



## South Ayrshire Council Transforms IT Support

### Organisation

South Ayrshire Council

### Industry

Local Government

### Business Benefits

- Flexibility to incorporate new processes and procedures
- Scalability to expand service delivery
- Proactive IT support
- Performance in an Oracle environment
- Best value service delivery

### Quick Stats

No. users:	52
HEAT licenses	20
No. calls per month	1,500
No. council employees	5,700
IT Assets Supported	16,000

### Products Installed

HEAT Service & Support  
 HEAT Asset Tracker  
 iHEAT  
 HEAT Self Service

### BACKGROUND

The IT revolution in education and the launch of online public services is creating more work for local authority IT departments everywhere. At South Ayrshire Council in southwest Scotland, for example, the inventory of IT equipment has doubled in the past three years.

South Ayrshire's IT support desk has risen to the challenge with the help of HEAT Service & Support from FrontRange Solutions. South Ayrshire chose HEAT for its features, flexibility and proven ability to work in the council's Oracle environment.

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*Dave Smillie, Information Systems Analyst*

*South Ayrshire Council*

### PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Like other Scottish councils, South Ayrshire has been a unitary authority since 1996. This means it must provide a complete range of public services, from education to refuse collection. Under the UK eGovernment targets, it is committed

to putting all possible services online by 2005. All this has to be achieved with a tight budget, demonstrating the best possible value for taxpayers.

### CORPORATE COMPATIBILITY

The council's previous help desk system was not up to the job: it had technical faults and was not millennium compliant. "After evaluating a number of solutions, we plumped for HEAT," says Dave Smillie, Information Systems Analyst. "We had already decided corporately to move to the Oracle platform, so we were looking for a system that was compatible." The council also wanted a system that could be customised - and had a proven track record.

South Ayrshire implemented HEAT quickly in spring 2001, when it logged its first call. "There were no technical issues whatsoever, that was immediately an improvement on the previous system," commented Smillie.

HEAT is now helping the council's IT team log, track and resolve around 1,500 support desk calls each month. Apart from HEAT's core call-logging and HEAT Alert module, the council is running the product's business rules.

### TRACKING ASSETS

Asset tracking has been vital in enabling South Ayrshire to deal with a rapidly growing IT inventory. Since 2001, the asset configuration feature of HEAT's call logging tools has been used to record all pieces of IT equipment; by location and



individual user. "We have built up a history of customer problems and can spot where a particular office has difficulties. We also notice when certain types of kit are causing more problems and this gives us a handle on whether we should continue to buy them," Smillie says. "We just didn't have this kind of visibility before HEAT."

#### **SERVICE DEMAND**

The council has 52 IT staff with access to HEAT with a 20 user concurrent licence. The team is responsible for supporting to the Councils 5,700 employees. "Typically there are two people on the help desk but this is flexible depending on the peaks and troughs of demand." When first line support takes a call, it is classified into type and sub type. "The vast majority are hardware faults, PC or printer," commented Smillie.

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There are seasonal peaks in service requests such as the beginning of a new school term where the IT support desk is called on to install and configure new PC's. Since 1999, the council's IT inventory has grown to 16,000 assets. "Could we support it without HEAT? I would say no," Smillie says.

#### **REDUCING THE COST OF IT SUPPORT**

In autumn 2003, the council purchased HEAT's self-service module to give customers access to the support desk around the clock. The aim is to allow

users to log a call at any time and interrogate the database to check the status on their call. It will cut down on the number of repeat calls therefore making more time and resources available to resolve issues. The end result will be a reduction in the average fix times and an overall improvement in customer service.

With offices and schools across 226 locations, South Ayrshire finds iHEAT particularly useful. It enables support staff in the field to securely interrogate and update HEAT from any web browser. This allows them to pick up and close calls in real time to provide Smillie and the management team with an accurate view of the services delivered to individuals and departments. Mobility and accessibility is particularly important across the Ayrshire district where offices and schools are scattered across rural areas.

#### **MODERNISATION**

Like other local authorities, South Ayrshire relies on ICT to modernise and improve its services. Trading standards staff, for example, are trialling handheld terminals in the field as a result the IT support desk needs the flexibility to deal with new challenges as and when they arise. This is where HEAT really scores, says Smillie. "It provides us with a system that can be customised to the way we want it to work - with the previous system we had to fit the way it worked."

#### **EXTENDING SUPPORT FACILITIES**

The council has further plans to make the most of HEAT's functionality. "We hope to use HEAT's Auto Ticket Generator, to log calls via email out of hours," says Smillie. "This is where HEAT will be absolutely invaluable. It will decrease the number of calls to the support desk by enabling customers to track the progress on their issue via the web. This will save time for both the support team and customers." Not to mention a better public service for the people of South Ayrshire.