled out to business users.”

Richard Steel agreed: “Infrastructure is easily forgotten but very important, not just to an authority and its partners but to the whole ‘place shaping’ agenda. A flexible, modern technological infrastructure is a huge catalyst in what can be achieved both for service delivery and for the community as a whole – but putting it in is a leap of faith.

“This is borne out of convergence and unified communications – not many people realise what a big deal it is, but it’s like an industrial revolution.

“We have a report going to Cabinet where we’re making a case for overall investment in infrastructure of between £8 million and £10 million. It’s more like a dozen business cases, covering the various projects that can also ride on the back of the new infrastructure.

“We’ve included both worst case and best case payback scenarios, the best case being just 2-3 years. A key to achieving the business case however is to be aware of ‘benefits optimisation’, where benefits are often ‘over expected’. Again it’s important to take a prudent view.”

Colin Whitehouse said: “There are a couple of major blockers for business cases in local government. First, how do you quantify benefits to the customer? This is notoriously difficult. And it is also hard to quantify savings. We’ve seen little evidence of business cases in projects we’ve been involved with – they are more to do with an organisational drive for continuous improvement.”

Measuring success: how do we know when it’s working?



“Every single public sector body has its own financial coding structure. In France, they have a single coding structure for the entire public sector. But here, it is not simple to access meaningful data.”

Andy Wynne

Any business case will need to be underpinned by solid foundations: metrics, statistics, unit costs, and management information tools.

National benchmarks will be valuable, but there could be limits to how far these will be applicable in each authority’s local situation. But local measurements cannot always be relied on either. Local customer satisfaction surveys, for example, simply reflect a council’s performance against local expectations, regardless of how good its services are when looked at objectively.

Eric Woods asked: “How advanced is the use of metrics in all this?”

Val Earle replied: “Building a business case to prove there is value in doing something is difficult. There are measures out there that managers collect, but they don’t tell them enough about service delivery and what costs contribute to it.”

Richard Steel said: “It ought to be easy to see that in, say, the NHS, it is cheaper per person to run the payroll, and therefore we should use their payroll system, but we don’t seem to be able to do it. There is a lot of information on services and outcomes, but we need to get everything down to unit cost. This is particularly important when considering shared services.”

Andy Wynne said: “It is not just about whether an organisation has higher costs, but why? Unit costs are very difficult, even if you are comparing unit costs between the same type of local authority. One of the reasons for this is that every single public sector body has its own financial coding structure. In France, they have a single coding structure for the entire public sector, which is similar to the private sector. But here, it is not simple to access meaningful data.”

Colin Whitehouse said: “We favour the approach of asking for a rough-cut unit cost, not worrying about pennies. We want to identify huge chunks of cost. For example if you take road repairs, you can look at overall fixed and time costs, then divide by the number of repairs carried out and then take that as the unit cost.



“Local authorities will find that the more they spend on being proactive instead of reactive, the more they save. And the fact that one service costs more than another doesn’t mean it is worse – it depends on local circumstances and the quality of the service delivered. This is not a blind tool: it gives you the right management information to help to decide what to do and why.”

Andrew Withey said: “Whilst analysis and statistics can be used to demonstrate improvement, we must still question whether this always translates into something that genuinely adds value and is recognisable to customers. The best way of showing if a service is improving is by picking output measures that really matter to our customers and keeping these measures stable over time. I’m not sure that national indicators have always helped in this.”

Colin Whitehouse said: “I think a set of national indicators is going to be a driver – the evidence from other indicator sets suggests this. Clearly this time it is more about outcomes, and outcome indicators will soon be available. Also, if something is not contributing to improving customer service, then why are we doing them?”

Richard Steel commented: “Standards are very useful in this, including the likes of the national e-service delivery (ESD). But the focus should be using comparisons as a starting point for investigation. There may well be a strong business case for accepting higher unit costs for improving service in a particular area, for example.”

Iain Lynch said: “Measuring customer satisfaction is fraught with difficulties. It often just measures the difference between people’s expectations and what they get. If a council’s reputation is poor, maybe citizens don’t expect much, so they will be more satisfied with less. Where in some areas they do well, people expect more and therefore are not actually so satisfied. That raises the idea of a minimum benchmark with local flexibility for the actual level of service provided.”

A different world? The democracy factor

Business process improvement, unit costs, efficiency – sometimes it all sounds so simple. But life for local authorities has the added complication of local democracy when it comes to looking at inputs and outputs, and boosting efficiency.

Neither serving the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society, nor following an agenda set by locally elected officials, should be a bar to progress. But those seeking to improve council processes should never forget the special democratic environment in which they operate.

Eric Woods said: “We must always remember there is another forum for this debate – we operate in a democracy, and elected members exist in a different world.”

Colin Whitehouse said: “In some areas, members are saying ‘we are the democratically elected representatives of the people in this area’, and they fear that shared services can dilute their influence.”

Iain Lynch said: “Where is the governance with shared services to make sure there is satisfaction and accountability at political level, when things are not going so well?”

