



## Case Study: Leicestershire Library Service

### Using Business Process Review to streamline library processes

#### The challenges:

- Improving community engagement with over 650,000 residents across Leicestershire and Rutland
- Simplifying complex legacy configurations and processes
- Delivering more accurate and timely management information

#### The outcomes:

- Streamlined frontline and circulation procedures
- Items reaching borrowers quicker whilst saving staff time
- Improved management insight into stock performance helps inform new policy

During its 15 years as a Talis Library Management System (LMS) customer, Leicestershire Library Services - which provides library services for 650,000 residents across Leicestershire and Rutland - has changed dramatically.

With over 4 million items issued to more than 200,000 borrowers across 58 sites, the decision to restructure the service to improve community engagement and streamline processes was not taken lightly.

Over the years, configuring the LMS system had become complex and time-consuming, meaning that there was less time for staff to engage with customers. In addition, out of date borrower and item types caused confusion for staff, which in turn led to some inaccuracies in management information.

Therefore, when Leicestershire re-selected Talis to provide their LMS in 2008, it provided the Library Management team with an ideal opportunity to review existing configurations and processes.



### Removing complexity through process maps

Since many legacy procedures were still in place, consultants from Talis introduced the concept of process maps to key Leicestershire Library Services' staff. Process maps provide a pictorial overview of the various stages in processes. These provided an opportunity for Leicestershire staff to re-examine why they were completing tasks in a certain way, and encouraged them to question if there was a more efficient way of doing things.

### Illuminating insights

Since the team had not worked with process maps before, Talis consultants provided a training session that included an overview of the methodology and hands-on, practical sessions, that helped the team to create their maps. The process maps were then used to deconstruct long-established processes, such as the current practice of lending books for three weeks. The team found that by simply asking questions such as 'Why do we lend books out for three weeks? Is this still suitable?' they were rewarded with some illuminating insights which helped inform new policies.

The process maps covered a number of areas including frontline and circulation procedures as well as system configuration. "The whole process was extremely useful" explained Lisa Watson, LMS Project Development Officer at Leicestershire Library Services. "We couldn't believe how complicated some of our processes were. Initially we were a bit daunted by the prospect of having to create process maps. However, the Talis team reassured us that we didn't have to go into minute detail, and that 'broad brushstrokes' in many cases would suffice."

One such process review identified that if borrowers didn't specify a collection site when placing item requests via the web, then the item would be sent to the library headquarters. This meant the borrower had to wait for the item to be routed to their home site – which involved more work for library staff. Following the process map review, the default site was set to the borrower's home site so the item arrives quicker and library staff save time.

### Simpler, more efficient services

When completed, the Talis Consulting team reviewed the process maps and made a number of recommendations including bespoke training, creation of custom scripts, local configuration enhancements as well as advice about best practice.

Commenting on the ambitious scope of the project - over 20 process maps were created over a month - Lisa said: "The process has tidied-up our procedures. I'd recommend examining a couple of processes, working these through, making changes to your procedures, and then moving on to the next set. It doesn't matter if it takes some time to work through the processes as by the time you've finished the exercise, you will want to review your original processes as all libraries are constantly changing."

**"The process has tidied-up our procedures"**

Lisa Watson, LMS Project Development Officer,  
Leicestershire Library Services