

Places for People Group (PfP) now have real-time visibility of operational efficiency and performance trends across its Housing Management, Repairs, Asset Management, Incomes & Expenditures and Commercial Developments functions aligned to its Executive Strategy through an organisation-wide Enterprise approach to Performance Management & Data Warehousing. Places for People Group's Executive team commented:

"The ability to continuously monitor our operational effectiveness and drive efficiency improvement with real-time, accurate information aligned to our organisation and user requirements, has ensured we continue to deliver the best possible level of service to our tenants. The BusinessObjects technology employed to deliver information has proved an open, flexible and scalable platform, and has allowed for the solution to organically grow in line with changing conditions and demands"

Profile PfP are one of the largest property management and development organisations in the UK with assets in excess of £2.2 billion. It owns and manages over 56,000 homes and operates throughout the country from Edinburgh to the Isle of Wight. PfP works in partnership with over 200 local authorities and numerous other partners to create places where people want to live

The Challenge

In the provision of long-term sustainable excellent services to its tenants, PfP, like all Social Housing operations, was required to triangulate and balance the demands of three entities:

- Government & Regulatory bodies, whose continually changing structure and compliance regulation created challenges for standardising the information to be returned, and monitoring on-going compliance.
- Tenants, where maintaining high satisfaction clearly provides one of the best measures of service delivery performance.
- PfP's business constraints own operational assets and budgetary constraints, across its group structure.

Whilst PfP had achieved satisfactory operational reporting, it needed a solution capable of combining data from across the organisation's multiple applications and operating units to deliver one single integrated view of performance in line with Executive Strategy, and to support its plans for growth and continuous improvement: A "single source of truth"

Quality of Reporting System

Whilst individual units and departments had developed successful processes for many operational requirements, these tools and processes operated in isolation, and a labour intensive process was required to integrate data for a single view of performance at a group level.

Cost of Production

Manual reporting processes, reliance on external contractors and the lack of one standardised platform represented a significant cost drain.

Quality of Information

Manual data collation left the reporting process prone to error both during report generation, and after presentation.

Relevance of Information

The inherent difficulties in communicating requirements meant reports produced often failed to answer the critical business questions which promoted them, and failed to support PfP's drive for operational efficiency.

The excessive manual effort required to integrate data to provide reports deriving data from multiple sources (costs, tenant satisfaction, operational facts), resulted in delays in the delivery of information..

Modeling of Information

Once data had been manually combined it was no longer possible for those at Group level to drill back down to detail and answer "what if" and "why that" queries. Understanding the root cause behind a rise in responsive repairs expenditure for a given month, for example, was difficult or impossible.

Definition of Terms

Multiple tools and processes for reporting meant there was no single architecture or consistent meta-data enforcing a standardised terminology for performance measurement; enforcing and affecting the KPIs, Goals & Measures, PIs and terminology across the group and in line with Executive Strategy or Regulatory Compliance was not possible.

The Solution

PfP saw the opportunity to drive greater operational efficiency, tenant satisfaction, streamline monitoring compliance and ensure pervasive information across the organisation for planned growth. It was imperative that a reporting solution be flexible to adapt to changing conditions, processes and systems. PfP selected **visualmetrics** as the technical and industry partner to assist in the process of transforming its Performance Management solutions.

Utilising **visualmetrics DRIVE** methodology, the detailed scoping exercise undertaken established the need for an Enterprise Data Warehouse to hold all information for reporting from across the organisation. The project was broken down into discreet phases aligned to PfP's key processes, starting firstly with Housing Operations and the migration of pre-existing SAP BusinessObjects reports from a legacy version tied to the Northgate Housing application.

The solution identified KPIs through which performance is monitored, some examples included:

Housing Operations

- Average Time in Void
- Number of Voids
- Number of Lettings
- Void Re-Let Times
- Total Arrears

Repairs

- Operational Efficiency
- Repairs Raised
- Repairs Completed In Time
- Repair-Related Calls Received
- Average Cost of Repair

