



## Hertfordshire County Council



**Hertfordshire County Council** has gained significant cost and time savings from more efficient reporting processes, reduced printing and postage and improved speed of delivery of information.

### The Company

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) delivers a range of local services to more than a million people, who live, work and travel in the county. Services such as local schools, libraries, support for elderly and vulnerable people and road maintenance are all provided by the county council.

As with all local authorities, Hertfordshire has also been tasked with delivering substantial efficiencies in the services that they provide, whilst maintaining high quality service delivery to customers.

Effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) is integral to delivering these efficiencies.

### The Challenge

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) wished to streamline the delivery of its services to the public by using ICT to cut transaction costs and reduce paperwork. After implementing SAP in 2004 as their new enterprise resources system (ERP) to manage the finance, procurement, HR and payroll functions, HCC wanted to further improve the process of creating, handling and delivering their business-critical documents. In particular they were looking to minimise paper-handling and deliver information in a more timely and effective way.

Two areas of high volume, paper-driven processing were identified in particular, where it was felt that an ICT solution would deliver cost benefits.

These were the splitting and delivery of monthly financial reports to schools and the electronic delivery of remittance advices to suppliers paid by BACS.

Two reports are produced each month for each of HCC's 550 schools, detailing financial transactions between the school and HCC and the payroll information respectively. There was no facility within SAP to run a single report across all schools and then split this down by school. Each report would have to be run and printed separately for each school.

For suppliers paid by BACS, HCC were sending out between 100 and 200 remittances every day, with each one having to be printed and posted, incurring significant staff, postage and printing costs.

### The Solution

Through Esker's link with SAP, as a provider of a fully-integrated document process automation solution, HCC engaged with Esker to develop potential solutions to these issues.

In both cases the same principles were applied. Esker's functionality was used to split a large, consolidated data file into appropriate sections, using key markers, and then distribute the sections to the relevant, linked email address.

For schools, 2 reports are run each month in SAP across all schools, instead of running 1,100 reports – 2 for each school. Esker is then used to split each of these reports by school, using the school number as the marker, and the reports are emailed to the school.

For remittance advices, a single file is run for all suppliers paid by BACS for whom an email address is held. This file is then split using the supplier reference as the marker, and the remittance emailed to the supplier.

## The Benefits

HCC has gained significant cost and time savings from more efficient reporting processes, reduced printing and postage and improved speed of delivery of information to schools and suppliers.

They are currently sending out approximately 200 emailed remittances per day. With each remittance costing roughly £0.50 to print and deliver plus staff costs for handling, this means a saving of at least £24,000 per year, plus the added benefits of reduced carbon footprint.

With the schools reports, HCC estimates that Esker has enabled a reduction in the time spent by payroll staff on collating the information, producing the reports and delivering them, by 5 days to just 30 minutes. Getting the information to schools more quickly has the added benefit of enabling them to identify and correct any errors in a more timely way.

Using Esker has also enabled HCC to deliver pre-payroll reports to schools, allowing them to identify any errors in advance of the main payroll run and therefore minimise any over or underpayments to staff. Conventional delivery methods of print and post were far too slow to allow HCC to be proactive in providing this information within tight payroll windows.

With the Esker solution, an advanced copy of the current payroll report can be sent out within 30 minutes of running the payroll proposal, so that any errors such as contractual changes, new staff starting, etc. can be identified quickly and adjusted before the final payroll is run.