

# CLIENT CASE STUDY

## Creating a performance-oriented culture in a large, Scottish unitary authority



Renfrewshire Council selected Covalent as its solution in May 2005 to bring together all the different arrangements and systems it had into one streamlined performance management framework.

The key areas the council wanted to improve were to reduce data being produced in different formats; to improve the accuracy of data and information to make it simpler for staff to record and report performance information. Renfrewshire was also looking for a system that would easily align PIs with its organisational objectives and to report results clearly and concisely.

Equally the new system needed to enhance performance monitoring by senior managers and elected members, so it needed to be simple and clear to use for all levels within the Council.

*'There were many reasons for choosing Covalent, including its ease of use and the fact that it is easy to install. We purchased a site licence which meant we had complete freedom to spread Covalent and implement it throughout the organisation. Everyone who uses it is impressed by its visual appeal, and the fact that many people can be involved in populating the system has brought together a community of 'performance experts' across the Council.'*

**Tony McEwan, Policy Officer, Renfrewshire Council**

### The implementation

Instead of Covalent undertaking the data load process, Renfrewshire took the slightly unusual approach of getting the users to load their own historic performance data, and did so successfully in a limited period of time. Though initially resource-intensive, Renfrewshire found this was an excellent way for users to get a 'feel' for the system and to overcome any initial training or technical issues at an early stage.

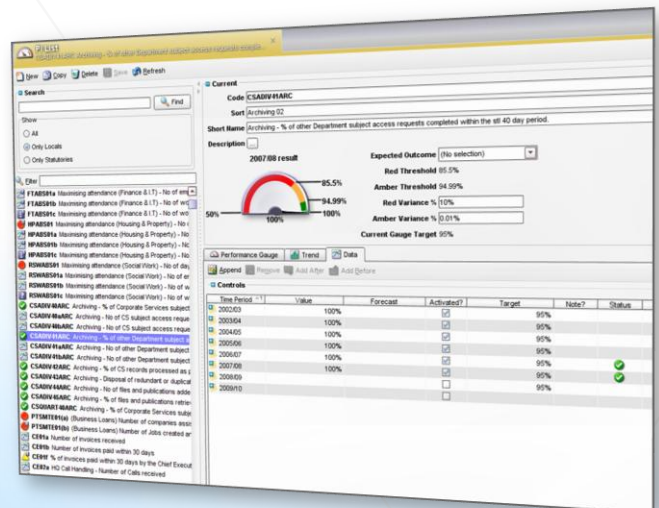
The initial training was undertaken by Covalent, with Tony acting as the first point of contact for on-going guidance and advice.

### The business benefits

Renfrewshire report a far stronger buy-in to the Performance Management culture since the implementation of Covalent, particularly among data collectors and senior officers. The ability to align and report on its PIs with actions and has proved the most powerful and valuable feature of the system.

The ease of use of the system has meant that PI data collection is a lot quicker and the Council can monitor a far greater number of indicators in a more concise way.

Quarterly PI monitoring reports are produced for the Corporate Management Team, allowing them to view the current state of performance and make informed decisions on forward planning and budget allocations.



### Staff feedback

Staff feedback has been positive. Many find the system extremely easy to use and can see how using Covalent will benefit their department now and in the long term. Everyone appreciates that on the rare occasion where the system does not meet their requirements that Covalent is willing to tailor the system to ensure that it does.

For example, there were a few issues surrounding how PIs are propagated - especially surrounding the collection intervals of performance indicators. Covalent addressed this issue with Version 6.0; every possible permutation of the way data can now be collected, and caters for multiple collection frequencies and how it should be propagated (i.e. does it add up, average, make into a percentage or is it simply to remain set as entered?).

The Council has selected a member of staff from each department (who is responsible for performance management) to use Covalent and encourage roll-out within their departments. They are supported in this task by the system administrator in the Chief Executive's department.

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Absence Management - Corporate Services  
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Dept	Short Name	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Environment	Environment - CS	3.80	4.10	3.80	3.80	3.40	3.20	3.80	3.70									
Environment	Environment - (Socio)	4.10	4.40	3.80	3.40	3.40	3.20	3.80	3.70									
Environment	Environment - Legal	4.80	4.40	3.20	3.60	3.40	3.20	3.80	3.70									
Environment	Environment - (Socio)	2.80	2.10	2.20	2.14	2.40	3.20	3.80	3.70									
Environment	Environment - (Socio)	0.5	3.10	0.0	0.0	3.20	3.80	3.70										
Environment	Environment - (Socio)	1.10	13.00	22.70	45	3.40	3.20	3.80	3.70									

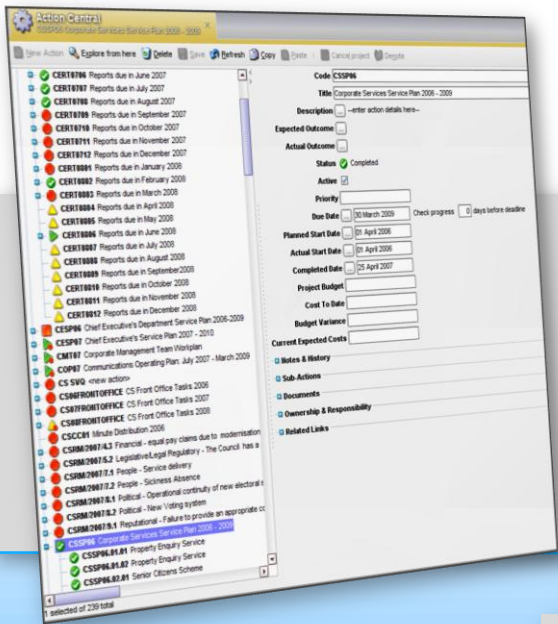
'At a corporate level, we are now reporting a greater range of indicators and these are being effectively managed. Also, there are clear benefits from having a web-hosted system: implementation is easier and much more efficient.'

**Tony McEwan, Renfrewshire Council**

## Covalent formulas

Renfrewshire are making extensive use of the propagation and formulae functions within Covalent. Many of its Performance Indicators are 'common' to each department or are % indicators, meaning that if raw data is entered by individuals, it is then possible to use Covalent's formula function to calculate the actual PI figure.

Data collection officers in each department consequently need only put the raw data against the PIs and a pre-defined formula calculates the % result. Or in the case of common PIs used by each department, the figures are entered by each department and a formula totals the overall council figure. Tony comments 'The system is very powerful in this respect.'



'Improvement activities identified to meet the outcomes in our Corporate Plan, are shown as future plans under the relevant Corporate Priority section of this plan.'

'All improvement actions will be captured on Covalent, the Council's performance management system and will be monitored monthly at the Management Team Performance Management meetings and at monthly informal Cabinet meetings.'

**Restormel's Best Value Plan 2006/07, p15**

'Our plan is to have as many people as possible in the Council using Covalent on a day-to-day basis to manage projects, initiatives and performance.'

'We are keen to foster an ongoing partnership with Covalent to ensure that our Council continues to play a significant role in how the system develops in Scotland. All Council initiatives, plans and actions will be monitored through Covalent, with each PI or action being assigned to someone or group of staff.'

**Tony McEwan, Renfrewshire Council**