

# themonitor



Guest editor speaks Annual User Conference 2005 Your priorities plus more

## BRAND NEW MONITOR

This issue of *the monitor* has a brand new design. Following Capita's corporate identity refresh, the magazine has had a lick of paint and now sports a fresh, new look for our readers.

# 4

Summer 2005

# Welcome... to the summer edition of *the monitor*, Capita Software Services' newsletter for our partners and customers across the local government and social housing market place.

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In this issue we have introduced a new and exciting guest editor section. I am delighted to welcome Tim Dawes, Managing Director of Nineveh Consulting Ltd, who steps into the role for the first time.

Tim Dawes has 30 years of experience in the IT industry, mostly within the public sector. His career includes holding senior ICT and management team posts in a number of English and Scottish local authorities. In 1997 Tim founded Nineveh Consulting and acts as the company's Director of Consulting. An authority on matters relating to ICT procurement in the public sector, his particular areas of expertise include electronic government strategy development, partnership sourcing and ICT service review. Tim is a member of SOCITM's Information Age Government Group and a regular presenter and writer on electronic government topics.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *the monitor*. If you would like any further information on our products and services, or have any feedback, please contact our marketing team at [cssenquiries@capita.co.uk](mailto:cssenquiries@capita.co.uk).

Best wishes,  
Kevin Dady  
Managing Director  
Capita Software Services

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## In the picture: guest editor... Tim Dawes

Dear readers

I am pleased to introduce myself as the guest editor of the summer edition of *the monitor* magazine!

This issue is packed with interesting news and views and focuses on the core subjects of efficiency and change – looking at the ways in which working procedures and technology can be transformed to revolutionise services.

Inside I offer my thoughts on the Government's Efficiency Review and the ways in which organisations can make sure their services are more effective and economical by introducing new, break-through technology.

This year's Capita Software Services Annual User Conference was a resounding success. Turn to pages eight and nine to read up on the event and its highlights. Further on, Andy Dean, Strategic Marketing Manager at Capita Software Services, provides a step-by-step guide on what authorities need to do to meet the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Priority Outcomes for eGovernment provision. Meanwhile, Steve Knights of The Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnerships updates us on the progress the organisation is making in delivering revenues and benefits services to both the districts of Breckland and Forest Heath.

I hope this issue of *the monitor* continues to inform, entertain and engage you, while also offering an insight into the range and scope of what Capita Software Services can deliver to you.

Best wishes,  
Tim Dawes



# news in brief



Above – Shoreham Bank – Adur  
Right – Horsham town centre

## Glasgow says YES!

Capita Software Services has been selected by Glasgow City Council to provide its new Council Tax and Benefits software.

The contract, worth in excess of £1 million, is set to go live in early 2006 and will run over a five-year period.

As one of Scotland's largest public sector organisations, with approximately 38,000 employees, the Council will benefit from a robust platform from which to deliver a faster and more efficient council tax and benefits service to its 600,000 citizens.

In addition to providing a platform for further developments in the service, the new system will ensure that the Council is fully compliant with current and future government legislation.

Councillor Ruth Simpson, the City Treasurer of Glasgow City Council, said: "Capita Software Services was awarded the contract as it demonstrated Best Value as well as expertise and reliability in the delivery of a high quality council tax and benefits solution."

## South east councils ready for revenues...

Capita Software Services has been selected by Adur District Council (DC) and Horsham District Council (DC) to provide our Academy Revenues systems and technical support. In addition, we will provide Adur DC with our Academy Benefits software solution.

Both councils will benefit directly from an improvement in their internal revenue system that in turn will lead to a faster and more efficient service for over 300,000 citizens. Each contract will run over a five-year period with a combined contract value in excess of £500,000.

Capita Software Services will provide the councils with applications for revenues, council tax and non-domestic rates. The new systems will run off a shared platform even though the councils do not neighbour each other geographically.

The open-platform solutions will allow the councils to further expand their services at a future date and it is already planned for Mid Sussex District Council to join the shared platform, as well as enhance employee working practices, such as the option of being able to work from home.



