

Enhancing Performance at Surrey County Council

New performance management framework drives performance culture at Surrey County Council

The Situation

In an increasingly demanding public sector, local authorities are looking to use performance management to help deliver better services to the citizen. Surrey County Council has to balance local and governmental needs, improving customer focus while at the same time delivering value for money. The Council also needs to work better with partners, improve the flow of information, as well as reinvigorate its appetite for continuous improvement.

Previous performance regimes had become bureaucratic with little employee buy-in. The Council was in danger of losing out in the government-defined Comprehensive Performance Assessment ratings. In addition, a simpler way of achieving performance improvement was required to support a structural reorganisation in Council Services that aimed to deliver savings of £34 million in the current year and ongoing.

The Solution

Surrey County Council needed to work with an organisation that both understood the concept of performance management and could deliver within the financial and cultural constraints of local government. With a proven track record in public sector delivery, Capgemini was contracted to design and implement a new performance management framework for the Council.

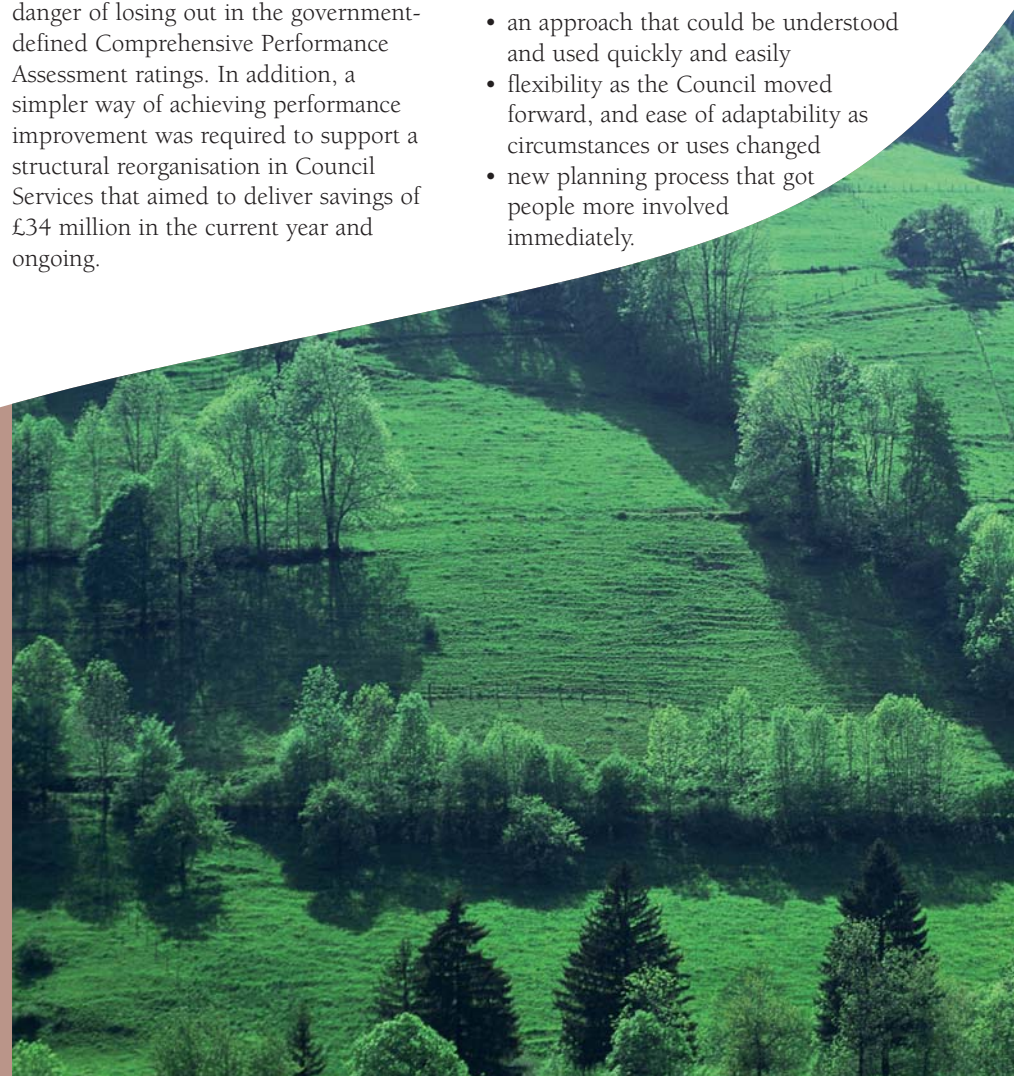
The Result

The framework rested on three themes for improvement—simple, flexible and engaging. It facilitated:

- an approach that could be understood and used quickly and easily
- flexibility as the Council moved forward, and ease of adaptability as circumstances or uses changed
- new planning process that got people more involved immediately.

“Working with Capgemini to turn our performance management around from start to finish in less than three months was a genuinely energising experience.”

Liz Lawrence,
Head of Planning and Service Development,
Surrey County Council



The approach recognises that frameworks, processes and systems are meaningless unless people are involved and motivated to act. The framework set the Council on a programme of continuous improvement in the way it manages performance.

How Surrey County Council and Capgemini Worked Together

Working closely with members of the Council's Planning and Performance team, Capgemini's consultants quickly grasped the strategic need to make the step change from monitoring to managing performance. The team identified a number of challenges that a new performance management framework had to overcome. These included:

- lack of consistency in the way in which performance was managed across the Council
- complex reporting processes
- failure to use information to drive improvement
- absence of a "golden thread" linking Council priorities informed by national and local priorities through to an individual's performance objectives.

Performance management had to undergo a sea change at the Council, and quickly. Timing was critical as the framework had to drive the planning timetable. Collaboration with Capgemini ensured that Surrey County Council reached its target deadline. The core themes of the framework remained watchwords during the project and a review of the current systems support for performance management was completed with recommendations on how to move forward with improvements

The earlier system at the Council was underutilised—it was too complex. By keeping things simple and ensuring that everyone understood not just how the new approach worked, but also why it was needed, Capgemini facilitated comprehensive buy-in for the Council.

Surrey County Council's new culture of performance management is central to a drive towards sustainable service improvements—a critical business benefit. User adoption of the new framework has been advanced by the clear communication of its benefits and by the suitable targeting of performance improvements.

The Council attributes rapid delivery of business value to the approach. Importantly, organisational priorities are now defined and the right set of

performance measures have been put in place to link with goals and targets throughout the organisation. Reporting makes sure that relevant information to support an understanding of performance is available and used in making decisions.

The performance framework is now part of Surrey County Council's culture. *"People understand it, they bought it, they use it"* says Liz Lawrence, *"Performance management really now underpins how this Council operates"*.



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In collaboration with



Surrey County Council provides citizens with a wide range of public services. Its priorities for the year are set out in a performance plan called, "Making Surrey a Better Place". For more information, please visit: www.surreycc.gov.uk.