

# Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

## Background

Early in 2008 the ICT Department of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) initiated a project to review and improve their ICT service management processes – along with the tools that support them.

As with many local authorities, Solihull MBC were facing demands for year on year cost savings resulting from directives established following the Gershon report. ICT were challenged to support the council's strategy of providing the highest quality of service, whilst reducing costs.

These ranged from information only to mission critical, from library opening times to supporting the CareFirst business systems for social services.

## The project

With the approach agreed and the processes and management information clearly defined, the next step was to review the supporting Service Management solution.

The existing RMS Service Desk and Configuration Management Database had not been maintained.

Working with RMS to specify requirements, it became clear that the solutions in place were able to cater for their emerging requirements, but an update was badly needed.

## Objectives

The new management team set the objectives: improving management reporting; enhancing service delivery; delivering the highest level of service availability where required.

To progress this as quickly as possible the team focused on:

- **Incident Management:** whilst all incidents were logged, a log and refer approach had developed with little or no prioritisation. A combination of old SLAs and a lack of a review process further impacted performance.
- **Change Management:** although changes were logged the process was paper based, slow and provided no visibility, control or management reporting.

## The approach

Solihull MBC quickly identified that establishing operational and technology savings would be the most effective mechanism for achieving the dual aim of reducing costs whilst improving services.

ICT targeted the introduction of industry recognised good practice as defined by ITIL. Further exploration highlighted that there were silos of good practice within the department, but that a consolidated approach and departmental wide processes were lacking.

Keep it simple and do not try to do everything at once with an agreed roadmap along with priorities and quick wins, adding a review and feedback mechanism as quickly as possible.

- **Problem Management:** without a formal process of supporting technology, problems were handled reactively, rather than proactively, and lacked the appropriate knowledge transfer.
- **Configuration Management DataBase (CMDB):** the lack of an up to date CMDB compounded the issues. It was almost impossible to budget for and plan areas such as a rolling desktop replacement program.
- **Service Availability:** with the introduction of service based SLAs ICT also need to identify downtime and the impact of this on the business services.

The visible part of the project was the management reporting, information; presented using dashboards. This also helped to improve communication with both management and the business.

With the scope and specification agreed RMS commenced the re-implementation project in January 2008. By early April 2008 Solihull MBC went live with the new system!

## Why RMS?

Andrew Kirk, Continuing Service Improvement Manager explained how RMS helped Solihull MBC to achieve their aims:

The challenge was ensuring the solution and partner selected could meet both the operational requirements as well as the strategic one and RMS has done just that! We chose RMS because we felt they understood what we wanted to do and how wanted to do it.

A good working relationship was established quickly and they have supported us throughout. As with most, if not all, complex projects there was a need to adapt and this is where the experience and responsiveness of RMS delivered over and above what was contracted.

*“The technology was proven and stable and we had confidence that RMS and the solution could support our current and future requirements. It provided a corporate solution but represented value for money.”*

*Steve Halliday, Head of ICT and Corporate Transformation Lead*

## Successes

A critical success factor was getting buy in at all levels, with ownership of the system wider than just one team or a few individuals.

As a direct result of the management initiatives and successful project deployment Solihull MBC achieved top position in SOCITM's user satisfaction survey for Metropolitan Borough Councils in early 2009. Within just 18 short months from their previous survey, Solihull had increased their customer satisfaction of 9%; the highest score achieved in the survey for a decade!

With demonstrably happier customers the ICT team is seeing benefits across the board.

The biggest benefit is the improved financial planning and control; e.g. implementation of a rolling replacement program based on the data gathered.

Change Management is now thoroughly embedded into ICT and the business allowing publication of a forward schedule of change.

The efforts can be focused on business priorities to treat causes rather than symptoms.