Tony Higgins, Director of Resources of Horsham District Council said: "We wanted to select a modern revenues solution that would support and help deliver Horsham's Best Value commitment. Our partnership working, combined with the technical support of Capita Software Services, has allowed us to deliver our promise. The Academy products will help enhance the working process via a user-friendly interface and therefore improve service delivery to our citizens."

## KETTERING GOES LIVE

Kettering Borough Council (BC) recently went live with its Academy Business Rates solution, replacing Anite's Pericles Business Rates software. The contract was awarded last year after Kettering was impressed with the quality and depth of functionality that the Academy software offered.

Citizens will now benefit from a more efficient service as council employees have consistent access to the Academy systems.

Cathy Hipkin, Head of Income and Debt Management at Kettering BC, said: "We wanted a reliable, functionally-rich business rates solution that would further assist council employees in their work. The roll-out of the system has proved to be a great success and complements our existing Academy Benefits and Academy Council Tax applications. Staff will benefit from its ease-of-use while the citizens will gain from efficiency improvements."

As part of the agreement, Capita Software Services implemented its Academy Windows NDR software, which was seamlessly integrated with the existing council tax and benefit applications originally installed by Capita Software Services in 2000. The process also included a data conversion from the Pericles system.

## Scoring for charity

Capita Software Services' AXIS Internet Payments (IP) solution has enabled Leeds City Council (CC) to raise more than £10,000 for an AIDS-related charity appeal.

Leeds CC launched its Leeds Durban AIDS Appeal on World Aids Day, 1 December 2004.

The campaign aimed to raise money to deliver badly needed care in the form of home-based care kits for people with AIDS in Leeds' South African partner city, Durban. Some 60% of donations were made online using the AXIS IP solution through a specially designed appeal website built in just five days.

Earlier this year, former Leeds United and South Africa captain, Lucas Radebe, along with representatives from the city of Leeds, travelled to Durban to deliver 1,000 care kits bought with the £10,000 raised by the appeal.

Adrian Strain, Head of International Relations at Leeds CC, said:

"The online donation site offered a convenient and easy means for people to donate to the Leeds Durban AIDS Appeal. We had never used an online payment system before, but Capita took us through the process step-by-step and tailored the site to our specific needs."

Since the appeal, AXIS IP has been used to raise money for Leeds' Sri Lanka tsunami appeal – Building Hope. The Council once again asked Capita Software Services to help with the campaign and to provide the internet payments capacity for the duration of the appeal.



Lucas Radebe and the Lord Mayor of Leeds hand over health kits to representatives of the Durban Health Department

## Randall Lyons joins Capita

Capita Software Services recently announced the acquisition of Randall Lyons, a leading UK provider of web-based information management solutions.

Randall Lyons specialises in the provision of web-based Electronic Document Management (EDM) and Workflow solutions, as well as bureau scanning services. The acquisition will allow Capita Software Services to provide its existing public sector customers with the ability to transfer seamlessly to a paperless environment. Randall Lyons also brings

strong experience of working with the insurance and financial services markets allowing Capita Software Services to build its presence in the private sector and add value to clients belonging to Randall Lyons.

Kevin Dady, Managing Director of Capita Software Services, commented,

"We're very excited about the enhanced capability to our offering as we can now provide a complete end-to-end web-enabled solution enhancing our customers' ability to store, retrieve and handle documents and images of all types."

We also welcome the highly-skilled and experienced employees who will transfer to Capita Software Services. The complementary strengths of the people and infrastructure of the two organisations will create a powerful value proposition."

The entire workforce of 40 employees will transfer to Capita Software Services and the business will continue to operate from the existing sites in Southwark and Bermondsey, in London.



This year's Capita Software Services' User Conference featured a number of interesting themes, but none were as prominent as the focus on the Government's Efficiency Review and the opportunities to use technology driven change to realise savings. This issue's guest editor, Tim Dawes, Managing Director of Nineveh Consulting, looks at how these efficiency targets can be met by local authorities across the UK.

There can be no doubt that the Gershon Report is high on the agenda of all UK local authorities. At the Capita Software Services conference, a compelling case for employing first rate technology and private sector support to meet the Government's aims was made throughout the event.

