

## Aberdeen City Council elects to use Visual|QSM

Home to a population of 212,125, Aberdeen is a thriving, cosmopolitan port in the Northeast of Scotland and is a backbone of the Scottish economy with its North Sea oil industry base. Vested in 1996, Aberdeen City Council is responsible for all local government services in Aberdeen and is the city's largest employer.

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The authority comprises 43 elected councillors who meet regularly, in committees and collectively, to make decisions about local services and various aspects of city life. The Council employs a workforce of 11,000 to implement these decisions and provide services to its citizens.

The Council works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organizations in the city and beyond, to plan and deliver quality services that meet local needs. It is currently embarked on an ambitious program of change, which includes reorganization of its internal structures and strengthening its relationships with other service providers.

### MANY DIFFERENT IT SYSTEMS POISE A BIG SUPPORT CHALLENGE

When Aberdeen City Council was vested as a unitary authority in 1996, two separate departments were amalgamated to form a central IT Service. Following success in addressing Year 2000 issues, a central Finance & ICT (Information Communication Technology) Service was created. The Council disposed of its mainframes and now bases its operations on UNIX and NT systems – around 25 primary business systems with some 350 minor systems. It is currently a “fat client” organization with “thin client” technologies under active consideration. There are around 3,500 networked PCs running on Novell Netware mostly using MS Office. There is also a growing number of laptop, tablets and PDA users thanks to the increasing mobility of the staff.

### ITIL APPROACH OF VISUAL|QSM KEY ANSWER

With so much ICT usage, it has always been a priority to provide optimum Help Desk support. The Finance and IT Service inherited Quetzal from pre-reorganization days and continued to run this help desk software from Datawatch until 2003, when it became necessary to look at other options. The rationale for this included a need to support Windows XP and to accommodate an IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) approach. Nigel Landy, Client Services Business Manager at Aberdeen City Council and his team, created a high level specification and sent it out to most of the main players in the Help Desk market, including Datawatch. After reviewing the findings it was decided to continue using a Datawatch solution.

**Aberdeen**  
212,125 people  
60 languages  
14 faiths  
1 city

aberdeen *futures*  
ALL TOGETHER BETTER

All different All equal  
All together We are Aberdeen

Logos for Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, and other local organizations.



**“Numbers of calls to the help desk have nearly tripled in three years, but due to good technology, motivated staff and sound management, staff numbers manning the Desk have remained stable,” continues Nigel Landy, Client Services Business Manager at Aberdeen City Council. “Visual QSM has allowed Aberdeen City Council to support an ITIL approach with minimal administration overheads.”**

“Moving to Visual|QSM was considered the best option for the Council,” explains Nigel. “Not only was it among the most cost effective routes, but we were familiar with its ‘look and feel’, we had established a good working relationship with the company and we were confident in their technologies. We therefore went ahead with the implementation of Visual|QSM Portal and the project was managed by a knowledgeable Datawatch consultant. The mechanics and transfer of data went very well.”

The Visual|QSM solution links every service area. It operates in an hierarchical call structure. This promotes improved call diagnosis and improves back-end reporting, enabling the user to understand the root cause of problems and assisting in maintaining a proactive service desk.

#### **DRAMATIC INCREASE IN SERVICE REQUESTS NO PROBLEM**

“Numbers of calls to the help desk have nearly tripled in three years, but due to good technology, motivated staff and sound management, staff numbers manning the Desk have remained stable,” continues Nigel. “Visual|QSM has allowed Aberdeen City Council to support an ITIL approach with minimal administration overheads. To ensure that staff service is maintained, user satisfaction surveys are recorded monthly. With the poorest possible result being 1 and the highest being 4, the Help Desk facility at the Council is averaging at 3.6. I now have no down time for re-indexing, as this is not necessary in Visual|QSM which allows for a constant service. My operators and users are happy with the solution and our scheme, which makes for a whole lot better ICT service.”

The Council intends to implement a full CRM service in the longer term. A likely early pilot service could be the handling of enquires by the elected members on constituent issues, which usually fall into one of eight categories including housing, social work and planning. Nigel Landy is hoping to utilize a second Visual|QSM system with the inclusion of Workflow, to offer the elected members a centralized view of active progression against defined timeframes. This would also allow a centralized view and measurement performance with clear identification of any under-performing groups.

“We have confidence in Datawatch,” concludes Nigel, “and are very happy with the functionality and stability of Visual|QSM, so it would be a natural progression for us to utilize it on this project. It offers us a net-enabled service management solution which will provide location independent accessibility over a much extended business day.”



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