



Case Study: Renfrewshire Council achieves BSI Benchmark

Background

The Commercial Operations Group, a division within Renfrewshire council's Department of Environmental Services, is the first local authority function in the UK to gain the British Standards Institution's BSI Benchmark. The division is also the first to receive the Gold level award for continually improving its management system. Shona MacDougall, Head of Commercial Operations commented: *"We are absolutely delighted to be the first local authority to receive this award, it is recognition of the hard work and commitment that our management team give to delivering quality services to the public of Renfrewshire."*

Providing a good service is important to any business and Renfrewshire council is no different. The council aims to achieve 'Best Value' within its service delivery as well as providing high quality services to meet local needs.

Based in the west central region of Scotland, the council employs 9,500 staff and is responsible for the provision of all local authority services for 178,000 people throughout Renfrewshire. The Commercial Operations Group is responsible for the strategic, operational planning and delivery of:

- Refuse collection
- Street cleansing
- Grounds maintenance
- Waste disposal
- Public conveniences
- Catering
- Building cleaning
- Window cleaning
- Janitorial
- Community education supervisors
- School crossing patrollers

Challenge / Issues

The Commercial Operations Group was faced with a number of challenges for improving service delivery and mounting initiatives. Shona MacDougall, Head of the Commercial Operations Group commented: *"By undertaking BSI's Benchmark, we could pull together key strategic projects along with various other internal and external programmes for improvement i.e., ISO 9001:2000 and Charter Mark, under our business planning process. The outcome of which would hopefully result in a focused, evidence-driven exercise that would deliver 'Best Value'."*

Another issue was to remove some of the subjectivity from the improvement programme to allow the department to focus on the key business processes that affect service delivery.

Solution

In January 2005 a decision was taken by the Head of Commercial Operations Group to evaluate the options open to the department, in order to help them focus on continually improving their service and delivering “Best Value”. BSI’s Benchmark product was chosen because it allowed the management team to self evaluate the organisation’s ability to meet the eight management principles of ISO 9000:2000, which are core to running an organisation, regardless of whether they are registered to ISO 9001.

BSI’s Benchmark measures the maturity of the organisation’s approach to its service delivery and its progress over time. The process involves top management attending a facilitated workshop, to score how effective their management system is at delivering its service to customers.

After top management had scored their system, BSI then took their view of the business and searched for evidence of processes that could deliver the service. Upon capturing this evidence, a comparison between the management’s perception and the reality of the processes in place to deliver was evaluated.

The findings were presented to the management in a comprehensive report detailing the strengths and weaknesses in the system, along with suggestions for improvement. The report focuses on areas where the department can improve service delivery and ‘Best Value.’

Benchmark has enabled the department to identify the gaps in their system. Its implementation also demonstrates to the council’s employees and stakeholders that they have an ongoing commitment to continually improving their service to customers. The independent assessment, by BSI, has enabled the council to benchmark their efforts against other local authorities and the private sector, and set a standard for their suppliers to aspire to.

Tom Scholes, Chief Executive commented: *“In partnership with BSI we have been able to improve our focus on service delivery within the Environmental Service Commercial Operations Group through the BSI Benchmark exercise and the process mapping training in a manner that is beneficial to Renfrewshire.”*

Future

Through working in partnership with BSI, Renfrewshire council have been able to maintain a consistent approach with its other management systems and allowed the department to pull together “best value”, Charter Mark and other initiatives into a coherent, measurable approach.

The expertise and professionalism of BSI’s Client Manager has provided the council with a consistent and compliant service, as well as raising awareness and education throughout.

Bernard J Forteach, Director of Environmental Services commented that: *“BSI’s Benchmark has allowed us to focus on the development of the management system, for the planning and performance improvements in the delivery of essential services to the public of Renfrewshire.”*

Renfrewshire council look forward to receiving even more benefits in the future as a result of implementing BSI Benchmark.