

# Boosting Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Monthly Forecasting Process

## Capgemini introduces an automated solution embedded within SAP's Business Intelligence platform to replace a manual offline process

### The Situation

Against the backdrop of increasing pressures on resources, Dorset County Council like many of its peer group was seeking ways to get 'more from less'. Various planning processes were considered - the monthly forecast outturn process provided the greatest benefits potential given it utilised an offline spreadsheet model which suffered from a number of limitations including: inconsistent usage across the organisation; extensive manual effort to collate, generate and publish forecast data; lack of integration to core back office systems; limited reporting and analysis capability and scalability restrictions.

### The Solution

Working in collaboration with Dorset County Council, Capgemini designed and developed a new forecast outturn solution utilising SAP's Integrated

Planning functionality, embedded within SAP Business Warehouse.

The solution comprises a number of planning input schedules supporting financial, headcount and driver based inputs. Planning functions allow the Finance community to dynamically model and simulate forecast values using features such as distribution profiles and historic data patterns. The ability to manually adjust simulated values was provided giving the forecaster the ultimate flexibility.

Integration with the core SAP back office solution via SAP BW, enabled master and transaction data to be embedded into the planning input schedules automatically with no manual

“The solution standardises the forecasting process across the council, enabling us to restructure our finance function and make tangible headcount savings.”

Jim McManus  
Group Finance Manager  
Dorset County Council



intervention. With forecast data being generated in the common reporting environment i.e. SAP BW, actual versus forecast reporting was enabled in real-time.

### The Result

As Jim McManus, Group Finance Manager of Dorset County Council reports: *“The solution combines the master data and financial information seamlessly and means we no longer have to keep updating offline templates for completeness.”*

The SAP powered forecasting solution was first used in the month following the go live of the core SAP back office and reporting system – this was as scheduled to be in line with the forecast data update timetable.

The development of the solution gave Dorset County Council a substantial ‘avoided cost’ benefit as they did not have to convert their previous spreadsheet model to integrate to SAP rather than legacy.

In addition to the avoided cost, the solution has delivered a number of cashable and non cashable benefits including:

- Headcount savings – the increased level of automation has freed up resources to be deployed elsewhere
- Standardisation – a common forecast outturn process is now deployed across the Council
- Facilitating better decision making – the solution facilitates a shift in focus from data collation to information analysis and exploitation
- Commonality – common solution for management reporting and forecasting
- Integration – automated integration into the forecasting process of core back office SAP Finance, HR, Payroll and Procurement transaction and master data
- Driver based forecasting – enabled through the delivery of a driver as opposed to output based template
- Improved Cash Management – forecast process is based on monthly

forecast values enabling better cash flow management opportunities.

The business outcomes delivered have been considerable and in addition the solution provided a rapid and quantifiable payback on Dorset County Council’s investment.

Quoting one of Dorset County Council’s Finance community: *“Now our forecast information is generated in one place, on a consistent basis, so all our managers have a clear and transparent view of the financial position across the organisation.”*

### How Dorset County Council and Capgemini Worked Together

Key to success was the ‘One Team’ approach in which staff from the Council and Capgemini worked together seamlessly to establish and meet goals.

Adopting a collaborative approach,

the Finance community was fully involved in all phases of the solution’s development.

Dorset County Council’s ‘Fit for the Future’ programme aims to transform their core business processes, providing better value for money and an improved focus for its citizens. A major element in this programme was the deployment of the SAP-enabled back office and reporting solution, which Capgemini was selected to deliver, promised and has delivered rapid payback.

A phased approach was adopted for solution delivery. A number of checkpoint gateways were established with progression criteria defined – these regular checkpoints ensured that the focus remained on benefits delivery.

Capgemini deployed its distributed delivery framework blending local and offshore resources to deliver the solution successfully.



### About Capgemini and the Collaborative Business Experience™

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In collaboration with



Dorset County Council works to improve the quality of life for people in Dorset. In order to meet its objectives and deliver services efficiently and effectively, Dorset County Council is organised into four

directorates. With a total annual budget in excess of £625 million, it is responsible for providing or commissioning a range of services.

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