

## Dumfries and Galloway Council



*Dumfries and Galloway Council has gone live with Integra Open Enterprise Financials, as well as Job Costing and Time Recording modules. The project has been delivered on time and has included the first implementation of a Computer-Based Training system to train 1300+ users of the system.*

### **Dumfries and Galloway Council Enjoys Smooth Transition to Integra**

Since 1997 and prior to selecting Integra, Dumfries and Galloway had been using Powersolve. This was used by all services across the council and was the primary source of financial management information.

There had been growing management concerns that the system could not meet many of the current and future challenges facing the authority and that the ageing architecture could not enable necessary improvements to management information. Despite many ongoing developments, the Powersolve system was not considered to be efficient or user-friendly by the majority of users.

Lindsay Wilson, Business Performance and Development Manager at Dumfries and Galloway Council, said, "The increased focus towards improved financial control within the council, and the requirement for detailed financial information to support budget processes, highlighted the weaknesses with our previous system.

### **Modern Enterprise-Wide Software**

It was recognised that replacing this with a more modern, enterprise-wide software system would offer the potential for both real and indirect efficiency savings. We decided to look for a replacement system that would allow us to review and enhance existing business processes so that finance officers, for example, could devote precious time to more value-adding activities."

He continues, "We selected Capita IB Solutions because of the capabilities of the software and their experience of delivering this type of project. In addition, they demonstrated that they could provide the council with ongoing training, which was deemed critical to the success of such a large implementation."

Integra Open Enterprise is a financial and e-business software suite designed to suit organisations across all sectors. The modular design provides an unprecedented degree of scalability, and delivers the most efficient and effective financial and procurement processes.

## Greater Flexibility

Integra uses automated workflows to increase agility, control and speed, reducing paper flow and data entry to an absolute minimum.

"We wanted to provide our budget managers with an improved and more effective budgeting system. In the past, they have used a number of different systems and file formats and we wanted to provide standardised templates so that everyone could use the same style of reports, making it easier for the accountants to handle them.

Integra provides everything they need to set, manage and control budgets within a consistent interface and a fully integrated system. This generates significant time savings in terms of developing budgets and also when creating reports across departments." adds Lindsay.

The new system also allows greater flexibility when budget changes are required. "Previously, all budgets had to be downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet, and if the relevant budget holder or accountant was unavailable, there was no access to it. With Integra, the budgets are all held within one system, so there is no duplication of work and it provides much better accuracy and control," Lindsay says.

## Integra Integration Gateway

As part of the Integra suite, the Integra Integration Gateway provides Dumfries and Galloway Council with the capability to link seamlessly with the authority's other core systems.

"This is important," comments Lindsay, "because other council systems have their own financial rules. For example, the social work system produces invoices and payments to various organisations, such as care homes, and they require transactions to be processed in third-party systems.

Now they can send them to Integra, and the system integrates seamlessly with other systems and completes the task quickly, accurately and efficiently. Similarly, integration with payroll systems means that up-to-date budget costs associated with staff can be used within other systems seamlessly, which is saving lots of time and man power."

## Implementation and Training

Capita IB Solutions supplied a professional and experienced project and support team, which ensured a successful implementation.

"This support was a key influencer in our decision to select Capita IB Solutions," says Lindsay, adding, "The current FMIS system has 741 users, but has increased to 1,300 with primary schools requiring access for the first time. All of them needed to be trained on how to use the Integra software, so we needed a company that could deliver a complete solution as well as a very specific focus on training."

For the project, Capita IB Solutions proposed a two-tier approach to the training. Training was delivered to the authority's core project team in a mixture of formal "classroom" training and one-to-one "on the job" training.

This gave the main users the ability to maintain a level of in-house expertise around their particular job function. There was also a programme of computer-based training for the end-user community, tailored to meet the specific needs of the authority.

## Key Benefits

"The project teams from both the council and Capita IB Solutions worked really hard to get us live on schedule," says Lindsay, adding, "The system is up and running and we are already seeing some key benefits, particularly around reliability, speed and accuracy.

We were also impressed with the training service and this has given us a real opportunity to hit the ground running with Integra. The users are finding Integra very intuitive and it has been very well received."

He concludes, "We have some high aspirations for making our operational processes more efficient so that we can generate a broad range of cost savings across the council. The key benefit so far has been the support we receive from Capita IB Solutions. Their consultants are very knowledgeable and highly responsive, and I would have no hesitation in recommending the company and its products to other councils."