

# Peterborough City Council Saves £150,000 a Year with QlikView for Budget Reports

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*Steven Pilsworth, Executive Director of Strategic Resources, Peterborough City Council*

## Background

Most local authorities in the UK are having to consider budget reductions to meet stringent demands from central government for efficiency savings and cuts in non-statutory public services. Peterborough City Council is no exception. Its core funding from central government of £110 million in the 2010-2011 financial year was reduced by £12 million in 2011-2012 which will rise to a cut of £24 million in 2014-2015.

Traditionally, Peterborough has relied on a multitude of reports generated from Oracle and other financial reporting software to produce Budget Comparison Reports (BCR) and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) information. This often involved extensive manual manipulation of data in Excel to derive required outputs. Managers were also frustrated by the inability to report and analyse data in a single format and the severe delays in accessing information.

## Deployment and Impact

QlikView quickly remedied these weaknesses. Its ease of use, speed of deployment, and ability to analyse data from many sources provided greater visibility across financial and performance data. The introduction of QlikView has vastly improved budget holders' ability to access the information they need to manage their budgets and to carry out accurate forecasting. The time savings achieved mean that finance staff can focus on improving quality of information to achieve more accurate budgetary out-turns and reduce unanticipated movements in forecasts.

Budgetary information is now accessible

during the month instead of at month end only. Full prior month information is now available by mid-day on the first working day of the next month. Instead of using the previous manual processes to split and circulate reports to individual budget holders they are now created automatically and sent out via Microsoft Outlook. The reporting of prior month budgetary information has improved by two working days with annual productive time savings of £150,000.

Budget holders find it easier to identify efficiency savings. They have greatly improved information to manage their budgets which is especially important at a time of restraint in expenditure throughout the council to keep local taxation low. Data entry functionality has been introduced so that revised forecast out-turns and comments could be input to QlikView and then carried forward month by month ensuring that budget holders can work by exception instead of redoing forecasts each month. Procurement reports now provide supporting evidence to help identify procurement efficiency savings and KPI information. Finance staff are directed by a traffic light system to any purchase orders that need to be closed or investigated.

## The Future

By acquiring QlikView Peterborough City Council is now much better placed to respond to the policy decisions by elected members following the government cuts in local authority central grants and the obligation to free council tax in 2011-12. The software also makes it easier and less time consuming to track over/under-spends in successive financial years.

## Solution Overview

### Peterborough City Council

Peterborough City Council is a unitary local government authority in the United Kingdom delivering high quality public services to around 175,000 people. The authority employs 6,500 staff and has annual budget of around £217 million (2009-2010). It is making major efficiency savings to meet stringent government targets for reduced spending in the public sector.

### Industry

Public Sector - Local Government

### Function

Executive, Finance

### Geography

East Midlands, UK

### Challenges

- Multitude of reports generated from diverse systems to produce budget information
- Delays in accessing budgetary control information
- Data only available at month end resulting in difficulties in forecasting variations
- Inability to easily extract procurement data to identify potential efficiency savings

### Solution

The council deployed QlikView in the last quarter of the 2009-2010 financial year enabling the assembling of numerous data sources in one business intelligence application. This allowed the production of faster and more accurate finance reports for users.

### Benefits

- Annual productive time savings of £150,000
- Budgetary information available during the month instead of at month end only
- Reporting of prior month budgetary information improves by two working days
- Budget holders now work by exception rather than re-doing forecasts every month
- Flexible data views ensure better oversight of procurement key performance indicators

### Data Source Systems

Database: Oracle, Excel

### About QlikView

The QlikView Business Discovery solution bridges the gap between traditional BI solutions and inadequate spreadsheet applications. Its in-memory associative search technology created the self-service BI category, allowing users to explore information freely rather than being confined to a predefined path of questions. Appropriate from small to the largest global enterprise, QlikView's self-service analysis can be deployed with data governance in days or weeks. The QlikView Business Discovery platform's app-driven model works with existing BI solutions, offering an immersive mobile and social, collaborative experience.