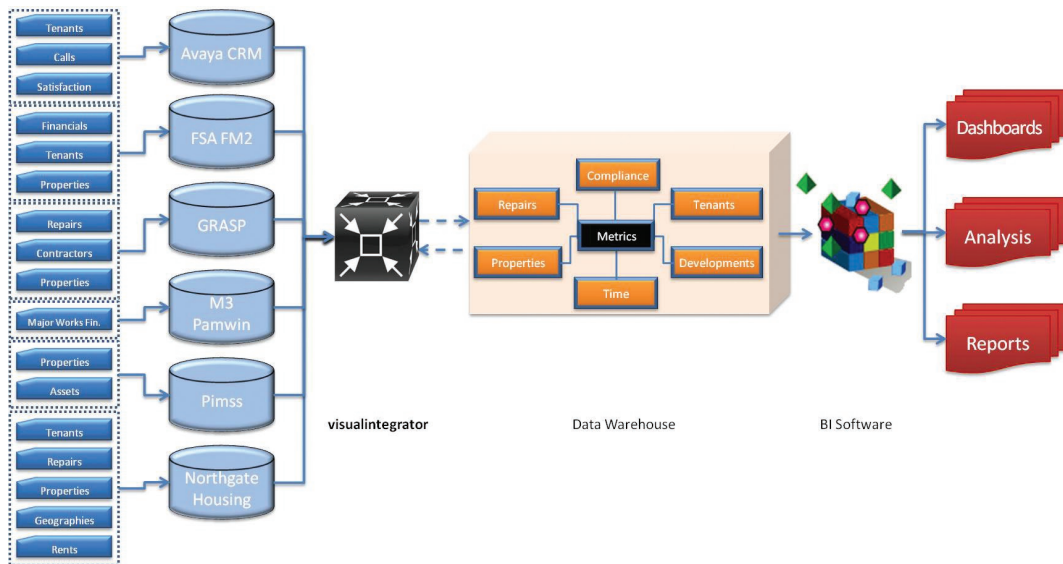
Commercial Developments

- Defects Completed In Time
- Build Quality Satisfaction
- Sales Process Satisfaction
- Group Investment in Major Projects
- Working Capital Limit

The Data Warehouse hierarchies reflect PfP's required reporting structures; analysis of metrics by:

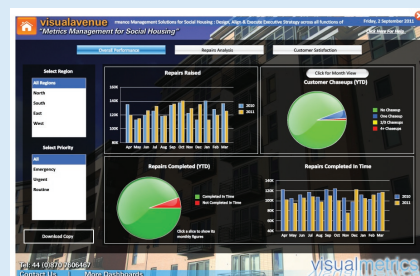
- Group
- Tenant
- Operating Division
- Contractor/ Service/ Repair Teams
- Geography (Region, Scheme)
- Property Type
- Tenure

Analysis & Reporting



visualmetrics developed an Oracle Data Warehouse using SAP BusinessObjects Data Integrator to extract information and consolidate it for reporting. Initially, data was integrated from Northgate and FSA FM2 finance system, and in subsequent phases from other sources systems, including Wheatley Associates GRASP, Clarity, Avaya CRM, Pamwin, Pimss and Microsoft. The "plug and play" nature of the Data Warehouse enables simple streamlined introduction of new systems. The solutions' ETL process performs a complete refresh of the Data Warehouse, and upwards of 2 million records, on a nightly basis.

Alongside Web Intelligence (WebI), the primary SAP BusinessObjects tool used for reporting, querying and analysis, a series of high impact interactive SAP BusinessObjects Dashboards were designed and developed to allow both fast assimilation of key information, and interactive analysis of trends over time.



The Benefits

Business Effectiveness

In partnership, **visualmetrics** and Places for People's organisation wide approach to Performance Management has delivered a complete solution for monitoring and measuring performance across all areas of PfP's operations, enabling cost controlled service delivery excellence, tenant satisfaction and exemplary results in regulatory compliance assessments.

Performance can be reported across a number of key dimensions against defined Measures to answer questions such as:

- **How does our Responsive repairs bill actuals this month compare to last month and against SOR by; priority, contractor, geography or subsidiary?**
- **What percentage of stock is void currently void? How is that changing over time and by region. And how does time in void vary by region?**
- **What proportion of properties do not have a valid Gas performance certificate for more than 1 month, has that increased or decreased in the last quarter?**
- **How satisfied are our tenants with our responsive repairs service delivery performance, what's the average number of visits per repair?**
- **What % of rental income is in arrears? How is that changing month on month? How much do we forecast we'll recover?**

The Performance Management solution has supported PfP's controlled growth, whilst ensuring service delivery excellence. Insight into performance is delivered at a significantly lower cost, with savings swiftly justifying the investment.



Information Integrity

The automated processes by which **visualintegrator** validates and loads data into the Data Warehouse enforces data quality and streamlines the introduction of new data sources, thereby removing the requirement for manual manipulation. The result being accurate and unambiguous information, which utilises one consistent universal terminology, is shared by all consumers.

