



LLPG: feel the difference!



Alistair MacLenan reports on how Vale of Glamorgan Council transformed its LLPG from a niche application into one that serves all

When the Local Land and Property Gazetteers (LLPGs) were being created by Britain's local authorities, they were viewed as either something that were required by legislation or to fill a specialist niche that would be of use to just a very few departments. A few years on and the accurate address data held within the LLPG forms the bedrock of applications throughout government organisations.

According to a study by the Centre for Economics and Business Research, the National Land and Property Gazetteer (the amalgamation of all LLPGs) could save local government £50 million plus a year. The same report added that, on top of this enormous saving, the implementation of the LLPG has resulted in 'faster and more efficient service' as well as a 'reduction in errors and complaints'.

A case in point

A case in point is the Vale of Glamorgan Council which began creating its LLPG in 2001. However, resource limitations at the time made data sharing difficult and the business case for continuing its development was difficult to justify. What was needed was a compelling business need for up-to-date, accurate and accessible address data. This came in the form of the council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

Like any organisation, public or private, maintaining accurate information about its customers is crucial to providing excellent service.

Vale of Glamorgan Council is no different and understood that the need for a council-wide CRM was vital if it was to provide its citizens with the level of service they expected, and more.

The CRM itself was part of a huge council-wide project (called OneVale) aimed at integrating the contact centre staff directly to the back office systems. Based on the Oracle E-Business suite, OneVale needed an accurate and reliable address database at its core if it was n't to become a white elephant. A working LLPG was crucial to the council and would now prove vital across every department of the council. To do this, the maintenance of the database was brought back in-house from an external contractor and, in January 2006 a full-time LLPG/Local Street Gazetteer Custodian was employed to ensure that the latest information was sent to the OneVale system and that client-facing staff were always supplying the most up-to-date information.

Working from experience

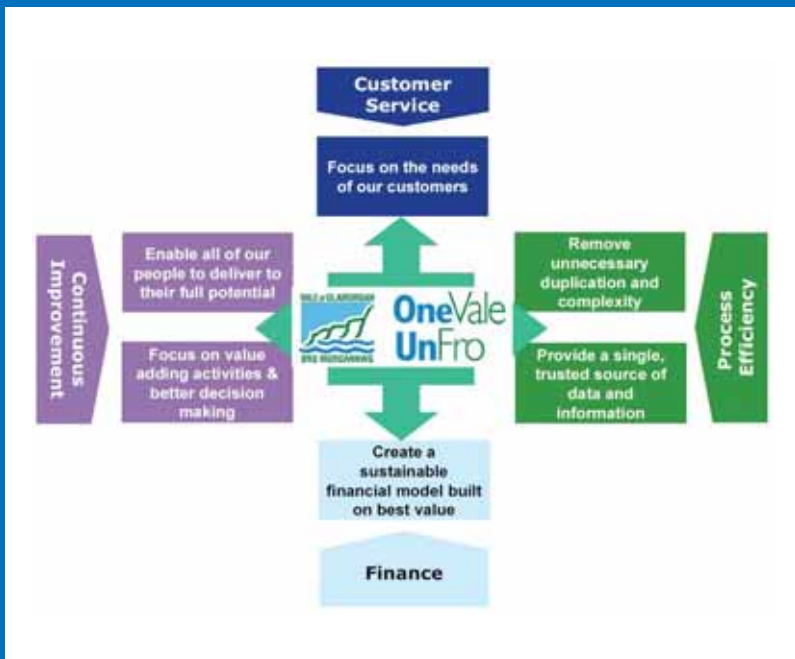
Anthony Tarrant (pictured above) had more than five years' experience of working with gazetteers and knew at first-hand how such datasets could be managed and implemented. With him as the Council's Custodian, they were assured of a person with the right skills to manage the LLPG implementation.

His first task was to find a simple to use, Oracle-based management system (although not exclusively since a few departments ran

OneVale: putting service users centre stage

The essence of the OneVale programme (www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) is to put service users centre stage and where they can deal with the Council in the way that suits them - by phone, face to face, by email, via the Internet or by letter. To date, the Council has completed the following as part of the programme:-

- Established a Contact Centre (known as Contact OneVale) for Visible Services enquiries and general enquiries for Electoral Registration. Other services to be embodied include Building Control, Housing Repairs and Regulatory Services.
- Implemented the Oracle Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for Contact OneVale which is the software system between the front office and back office services.
- Established TransAct (integrated HR and Payroll Team) who undertake all administrative and transactional activities from point of application through to termination (staff appointments etc).
- Implemented Oracle Human Resources system w
- Established a new bi-lingual Website.

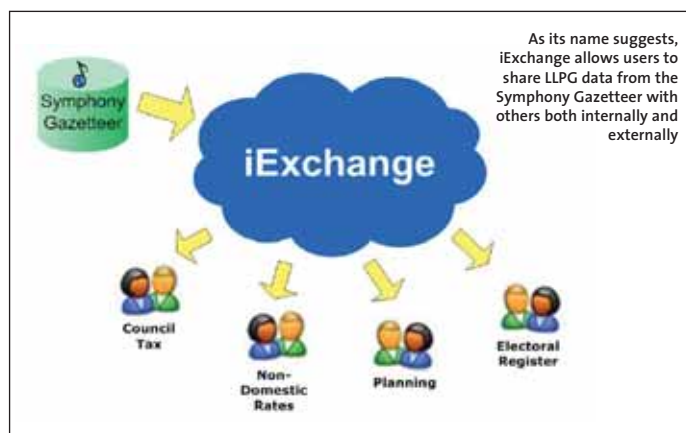


outside of the Oracle environment). A number of companies provide these specialist services and products to councils and, after researching all of these, the Vale decided to employ iManage, a tool from the MapInfo-based Symphony suite developed by specialist address management solutions company Aligned Assets Limited.

Tarrant picked iManage, not only because he believed it to be the best product for his application, but also because he found a large user community of the product in councils across the country.

With its help, Tarrant was able to raise the LLPG to the required quality and, as important, easily maintain it. Better still, the LLPG data could now be linked to the Oracle E-Business suite. This had proved difficult in the past as problems using DTF or HTML formats had made the exchange laborious, but iManage eased the process with its open architecture and simpler way of storing data within the Oracle database.

Another program from the Symphony Suite; iExchange, meant that Anthony could output the LLPG data in a format that could be understood by the legacy systems that still remained within the council.



Marked improvement

With the project completed, all staff involved in the use of address information found a marked improvement in accessing the data they need to do their jobs. As Tarrant remarks, "The ability for our OneVale CRM contact centre staff to have up-to-the minute real-time address information and to feed any new or changed addresses back to the custodian and where, in turn, it can be distributed to back office systems is a huge asset".

Thanks to the huge cost and service benefits an LLPG brings, the project is now being extended to include management of the Council Tax, NDR, the electoral register, planning applications and Land Charges.

The real step forward for the Vale of Glamorgan is in understanding that the LLPG is not a niche application that should be created simply because legislation says so. With the correct implementation, the right people, and the backing of the whole organisation, it can deliver tangible benefits to every department.

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Symphony iManage is an enterprise wide, BS7666-compliant management solution for street, land and property gazetteers