

Case Study

London Borough of Bexley Council



The London Borough of Bexley Council uses benchmarking to identify £3m savings

About:

London Borough of Bexley Council is the 7th largest London borough by area, serving a population of 232,000 and covering an area of 23 square miles. Situated in the south east of London, it borders the Thames to the north, the boroughs of Greenwich to the west, Bromley to the south and County of Kent to the east.

Challenge:

London Borough of Bexley is a unitary authority responsible for a wide range of services. Bexley's key priorities are:

- *Growing the economy and protecting the environment*
- *Helping residents enjoy the best possible quality of life*
- *Building safer and stronger communities*
- *Making the best use of our resources*
- *Building a council for the future*

Like all other councils, Bexley must operate within a strict budget limited by two major funding streams: central Government support and the amount raised locally by Council Tax. The Council found itself having to formulate a strategic response to the challenge posed by reductions in Government grants and the tough economic climate from 2014/15.

To successfully meet this challenge, Bexley needed a data analysis tool which would not only allow it to obtain a long-term objective view of its services to identify areas of improvement and potential cost efficiencies, but also to see how well it was performing on a national level, by comparing itself with councils operating within similar demographics.

Julia Webb, Head of Policy and Performance at London Borough of Bexley, said: *"Faced with increasing pressures we had to set robust priorities for spending. We had completed one round of efficiency savings but needed to identify further reductions which would come into effect from 2014. Making informed decisions was vital in safeguarding the quality of the services we provide, so any further round of efficiencies had to be strongly 'evidence based'. We needed each Deputy Director to review their portfolio of services, look at how they were performing against other authorities and how much they were spending on similar services. To do that, we needed a system which would allow us to find that information in one place. A single source to allow us to look at the bigger picture."*

Solution:

In April 2012, online data management and analysis solutions specialist SSentif, delivered a demonstration of its benchmarking solution to Bexley Council's Director of Finance and Director of Education & Social Care. SSentif's unique system contains approximately 25,000 different indicators and more than ten years worth of historical data. They were immediately impressed, recognising the potential of a system which has the widest range of fully analysable public sector data in the UK.

Julia Webb: *"It was immediately clear that SSentif's system could prove to be a useful tool in achieving the cost efficiencies needed to keep us within budget. It allowed us to produce clear, easy to interpret reports for each of our Deputy Directors who were faced with the tough task of justifying their expenditure and differentiating the 'nice to haves' from the essentials to identify potential savings."*

The SSentif system allowed Bexley to prepare a set of reports for each Deputy Director, covering services as diverse as Waste, Social care, Youth services and Planning Services. Each report compared key performance indicators for each Deputy Director's services with London Boroughs, outer London Boroughs and statistically close matching neighbours. Each Deputy Director also received a report comparing key finance indicators for their services in the same way.

Julia Webb: *"SSentif's system allowed us to gain an organisational-wide view of our performance and expenditure and present it to others within the Council in a digestible format. In essence, we were able to take a long hard look at ourselves."*

Outcome:

SSentif's system has given Bexley access to a single data benchmarking source that allows it to monitor its performance against its peers.

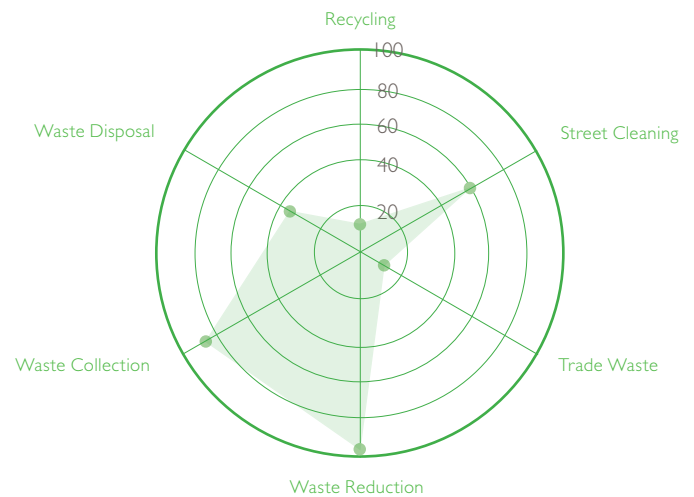
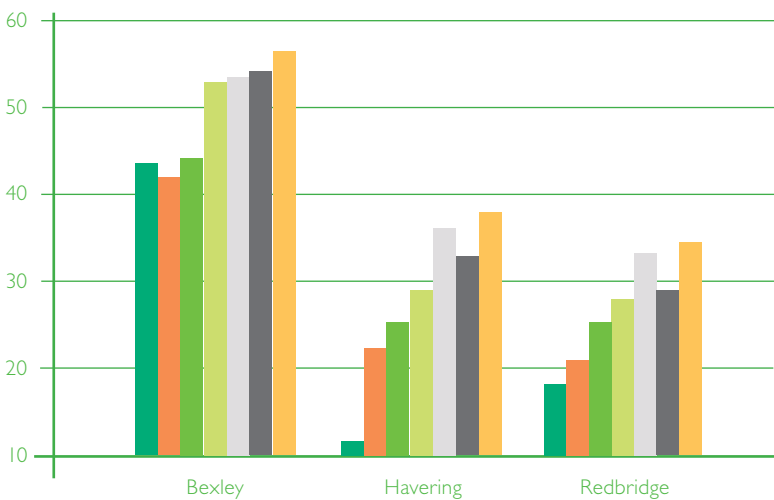
Crucially, use of SSentif's benchmarking system can be linked to the delivery of £3m of efficiency savings across the Council, at a time when every penny counts.

Julia Webb: *"The SSentif system has proved useful within our organisation. People have been impressed by its simplicity because, despite offering a comprehensive range of data, it is easy to use and presents information in a straightforward, usable way. We did not have the time or the resource to conduct this level of analysis ourselves and the information available via benchmarking clubs was inadequate. Budgets have become tighter and tighter and are constantly shifting and under scrutiny. What SSentif gives us is unprecedented access to the 'whole picture', allowing us to view performance and expenditure side-by-side to make clued-up choices."*



Percentage of Household Waste sent for Recycling 2006-2012

Bexley's spending profile for Waste



Data Range

- Financial
- Outcomes
- Activity
- Performance



Analysis Tool

- Benchmarking
- Performance Tracking
- KPI Dashboards
- Efficiency Savings



Support

- Online Training and Tutorials
- Onsite Training
- Bespoke Report Services
- Helpdesk Services

How has using SSentif Intelligence Benchmarking helped your organisation?

London Borough of Bexley: *Use of the SSentif tool can be linked to the delivery of efficiency savings, across the Council, worth in the region of £3m.*