



➔ CASE STUDY: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

## ➔ OnBase has been a critical enabler for change, allowing Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council to work smarter

Rochdale is the second largest of the ten metropolitan boroughs that make up Greater Manchester. It covers 62 square miles and has a population of more than 200,000. Rochdale Borough Council provides local government services for the whole area. These include education, housing (through an arms length management company), social services, planning, highways, and environmental services.

### The drivers for change

- Local authorities are resource intensive and are under constant legislative and political pressure to reduce costs and improve service provision.
- The council wanted to avoid building back office systems which would increase the future maintenance burden.

The old microfilm system was a dying media, with poor access. It was costly and cumbersome to maintain and the physical constraints of storing a growing paper mountain in a town centre location

had to be addressed.

This has been given added importance with the development of a £70m new corporate centre which, within five years, would be housing the majority of services in a state of the art building.

The council did not want to transfer 'old' inefficient working practices to that building with the staff, but work smarter, using a back office infrastructure that supports that aim.

The new way of working would also have to meet the following requirements:

- A state-of-the-art technical solution

- Support integration with numerous legacy and new local authority back office systems
- Rapid file lookup/retrieval for 1000's of users
- Provision of a total auditable and imaged history (people and places)
- Flexibility and scalability to meet both existing and future needs, such as integration to GIS, CRM, contact centre, remote working technology and integration with electronic service delivery solutions.

## OnBase

An OnBase integrated document and records management system from ProcessFlows was selected after an in-depth market review. That system has expanded and developed as vertical and enterprise solutions have become important.

The system included automated capture and indexing technologies with the following capabilities:

- Access to legacy data (e.g. legacy mainframe)
- Simple code free integration with existing line of business systems
- Web access (no software install minimises IT overhead)
- Email management
- Integration with Microsoft Office

**Applications:** Initially for Planning & Building Regulation, OnBase is being implemented throughout many service areas. These include Housing, Child and Adult Care Services, Information & Transformational Government, Leisure & Recreation and Schools Services.

## Milestones achieved within 18 months

Within weeks of implementation the system was running smoothly with scanning underway.

In the first 18 months the following milestones were reached:

- Approximately 500,000 planning & building control files containing letters, maps and photographs were imported into the system
- A total of more than 5 million individual documents were scanned
- More than 30 cabinets of planning files, taking up two entire rooms, were reclaimed for use as prime office space
- 23 trainees gained NVQs after working with the system
- Taking into account all costs, a return on investment was achieved in the first 12 months. There are ongoing cost savings that meet the stringent and increasing efficiency savings that deliver value for money
- In particular, Government 'best value service targets' were also achieved, aided by access times to documents reduced from 30 minutes to less than five seconds per document

## What Next

- All departments will have access to the scanning hardware, with document import processors for all council services



- The process is being embedded into many back office systems, facilitating the corporate aim of a move towards workflow and linked to where business process re-engineering is undertaken
- Scan stations will be gradually centralised for 24/7 operation
- Total paperless online planning applications by 2011
- Web-based instant 'on demand' function as an embedded element in the restructured Intranet for all services by 2012
- Further CRM and workflow/call centre integration as workflows develop.

Kenneth Usman-Smith, Technical Support Manager at Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council explains, "ProcessFlows spent time up front to ensure they had a thorough understanding of our current and future requirements, and then worked with us to ensure that they were met. ProcessFlows is not just a supplier, but an important business partner to Rochdale Borough Council.

The ProcessFlows Team, both Sales and Services, has a wealth of knowledge that gives them an understanding of the

lifecycle of any document and a willingness to develop new ideas. They can use that knowledge to look at issues from a fresh perspective 'outside the box' and add real value to the relationship. Training costs were minimal and one off (a little update knowledge is needed!) and the online web training is extremely helpful. The system is easy to implement and even easier to use/support. Also, it is never down – a rarity in networked systems!

The ease with which images can be manipulated with no technical knowledge is stunning. The security of those same images is never compromised and the total audit trail for every document is remarkable. This is vital – the public need to feel confident that we are storing and handling personal information securely and with integrity.

OnBase represents excellent value for money, on both the initial and future licence and support costs. The number and scope of additional add-on modules means that we can flexibly plan how to deliver the next stage of our strategy. This will help place us in the top quartile of performing authorities."