Of course much is already happening in this area. According to the Local Government Chronicle's (LGC) analysis of top tier councils' annual efficiency statements in May, we are well on our way to meeting the Gershon targets – with an initial estimate of more than £1 billion in savings. Most senior figures quoted in the LGC seem to think that the efficiency targets are not that challenging. Rather a hostage to fortune perhaps, if the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was reading.

Interestingly, the reported methodologies for achieving savings are not always what Gershon might have expected, or hoped for. The Efficiency Review looks at long-term transformation of the public sector to make it inherently more efficient. Key components of this involve the re-engineering of back-office administrative processes and radically changing front-office services to initially improve access opportunities. In the longer term this will realise savings by migrating customers to self-service channels like the internet. However, much of what is being put forward as saving mechanisms are old fashioned 'stop-go' economics solutions, such as recruitment freezes and reviews of existing services at team level.

With revenues and benefits departments already the most developed users of technology within local government and as often

# Change and save

as not, already subjected to business re-engineering, we will need to look to more innovative ways of delivering longer term savings. The kinds of approaches being discussed are:

- partnerships
- home working
- remote working
- channel migration.

## Partnerships: the right balance

The issue of partnership working was particularly high on the Capita Software Services Conference agenda. However, one note of caution aired on the subject of partnership working, particularly with central government agencies, was that this may not lead to efficiencies.

Single assessment certainly has many advantages for the claimant and could, at least in theory, lead to efficiency savings for all parties. Of course, the government tends to be driven by the 'bigger is better' mind-set, but actually it is not always so. For example, one of the problems in working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) comes down to its own struggle with efficiency. Big it might be, but better it is not.

The DWP has recently announced an efficiency target of its own – to get the rate of visits undertaken by its assessors up to 3.5 a day. Most council benefit assessors already achieve twice that and many are under pressure to do more.

While it is clearly sensible to look to work in partnership with others there is a limit to what can be achieved by service aggregation. Partnerships are most likely to succeed and generate real savings when the participants come together naturally as the result of an agreed mutual benefit opportunity – as at Anglia (see page 15) or, on a small scale, the many examples of councils sharing specialist professional resources, back-up facilities, training courses and procurement projects.

## Home working

Home working is now well established in many revenues and benefits departments. It has been seen mainly as a useful means of keeping valuable staff whose personal situations make it difficult for them to come in to the office. To make significant savings, those with established home working programmes may need to look further and positively encourage more back-office staff to work from home. Eventually all back-office staff might do so, with only front-office

services (enquiry handling and output distribution) staying at the town hall. It is a radical concept, but we do have the technology, management systems and experience to make it happen. Potential savings in property and overhead costs are real enough.

Remote working (connecting to your IT systems while out and about) is a different prospect to home working, but there is a lot of experience developing from the many pilots that are presently on-going. With G3 mobile telephone services now becoming widely available, this approach will be adopted more widely over the next couple of years and should start to generate savings as those working in the field find they do not need to return to the office between appointments.

Finally, the development of self service systems on the internet offers the prospect of migrating Revenues and Benefits customers away from more expensive channels, such as face-to-face and using the telephone. In my view, current eGovernment targets rather miss the point. We need to find new and innovative ways in which we can use the internet to address the high volume and time variable customer transactions that cause the big problems – things like post summons run and benefits application enquiries. And, e-summoning might be a good start on both counts!"

# Annual User Conference 2005

## *the highlights...*

This April saw the second Annual Capita Software Services User Conference, where our customers had the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the issues within local government, the social housing market place and the services that we offer.



Held at the Chesford Grange Hotel in Warwickshire, customers were also provided with a forum for them to give feedback and discuss their needs with us.

This year's theme focused on efficiency and change. Delegates attended a range of discussion groups and listened to a number of presentations by industry experts at the event. They were also invited to share best practice knowledge and to discuss topics ranging from the latest technological developments, to the changing environment that local government and social housing operate in.

