



At a Glance:

Sector

- Local Government

Challenge

- Develop and maintain a performance management framework, with a supporting software system, across all partnership members.
- Introduce a performance management culture.
- Meet the reporting requirements of the Government Office.

Solution

- Implementation of a hosted web-enabled solution, based on Ten Web Server;
- Providing each partnership member with access to enter their own information.
- Automatic presentation of analysis results for decision making and reporting.



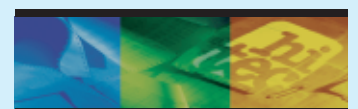
Performance Management helps Wolverhampton establish new Local Area Agreement

The introduction of effective and appropriate performance management systems is helping participants in the Wolverhampton Local Area Agreement to establish organisational structures and assess the success of the initiative. A powerful but easy-to-use solution that manages data collection from partnership members and then analyses and presents aggregated strategic performance indicator information has been created using Ten.

“We needed to develop and maintain a performance management framework that could be applied efficiently across all partnership members,” says Paul Booth, Director of the Wolverhampton Partnership. “Our clear vision, realistic timescales and positive response to the preliminary performance model contributed to the success of the initial implementation.”

“There is still much to do, but we have laid the foundations upon which to build an effective performance management framework. The Council is pleased to support the Partnership and the continuing development of the system will add value to the ongoing work to deliver improved services” says Richard Carr, Chief Executive, Wolverhampton City Council.

Wolverhampton Local Area Agreement (LAA) was established in April 2005 to build on the success of the existing Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). It aims to create more opportunities for the area’s principal service providers to work together more closely to reduce inequalities and deliver greater value for money to the “geographical local communities and communities of interest” in a population of 240,000. It comprises organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors throughout Wolverhampton and provides the overall framework for them to work together. Participants include the major local service delivery agencies such as the City Council, the Primary Care Trust, the Police, Jobcentre Plus, the College and the University. There is input from the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses as well as Voluntary and Community sector organisations such



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as the Community Empowerment Network, Wolverhampton Network Consortium and Voluntary Sector Council. Within the initiative around 20 different funding streams totalling £9.5m were consolidated into three blocks structured around Children and Young People, Safer Stronger Communities and Healthier Communities and Older People.

The LAA undergoes an annual update or refresh. This has seen the development of the Economic Development and Enterprise Block from April 2006. The development through 2005 saw the amount of pooled money change to £10.41m but also partner organisations have aligned £136.2m of mainstream funding to deliver the outcomes.

The LAA supports and helps deliver a local community strategy which sets out long-term priorities for the area. It also aims to improve relations between central and local government and enhance the efficiency and strength of partnership working. Another key objective is to promote the principle of devolved decision-making, to rationalise funding and ensure better use of resources.

“Many partners had their own performance management solutions in place and the challenge facing the LAA was to find a way to join these up, cut bureaucracy and create a single area-based framework which could monitor and report on the achievement of overall outcomes and targets,” says Mark Rowley from the City Council.

A solution was needed to be delivered in a relatively short timescale that would be accessible to all partnership members. Wolverhampton City Council has used Ten since 2003 and is the accountable body within the partnership for ensuring robust reporting procedures. The Partnership took the decision to consider a solution based on the same software. A preliminary model provided proof of concept. Hosting the application on external servers was preferable as this would simplify access for partner members and negate the need for participants to adapt internal systems. Before committing to the implementation the performance management team met their counterparts at Mansfield LSP to discuss their experiences using Ten on an external server.

The decision to adopt Ten was made at the end of 2005 by the Wolverhampton Partnership Board comprising representatives of partnership members which included Mark Rowley, Chief Co-ordinating Officer for the LAA, Paul Booth, Director of the LSP, and Martin Eades, Senior Performance Manager at Wolverhampton City Council. Demonstrations were given to Government Office West Midlands and the

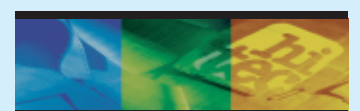
Audit Commission as they will be involved in evaluating the overall effectiveness of the LAA. These timescales allowed the first performance management model to be deployed for an annual review exercise conducted in March 2006. The LAA completed its developmental phase in September 2006 in time for a scheduled six-monthly review and this saw the first tentative steps in using Ten across the Partnership.

The model is hosted on a secure website as part of a managed service which incorporates facilities for backup, restore and technical support. The overall package included customisation and integration tools to help the performance management team develop and deploy the model. Implementation was managed in three phases. The first involved adapting the original LSP template in conjunction with Ten Software to introduce the live model. Next, a training programme was devised and delivered. Finally, the live model was revised to enable half year review data to be entered. The use of the web-based solution means end users can be trained quickly and easily without the need to understand the underlying software. This provides a number of advantages: end users are not intimidated; data entry can be achieved quickly; training sessions can be delivered in about one hour; the system can be accessed from any internet computer.

“The main implementation issue we had to address was ease of access for users which is why we chose a web-based model,” says Martin Eades. “Training focused on navigation, access, passwords and entering information. We had the users in mind at all times and aimed to keep everything as simple as possible.”

The model has been designed so that users from each partnership member can enter their own performance management information using templates accessed by a simple web-enabled interface. This simplifies the data collection process and helps ensure that the correct information is collated. The model then analyses this information to present performance indicators graphically so that all users can see how the overall service or initiative is performing and how their own components are contributing and inter-related. Users throughout the LAA have a clear and unambiguous view of performance related information that can be accessed at any time and which is always up-to-date.

“Although the hosted system involved no changes to internal servers the discipline needed to ensure accurate data entry across a range of partners required careful planning,” says Martin Eades. “Bringing together data from different organisations was difficult but the common framework and effective communications removed the need for multiple data requests which saved time and effort.”



The system is now widely used throughout the partnership by block co-ordinators, theme co-ordinators, target lead officers, project officers, and data officers, and forms a major plank of the performance management framework of the Thematic Partnerships. It forms an important operational tool of the Partnership, enabling and supporting informed decisions on services. One of the major advantages of the system is its ability to track funding allocations and match them to performance, something that was not possible before.

“Ten is a good solution because it allows us to demonstrate strategic performance management and communicate progress,” says Martin Eades. “Strategic management is focused on LAA block outcomes and what we have decided. Users can drill down and filter a specific PI to see how these relate to the bigger picture.”

The next major task will be to input the Wolverhampton Community Plan into Ten to track longer term improvements to the quality of life for local residents. Now that Ten has been engrained in performance management the LAA is looking at introducing facilities to support risk management and more assessments. The software can also be used as an information hub to enable links to other important data sources.

The model was in place well ahead of the LAA's annual performance review in early 2007 when the Partnership and Government including Government Office West Midlands and Department for Communities and Local Government assessed how the Agreement is progressing. Although these assessments are more about checking progress and value for money than verifying statutory compliance, the Partnership has been able to use the system to demonstrate its reporting procedures are effective and appropriate.

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