



Case Study: Slough Borough Council

Potential changes to Slough Borough Council's housing service focused the attention of the Legal Services section on the need for improved management reporting and time recording.

Slough, a Unitary Authority since 1998, is one of only 12 councils to get government approval to consult with tenants on an **Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)** for its 7800 homes. If approved this will devolve management responsibility from the council to a separate body able to access government grants, but Slough's Legal Services Department will have to compete to supply services to the ALMO.

Iken's Management and time recording functions support the department's 22 staff in the planning, monitoring and delivery of a full range of legal services to the Authority, and will enable accurate bidding for any future work within the ALMO.

Legal Services currently has three main areas of work:

- **Conveyancing** – incorporating Right to Buy, Traffic and Highways
- **Litigation** – which also covers Education and Social Services
- **Contracts** – which includes responsibility for Accessing Government Grants, as well as Employment and Outsourcing

The Legal Services Department works closely with the Council's Valuation Service in the management of the Authority's substantial portfolio of commercial properties. This includes the Slough Trading Estate, which houses 400 businesses and 20,000 jobs and is Europe's largest trading estate in single ownership.

"We visited Spelthorne Borough Council, an existing Iken user, who clearly had a good working relationship with Iken Business Ltd. Despite significant staff turnover in their department the system was working well, indicating that this was a user-friendly solution."

Jill Bell, Principal Solicitor

In Spring 2003 the Department began looking for a new time recording and case management system that could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the legal and valuation services. Staff were reluctant to use



the existing system as the management reports were cumbersome, inflexible and often unavailable due to system problems.

Key requirements were for a user-friendly system that would support operational activities, deliver accurate reports and enable future planning. Visits to the reference sites of three short-listed suppliers focused Slough's attention on training and knowledge transfer.

Slough's evaluation panel was impressed with Iken's understanding of their business needs and commitment to service quality.

"Iken talked our language and were very approachable. They knew our business and how to support us in our jobs. Iken's solution offered the functionality that we required, and their concern and commitment to the quality of the department's service was a big winner."

Jill Bell, Principal Solicitor,

The contract was signed at the beginning of December 2003 whilst implementation and training began in January 2004. Training was carried out in two-day batches over a period of several weeks, and by the end of February all users were able to successfully record their time and undertake case management work, no matter what level their IT skills were previously.

Slough's Legal Team required a two-tier programme whereby all users were trained in the day-to-day operation of Iken and then a second level of training was organised for designated 'super users'. These 'super users' would then be able to provide their department with in-house assistance and would also be capable of training any new team members.

"Our tailor-made training sessions give new users a real confidence in utilising Iken. We realise the importance of incorporating our clients' actual workloads into each session in order for users to see how Iken works within their own business processes. These specialist sessions are often situated at the user's own workstation."

Reina Capus, Implementation and Training Consultant, Iken Business Ltd

The Legal Team recognise the improvements that Iken has already brought at an operational level and are now moving to extend the use of the system to workflows and eventually to support an application for Lexcel accreditation.

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