

ROAD-MAP SHOWS COUNCILS THE WAY TO GERSHON TARGETS

Submitted by: Alison Hall PR

Tuesday, 3 January 2006

ROAD-MAP SHOWS COUNCILS THE WAY TO GERSHON TARGETS

Local authorities in England can gain a clearer view of their progress towards government efficiency and savings targets thanks to a practical new software tool.

The solution developed by Datawatch has been tailor-made to meet the needs of public sector organisations working to meet the targets set in Sir Peter Gershon's 2004 Spending Review.

The Gershon review requires local government to deliver over £6.45 billion worth of efficiency savings by 2007-08. At least half of these savings will release money to be used for improving services to taxpayers.

However, the requirement places a heavy burden on local authorities – not only to identify potential savings but to demonstrate how they are being achieved and provide clear evidence that targets are being met.

Those that succeed can look forward to more favourable ratings in the Audit Commission's next round of comprehensive performance assessments. Currently, councils that achieve a "good" or "excellent" rating benefit from a range of freedoms, while "poor" or "weak" ratings can result in unwanted consequences. Ian Spreadbury, local government analyst at the Datawatch Corporation, has been working closely with councils in England to show how a new software solution can help to alleviate their concerns. He said: "We have found that many local authorities are finding it hard to track and monitor where savings are being made, because many of their efforts relate to efficiency rather than actual costs. For example, some have set performance targets using factors such as environmental impact, which can be difficult to audit and measure."

Datawatch can help local authorities better manage the process of finding and tracking of actual savings with its purpose-built solution. The software has been designed for simple and trouble-free installation as it leverages existing IT systems and will interface smoothly with other software applications.

Ian says: "Our approach helps councils to identify where savings are coming from to meet the government's Gershon targets, and also enables them to track their progress over time. A chief finance officer, for example, can drill down from the headline data to see supporting information such as invoices.

"It also paints a very accurate picture of where real savings are being made. Some local authorities are achieving their targets by investing in e-commerce initiatives which cover several different departments, and they run the risk of double-counting the savings – our solution can prevent these sorts of problems."

Further information on the Datawatch range of solutions can be found at www.datawatch.com.

About Datawatch Corporation:

Datawatch Corporation is a leader in the rapidly growing Information Services market space. By providing

solutions that build on a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) framework, Datawatch allows organisations to access, enhance, analyse and deliver information from wherever it resides inside or outside the enterprise to solve business problems. Datawatch products are used in more than 20,000 companies, institutions and government agencies worldwide.

Datawatch solutions are distributed in the UK by Datawatch International, Cardinal Point, Park Road, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1RE.

Contacts:

Press information:

Alison Hall, Public Relations

Email: alison.hall@alisonhall-pr.co.uk

Tel: 07899 986932

Sales:

Lindsey Glennie

Email: mlindsey_glennie@datawatch.com

Tel: 01923 437669