

CUSTOMER CASE:



Argyll and Bute Council is a Scottish unitary authority employing 5,500 staff. It provides services for Education, Social Work, Roads & Amenity Services, Planning, Transport & Infrastructure and Corporate Services. Today it faces stringent performance targets relating to local and national initiatives designed to promote continuous improvement of services to the community.

Managing performance and improving services with QPR ScoreCard in UK local government



“For Argyll and Bute Council, this whole process was about ensuring we could manage performance to improve services. Monitoring performance wasn’t enough, we needed to understand outcomes, share good practices and put into place a culture and process that would allow us to support service improvement. Making better use of the information available to us was critical to this process” says Lyndis Davidson, Performance Management Officer, Argyll and Bute Council.

The challenge

While the need to change had already been recognized, a critical Best Value Audit Report provided a powerful stimulus to embed a performance management culture throughout the Council.

The Council realized that it needed to improve the recording and sharing of performance information in order to move towards pro-actively managing performance to support service improvement. Previously, reports were produced in paper format and distributed every quarter.

Information was out of date, difficult to review and as a result management and Members could not discern underlying problems nor understand how best to rectify them.

To help overcome these problems, Argyll & Bute Council decided to

procure a web-based performance management system. After surveying the market and completing the tender process, they selected QPR ScoreCard from CACI.

The solution

Known internally as Pyramid, the system has been developed as part of a corporate performance management framework, which links goals through a ‘Golden Thread’ to detailed work plans and personal objectives.

Budget compliance, Statutory Performance Indicators, external review action plans and early-implementation service performance

targets are now monitored through Pyramid, with correlations between departmental targets and the Corporate Plan more easily identified and acted upon. In the future Pyramid will also be used to manage targets set out against the Single Outcome Agreement.

The benefits

Performance information is now more visible, there has been a corresponding increase in data ownership and there have been dramatic improvements to information sharing and performance reporting.

As a result, local achievements are now starting to support national initiatives far more effectively.

Members, including the Leader of the Council can interrogate the system and ask challenging questions of Services, whilst Heads of Service can use the system live in meetings to prompt discussion and investigate underlying details there and then.

The Strategic Management Team can also use output from the system in their monthly performance meetings.

Now we can really tell how close we are to becoming the Leading Rural Area!"

Lyndis continues:

"Our QPR ScoreCard based system is so flexible we are using it in ways we never anticipated.

We've had the system for over a year and still feel we've only scratched the surface. It is great to know that the system has the capacity to grow with us as our performance management framework evolves."

CACI implemented the system over a period of 3 months, setting up the initial data, carrying out training and consultancy. Argyll and Bute staff was then sufficiently skilled to roll out the system with very little additional input from CACI.

"The system is great fun to work with as you can present performance information in a more creative way.

We can still produce lists of PI's and graphs, but can now also create exciting diagrams and views, which bring performance management alive.

We can look at our Corporate Plan, previously just a text document, and see our performance against each topic overlaid on it.