### Day one

The first day focused on policy and strategy and featured a number of key speakers from the private and public sector. John Higgins, Director General of Intellect, opened the debate by holding a talk on the Efficiency Review. Regarding the Review, he said it was the key for councils aiming to have a high quality relationship with their suppliers – ones that can withstand the pressures of achieving a common outcome. John Beckford, Visiting Professor in Managerial Cybernetics at Liverpool John Moores University, added to the day's discussions by looking at the 'Cultural Implications of Change Management'. He gave some forthright messages on the subject matter of change, stating that in order to achieve change organisations need to:

- look to change what they are doing, not how they are doing it
- potentially implement complete transformation in the management model
- invest trust in staff – devolving decision power networks allows workers to work, managers to manage and directors to direct
- implement change projects via the workforce
- enable behavioural change in order to lay the foundations for the redesign of services and use of new technology
- beware of measuring efficiency gains against current processes and systems at too low a level.

In the afternoon, the issues of partnership and joint working, changing housing requirements, improvements in customer services and choice-based lettings were also on the agenda.

John Rowlands, Assistant Director of Revenues and Benefits at Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, presented a debate on the 'Front/Back Office Divide'.

### Day two

Day two provided the delegates with the chance to get involved in a wide range of workshops, product demonstrations and interactive sessions with Capita and selected third parties. An exchange of ideas and the sharing of best practice were stimulated by topical debate and discussion.

The sessions were designed to appeal to a wide range of our customers and featured the subject areas of debt management, remote support, electronic document management and SMS applications, to name but a few.



## Party on!

We all know that no successful conference event would be without a glittering evening reception.

Held at Chesford Grange on the evening of day one of the conference, delegates, Capita representatives and speakers alike got the opportunity to don their glad rags and let their hair down. They were treated to pre-dinner drinks and after-dinner comedy provided by Lincolnshire's finest, Big Sid Dennis! The award winning stand up comedian – and scrap metal merchant – kept people entertained with his witty repartee.

The revellers finished off a perfect evening with drinks by the bar.

## Feedback from the day

Following on from the inaugural conference held last year, this year's Annual User Conference was a great success, with many delegates providing positive feedback on their experience at the event. Here are some of the comments made about the two-day event:

*"I personally found the content very good and have come away from the conference with additional knowledge for products for housing".*

*"Can I congratulate all those involved with the organisation of this year's conference. It was one of the best events I have attended. A superb venue with informed speakers".*

*"I really enjoyed the visit and will recommend that more delegates attend in future".*

## Congratulations

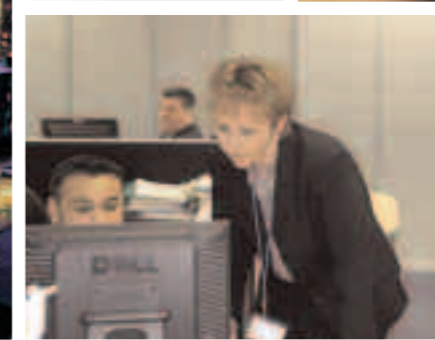
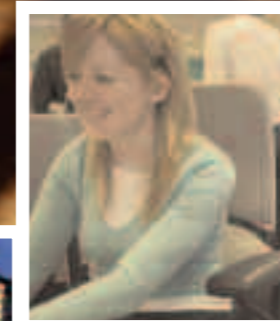
Congratulations to John Higgins of Intellect for his CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours. John became Director General of Intellect in 2002 after masterminding a merger between his former company CSSA and the FEI. This seems to be one award that was richly deserved as undoubtedly John has required both great skill and personal sacrifice to make this complex merger work for our industry.

**Well done on behalf of the monitor.**



# Firmer foundations for housing

After five years of exemplary service, we have refreshed our Academy Housing software, making it more comprehensive than ever.



To find out more about Academy Housing, please contact 08701 631 851 or visit [www.capita-software.co.uk](http://www.capita-software.co.uk)

Academy Housing software has always provided a range of complete, fully integrated business management systems for housing management organisations within the registered social landlord and local authority sectors.

Now, we have refreshed and refined our software to match the emerging requirements for improved customer service and streamlined business processes.

Packed with fresh new features and designed to meet all the current and future plans of social housing organisations, Academy Housing now supports the full range of housing management needs throughout the life cycle of properties.

It now sports everything from tenant services through to property management, maintenance and contractor services – with new emphasis upon delivering customer service and ease of use for users.