Val Earle said: “There are opportunities with new technologies for councillors to think ‘how do I engage with local communities better?’ One example is engaging people with local political debates on the web.

“There is a business case for that: pulling people to the web for local issues can then achieve ‘channel migration’ – increased take-up of online channels for service requests and service delivery, which can deliver significant savings.”

Iain Lynch said: “When we started webcasting our council meetings it was a leap of faith. But we saw an immediate cost benefit and we are also making the council more open and transparent. Once you have the facility, you can do more with it as well: we have used it to have the leader addressing people online, and to webcast our budget meeting and have people feeding their views back by video.”



“When we started webcasting our council meetings it was a leap of faith. But we saw an immediate cost benefit and we are also making the council more open and transparent.”

Iain Lynch

Conclusion

Streamlining business processes from beginning to end, and automating resultant new ways of working, can deliver improved services and greater efficiency. However managers do not necessarily have the skill sets required to progress with the significant change programmes they are asked to implement. This is even more pronounced where service improvement is focused around the customer rather than built around the service. Improved management training and capacity, in particular in process improvement and resource management, are therefore required for the transformation of services.

Real transformation of public services can only be achieved with buy-in from the top of the organisation and an understanding that additional resources or training may be required. Authorities can also realise the power of process-led change by integrating processes and systems around services as part of a wider change programme.

It is critical to start with the right technology infrastructure, especially in contact management and process workflow, as different applications can easily be built onto that foundation. But once the processes that need changing have been mapped, and measurements agreed, it is people that make them happen. At present, managers are often under-resourced, under-trained and hence overworked.

Any business case needs to be underpinned by solid foundations: metrics, statistics, unit costs, management information tools. National benchmarking will be valuable but there could be limits to how these will be applicable in each authority's local situation.

Finally, those seeking to improve council processes should never forget the special democratic environment in which they operate.



Feedback

Email

If you wish to make any additional points on building a business case for process improvement, please email us at AuthorityForum@civica.co.uk.

Future subjects

Are there any particular subjects you would like covered by an Authority Forum discussion? Please contact Daniel Twigg (danielt@chameleonpr.com).

Participation

If you would like to participate in a future Authority Forum discussion then please contact Daniel Twigg (danielt@chameleonpr.com).

Back issues

There are a number of copies of previous Authority Forum reports available, for more details please contact Christine Stratford (christine.stratford@civica.co.uk).

Authority Forum: Summer 2007 attendees

Chairperson:



Dr. Eric Woods
Director, UK Government Practice
Ovum

Participants:



Val Earle
Senior consultant
Civica



Richard Steel
Chief Information Officer
London Borough of Newham
and Vice President, Socitm



Justin Hunt
Contributor
Guardian e-Public and founder
of ItsOpen



Colin Whitehouse
Senior advisor for Local
Government Transformation
and Efficiency Department
for Communities and Local
Government



Iain Lynch
Corporate Director,
Waverley Borough Council



Andrew Withey
Business Change Manager
Reading Borough Council



Sally Partridge
Business Change Support
Officer. Transformation Team
Buckinghamshire County
Council



Andy Wynne
Head of Public Sector
Technical Issues
Association of Chartered
Certified Accountants



Sharon Perks
Head of Customer Service &
Change
Melton Borough Council



Dan Jellinek
Editor
E-Government Bulletin

About Civica

Civica is a market leader in software-based solutions that help public sector organisations to improve service delivery to their communities, with particular expertise in local government, housing, law enforcement, education and healthcare. Blending consulting, software and managed services, the group supplies more than 1,500 customers in the UK, Australia, Singapore and the USA, including approximately 89 per cent of the UK's local authorities.

From creating and delivering performance plans to implementing effective IT systems that streamline complex tasks and work processes, Civica blends outcome-based advice, planning and service delivery with a range of systems and services to ease the process of change and to help achieve modern and efficient services.

Efficiency is a priority area for Civica, in activities ranging from a consortium project to establish a performance management framework for ten Scottish councils to helping Australian Local Government Innovation Award winner the City of Whittlesea to achieve transaction savings as high as 79% through e-services.

Consulting

Civica combines practitioner and systems consulting. Led by experienced local government practitioners, its "Authority Solutions" range from corporate support to infrastructure deployment, and focus on:

- Performance management
- Funding and procurement support
- Resource support and optimisation
- Process automation and financial efficiency
- IT strategy and efficiency, including e-government and mobile working

Software

Civica provides a comprehensive suite of proven software applications, used for the business of local service delivery. These combine into a complete framework, spanning contact, workflow and document management, core systems and infrastructure, and providing the means to integrate front line, online or mobile working with back office systems and data.

Managed Services

Civica offers a proven suite of managed services that can be provided as standalone components or under a full and seamless service. The company takes responsibility for systems and infrastructure on behalf of customers, managing software systems along with equipment such as handheld units for optimum performance and convenience. In addition, and combined where appropriate with Civica's consulting services, the company manages and operates supporting processes ranging from bulk printing and correspondence to business service management.