Relevance of Information

The granularity of information is now tailored and disseminated according to the precise needs of the user. Executives utilise a series of interactive high level KPI (Key Performance Indicator) dashboards and senior managers utilise dashboards and receive prebuilt reports. With the burden of data extraction and report generation relieved, data analysts can now spend the majority of their time utilising the new powerful toolset to perform complex analyses. Mobile reporting capabilities are enabling employees to securely access information on the move.

Independence of Users

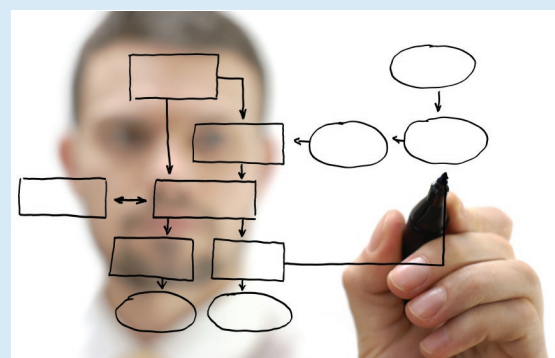
Intuitive and easy to use toolsets, and a robust communal portal through which reports are accessed, has enabled users to self-service their own reporting requirements. In turn these new tools and processes have enabled closer collaboration and swift communication between Executives, department heads and data analysts when complex collaborative data analysis requires it.

Ease of Use

The SAP BusinessObjects toolsets utilise a set of templates which give reports and dashboards a PfP look and feel, or allow for customisation to meet specific needs. The Data Warehouse provides one consistent source of information enabling historical trend analysis without the need to refer back to archived reports.

Uniformity of Terms

The combination of **visualintegrator** and SAP BusinessObjects Master Data Management functionalities enforces a strict control on data quality through a consistent business terminology aligned metadata. Reporting against Key Performance Indicators using known, understood and controlled terms has enabled meaningful communication across the organisation, simplified collaboration, and a single version of the truth to be shared by all.



The Case for Business Intelligence

We are familiar with the maxim.

- We know what we know
- We know what we don't know
- We don't know what we don't know
- There is another dimension, just as important.

We don't know what we know

To quote a former HR head of Hewlett Packard "if Hewlett Packard knew half of what it knows, it would be twice the size" This was an eloquent way of saying that HP understood that realising its untapped knowledge was the most productive singular step the business could take. This is a situation familiar to many organisations. They know that within the wealth of data they have is knowledge that would help to run the business better. They often know where to find this information but the time and cost it takes to make it coherent diminishes its usefulness. Worse, they know that there is business critical knowledge within this data, if it could be identified.

They don't know what they know.

This is the Business Intelligence challenge. To identify topics that are critical to business performance. To identify information within the data stores relevant to these topics. To mine the data and organise it in patterns that illustrate relationships. To manipulate this information to show the behaviour and trends which flow from these relationships. And finally to present the findings to decision makers in a time frame and form that allows insight to be drawn and action to be taken.

Business Intelligence (BI) answers this challenge through solutions based on a number of key principles.

One Version of the Truth

A common problem organisations face is that information used by different parts of the business is often collected from disparate sources of data. This can lead to inconsistency and conflict. BI applications developed by **visualmetrics** are based on a single repository of data. There is always only one **version of the truth**.

Business Intuitive

Traditional reporting often delivered little more than large reports containing even larger volumes of data. Interpretation was left to the reader. A key characteristic of the BI solution is that it presents information in a multidimensional format that allows cause and effect relationships to be interactively explored. By being **business intuitive** a BI application quickly brings insight into how the business is working.

Fit for Purpose

Different members of an organisation will require information pulled from the same sets of data but pitched at differing levels of detail and scope. The needs of the Board will differ from that of the Functions even when the same topic is being examined. BI applications present information that is **fit for purpose** for its user.

Just in Time

A reporting solution should optimally present up to date performance information with sufficient time for effective consequential actions to be taken. BI applications are designed with this **just in time** concept in mind.

Self Service

While information is designed so it is fit for purpose, there is often the need to manipulate it further by drilling down to greater detail, or to look for behavioural relationships between other sets of data. This needs to be achieved quickly and cost effectively. BI applications provide for a high level of **self service**.

Information Supply Chain

None of the preceding benefits of a BI application are possible without there being the capacity to identify, capture and consolidate data from an organisation's functional applications. To do this in the required time frame, and without operationally impacting these applications, requires sophisticated automation. **visualmetrics' visualintegrator** software automates the **information supply chain**.



Metrics House, Hilliards Court, Chester Business Park, Chester CH4 9QP

T: +44 (0) 870 7606467 F: +44 (0) 870 7606468

www.visualmetrics.co.uk sales@visualmetrics.co.uk

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