## Look what's new...

Building on our existing core product, we have added many new features to make Academy Housing easier, quicker and more efficient to use.

The new features added to the Academy Housing suite include:

1. A full suite of CRM software which enables local government staff to capture information and service requests.
2. A best of breed, flexible workflow facility which allows users to automate existing manual processes and therefore enables users to:
  - resolve customer requests faster – driving up the speed of completion and enhancing customer satisfaction levels
  - save processing time and money for the organisation
  - remove double handling, waste and duplication of effort, enabling users to focus on value added activities.
3. A new look and feel, using a browser to make the product easier to use and install.
 

The full spectrum of services now on offer sets us apart from the competition and allows the user to keep one step ahead in its sector.

Highlights of Academy Housing include:

- Back Office (Academy Housing engine)
- Customer Services (Academy CRM)
- Customer Self Service Web Transactions
- Worktray
- Academy Electronic Document Management
- Academy Mobile Working
- Academy Graphical Information System – showing data plotted on maps.

Together these components provide our customers with the capability to improve the speed, quality and standard of service provided to their own customers.

## Maximising business benefits

Apart from being legislatively compliant, functionally rich and practitioner driven, Academy Housing delivers a number of other measurable and tangible benefits:

- it lessens manual workload by reducing waiting lists and allocations and registering repairs automatically
- removes duplication of office procedures with common housing registers

- increases administrative efficiency by decreasing user time and effort
- reduces mistakes and inconsistencies by providing a modular and integrated housing management system
- it is a move towards a 'virtual' office – accommodating mobile and home users alike.

In addition, alongside the refresh of the software, the whole Capita Software Services package delivers the following benefits:

- improvement of key processes to reduce waste and duplication and improve the return on investment in ICT
- enhancement of customer service with processes geared around their needs
- identification and delivery of improvements and efficiencies in the back-office to enhance 'technology payback'.

## Capita Software Services: building foundations...

### The facts:

Capita Software Services has over 500 installations in local government and housing associations and has been providing excellence in software since 1994.

The Capita Group PLC has provided products, services and strategic advice to over 75% of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

Capita Software Services has an excellent client retention rate and a mixed base of both large and small LAs and RSLs.

Academy Housing customers enjoy:

- a higher percentage of rent collected (95.8% – up from the previous 93.4%)
- more effective rent arrears collection (31% – above housing authority average)
- have less rent written off (33% better than housing authority average)
- have less rent written off through vacancies (35% better than housing authority average).

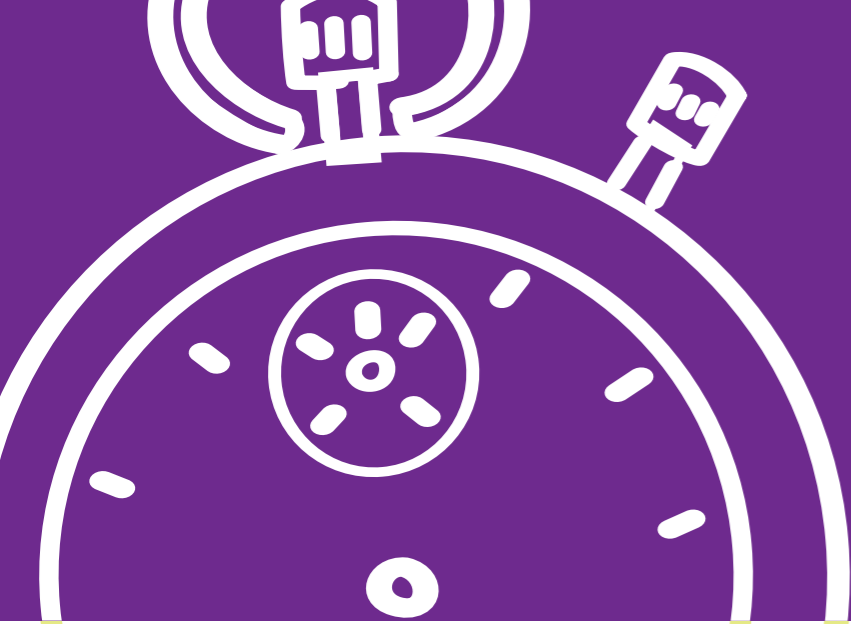
## The user's friend

We know that an unhappy member of staff is less likely to deliver good customer service, which is why we have put a lot of emphasis on making Academy Housing easier to use than other products. We have incorporated a number of changes to achieve this:

- easy set-up of Academy Housing on local PCs
- a better look and feel with larger icons and easier navigation
- new quick searches and retrieval of existing saved searches
- a 'ticker' reporter that can broadcast key facts to end users as they work
- full integration of the Worktray for workflow
- property owner sensitive logos, to remind other users who owns the property they are viewing.



# Your priorities are our priorities



Andy Dean, Strategic Marketing Manager at Capita Software Services, gives *the monitor* the low-down on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) priority outcomes for eGovernment provision and how Capita Software Services can help you.



We all know by now that in the drive to e-enable all local services, the 29 'required' priority service transformation outcomes must be implemented by local authorities by the end of December 2005. In addition to this, the 25 'good' outcomes must be at Amber stage (work approved for funding and actively being implemented) by the end of December and at Green stage by the end of next March. All local authorities have had to commit to these objectives in order to qualify for 2005/06 IEG4 funding.

We have now passed the 18 July deadline for the ODPM's mid-term IEG snapshot (IEG4.5), aimed at "realising the benefits from our investment in eGovernment" and in February we were told by Local eGovernment Minister, Phil Hope, that the average council is now 79% e-enabled. If this is the average figure, and we hear that some councils are already completely e-enabled, then it suggests that a number of councils across the UK still need to think very quickly

about how they are going to address some of the priority outcomes if the Government's 100% target is going to be reached.

However, as in all projects, there are of course obstacles and pitfalls. As if all of the above were not difficult enough to achieve, councils are now under pressure from the Gershon efficiency review to deliver new levels of service at a much reduced cost. Councils are also being warned that merely addressing priority outcomes in a piecemeal way, without the solutions falling into an overall long term strategy, is a recipe for disappointment. Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, concerns remain about the outcomes not really being measures of a meaningful difference from the citizen's perspective.<sup>1</sup>

All new ICT projects aiming to address one or more priority outcomes should be assessed carefully for the following factors:

- potential for service improvements
- potential for efficiencies (value for money)

- timescales
- deliverability
- affordability
- risk.

At Capita Software Services, we have been focusing exclusively on solutions for UK local government for twenty years. Therefore, we take all of the above concerns into consideration and ensure that all these vital factors are built into our solutions.

The priority outcomes are derived primarily from the shared priorities agreed between central and local government. For practical purposes, the shared priorities have been translated into a set of ten priority service and four National Strategy transformation areas. They, in turn, have then been broken down into a set of specific priority outcomes that should be delivered by local authorities.

<sup>1</sup>SOCITM response: "Defining e-Government Priority Services and Transformation Outcomes", Consultation Paper, January 2004.

## How we can help you

Capita Software Services provides a number of solutions that can either address specific priority outcomes directly, or can assist in delivering an ICT strategy that will address one or more priority outcomes. Here are a few examples of how our solutions have helped councils with their priority outcome projects:

	Priority	Reference	Capita's solution
Priority Services	Schools	R01 -	Capita Schools Admission covers this priority outcome and we are actively participating in the connected National Project.
	Community information	R03 - G02 -	Combinations of the Capita CRM, Capita Content Management and Capita Knowledge Management modules offer a powerful solution in this area. A combination of Capita's e-Citizen authentication module and the Capita Consultation module.
	Democratic renewal	R05&6 - G03 - G04 -	Consultation module linked to our Member Services module. e-Citizen is designed to work using both 'push' and 'pull' technologies, allowing the authority proactively to send information to a customer. e-Citizen controls and allows customer access to be directed to specific areas of interest. With the Capita Content module, it is possible to provide multimedia resource to inform the customers.
	Local environment	R07/8, G05/7 -	Capita CRM linked to the Capita Internet Payment module. The CRM has the capability of linking to GIS map viewing products so that logged calls can be viewed graphically. This facility is also available to the public via e-Citizen and our Self-Service modules.
	eProcurement	R09, G08 -	Capita is working with a number of customers to review processes and help with the implementation of e-Procurement systems.
	Payments	R10 - R11 - G11 -	Capita CRM, linked to Internet Payments module. Capita Self-Service modules with Internet Payments. e-Billing module.
	Library, sports and leisure	R13 -	Capita's Self-Service modules facilitate this outcome. These modules can interact with the third party application to provide information to the customer.
	Transport	G13 -	Capita CRM includes an industry leading e-forms solution that can be completely tailored by the customer.
	Benefits	R16 - R17 - G15 -	Capita CRM. Capita Software Services has worked with the DWP to produce an electronic claim form for all our customers. Capita's Mobile Working.
	Support for vulnerable people	R18 -	Capita CRM, with the dynamically linked and very powerful Capita Knowledge [management] module.
National Strategy transformation outcomes	Supporting new ways of working	R20/2 - R22 -	Capita Direct Consultation and Members modules linked to e-Citizen. Capita can help the authority establish the infrastructure to support this.
	Accessibility of services	R23 - R24 -	Capita CRM can support out of hours mediated or unmediated access to key services. It also allows for a distributed model to be adopted so other agencies can log out of hours calls on behalf of a council. Capita Content [management] module.
	High take up of web-based transactional services	R25/26 - R27 - R28 - R29 -	Capita is working in partnership with a third party to provide an online Performance Management Reporting system, capable of providing high level and detailed graphically-based reports measuring performance and performance improvement. A combination of Capita CRM and Capita Knowledge provide a very powerful holistic view of the customer, thereby facilitating a higher level of first time fixes. Capita CRM. A combination of Capita CRM and e-Citizen.
	Making it easy for citizens to do business with the council	G24 - G25 -	As well as EDRMS, we also provide integration between non-Capita document management systems and Capita CRM. A combination of Capita CRM and the e-Citizen module.

For further information on any of the topics mentioned above, please contact us at [cssenquiries@capita.co.uk](mailto:cssenquiries@capita.co.uk).

# One step ahead

Investments in eGovernment are about providing people with greater choice. At East Dunbartonshire Council in Scotland, the introduction of new internet, touch-tone telephone and customer contact centre payment systems has done just that.



Based in Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire Council looks after a largely rural population of 110,000. Around £72 million is generated in taxes on 43,000 domestic properties and 3,100 business premises.

Janice Peebles, Revenues Manager, is responsible for various systems including council tax, business rates, and debtors. The associated payment applications – AXIS Income Management, AXIS Counter Receipting and APACS – were all supplied by Capita Software Services. The Council's first online payment system allowed council tax and housing rents to be paid by debit card only, due to Council policy.

*"Our original system was introduced in response to e-government targets. We were trying to find a quick win electronically, and it was our solution,"* said Janice.

Limited by payment types and high transaction costs, the Council was soon looking for a longer term solution. It also wanted to support telephone payments via staff in a new customer contact centre. But any new systems had to integrate with existing software and avoid the need for complex new interfaces.

East Dunbartonshire then approached Capita Software Services to discuss the AXIS Internet Payments, AXIS Touch Tone and Mail Order Telephone Order (MOTO) modules from the Academy Payment Management suite. The transactional charges for a fully-managed service run from Capita's data centre were very cost effective and no new interfaces were required, while existing interfaces needed only minor changes. Capita staff worked closely with the Council to match the look and feel of the Council's website with the new Capita-hosted payment pages.

In November 2004, East Dunbartonshire Council became Capita's first internet payment and Touch Tone customer in Scotland. The MOTO module was initially given to four staff in the arrears team before being deployed to 12 staff in the customer contact centre.

The Council now enjoys the rich functionality of an in-house payment solution with none of the worries associated with overheads, IT support, and future development. All hardware and software is fully managed, supported and monitored by Capita Software Services. Future enhancements related to banking legislation or tighter security requirements are also implemented by Capita Software Services.

Greater choice seems to be the main asset of the service. Customers can make internet payments protected by 128-bit encryption with debit or credit cards, push buttons on their telephones to settle up or, should they wish, pay through the arrears team or

customer contact centre. Bill payments include non-domestic rates, council tax, house and garage rents, invoice payments and miscellaneous items such as sundry services for bulky waste collections.

The MOTO module has made the biggest difference within the Council. Because payments can be taken by customer contact centre staff, back office workloads and arrears chasing are being reduced (although improving the Council's impressive overall collections figure of more than 95% may be a tall order). The Council's overall costs have been reduced as the cost per transaction has also been cut.

*"The payment modules are very reliable solutions,"* said Janice. *"That's been the case with all the products from Capita Software Services. They are very efficient and customer-focused. Capita are also keen on taking our feedback and putting it into their product development plans. It's a refreshing view as you want the products to grow with your requirements."*

In future, the Council will be looking at implementing AXIS Paye.net, a browser-based system to allow ad-hoc payments to be taken by all staff during customer telephone or face-to-face contact. The introduction of chip and PIN technology is also envisaged along with a mobile payment solution.

Where providing greater customer choice is concerned, East Dunbartonshire Council intends to stay ahead.

# Let's stick together

## The Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership revisited

Last summer *the monitor* reported on an innovative partnership to deliver revenues and benefits services to the residents of two rural district councils in Norfolk and Suffolk. Steve Knights, Strategic Manager of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) – supported by Capita Software Services – reports back with an update on the Partnership's progress so far...



The district councils of Breckland Council and Forest Heath combined their Revenues and Benefits service in August 2003 to introduce the first service delivery partnership of its kind in the UK. Using the Academy suite of Revenues software, the two authorities offer a seamlessly integrated service for their residents under the banner of the ARP.

When we left the story in summer 2004, the ARP was beginning to realise significant service improvements and efficiencies. A 6% saving had already been achieved against the cost of the service, despite an 11% increase in caseload. Performance was also improving for both authorities.

By 5 July 2005, Partnership staff were moved into one building in Thetford. This provided the final piece in the jigsaw, enabling the team to take advantage of the real efficiencies of true shared working. In addition, management, staff, IT, processes and support services have now been brought closer together to provide maximum efficiency with regard to providing an excellent service to both authorities.

Performance can now be said to be the best seen in the history of both authorities, with new claims for benefits currently taking under 20 days to assess and council tax and

NNDR collection well over 98% (and still heading upwards). The Benefits Fraud Inspectorate has praised the rapid improvement in performance in a report released in January.

In addition to the reported performance through the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), other targets have also been met on the road to excellence.

This year, the organisation managed to keep its performance levels stable during the difficult annual billing months of March and April, and indeed, by May the Partnership was able to loan two of its benefits assessment staff to another potential partnering authority to help them recover from their year-end peak.

This judicious use of resources to ensure that any peaks and troughs in service were evened out has been achieved through the provision of staff to other authorities to maintain cost efficiencies for all the councils involved in the Partnership. Additional savings have been generated through the practice of ensuring that any existing excess staff capacity has been sold on to other authorities.

A new venture to market training and conference facilities from the ARP offices

will shortly drive the cost down further of these statutory services to Breckland and Forest Heath.

In summary, the ARP has provided a major contribution to the 2.5% Gershon efficiency savings required of each authority and the original aims of the project have now been achieved successfully and on time.

The ARP is now moving forward to work with other partners to encourage and achieve additional efficiencies in the delivery of excellent council services.



# COME AND MEET US...

Capita Software Services will be exhibiting at the prestigious Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) Annual Conference, 18 – 21 October 2005 at G-Mex/MICC, Manchester.

*Please come and visit us at Stand 32*

We look forward to seeing you there!

## Diary dates

7 – 8 September 2005

IRRV Scottish Conference  
Crieff Hydro Hotel, Crieff

14 – 16 September 2005

NHF Social Housing Conference  
ICC Birmingham

20, 21, 28 September 2005

HITEX

20 – Stadium of Light Sunderland

21 – COM Stadium Manchester

27 – The Boleyn Ground, Upton Park, London

29 – The Walker Stadium Leicester City

18 – 21 October 2005

IRRV Annual Conference  
G-Mex/MICC Manchester

2 – 3 December 2005

IRRV Scottish Benefits Conference  
Park Hotel, Falkirk



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