



Spelthorne Borough Council is one of 11 borough/district councils in Surrey, which, together with Surrey County Council, deliver local government services to over one million people at the inner edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The council provides services such as planning, environmental health, electoral registration, council tax collection, leisure and recreation, parks and open spaces, car parks, housing for the homeless and refuse collection.

HIGHLIGHT

AT A GLANCE

Integrated, secure treasury management for a budget- and resource-constrained local council.

The Challenge

The council has an enormous responsibility to manage funds compliantly and frugally. Like every council, Spelthorne has massive commitments and liabilities as well as large investments to manage. Investing daily in the money market is a critical part of the council's overall financial planning and management strategy. But it was a time-consuming, resource-draining manual task conducted on spreadsheets that put an enormous strain on what was an already over-stretched team.

When Anna Russell, Deputy Chief Accountant at Spelthorne Borough Council, was recommended the CS Lucas Treasury Management System (TMS) by Arlingclose, an independent treasury advisory company, she recognised that the level of automation it could provide would take the strain off her team while improving visibility of the council's money market activities.

It was clear that with CS Lucas' 25-year history of reliable and trusted service, an ISO 27001-certified information security environment, rapid deployment, industry expertise, ability to customise upon request and the 360-degree cash visibility its TMS provides, Spelthorne Borough Council was in good hands.

Our Solution

CS Lucas has a mature, robust, flexible treasury management toolset. Its TMS was highly recommended for its effortless data input, control, and visibility via a slick, modern user interface. It was a perfect fit for Spelthorne Borough Council, whose staff required a nimble, customised tool that addressed the local government environment.

A team collaboration in unusual times

In March 2020, the CS Lucas team was engaged to migrate all data related to Spelthorne's investments and loans from existing spreadsheets into the system. This involved migrating payment schedules for activities over the next 50 years; over 25,000 future payments. These were fully reconciled to the internal system and agreed to notices from PWLB. "Being able to access and analyse our real-time positions in a single system is one of the reason we decided to invest in CS Lucas," recalls Ms Russell. "Support from the CS Lucas team adds great value to the system."

HIGHLIGHT

"The TMS does most of the work for us."

**Spelthorne Borough Council's
Assistant Accountant, John
Bradley-Turner**

Once the system was brought "live", CS Lucas onboarded the Spelthorne team, providing the requisite training module by module so that the council could take over the day-to-day running of the system. The lockdown period at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic presented initial challenges as the two teams adjusted to working remotely. However, Spelthorne and CS Lucas very soon adapted to the "new normal", with CS Lucas continuing to support Spelthorne in the use of the system through regular feedback sessions.

One size does not fit all

"Whilst the system was designed for use by local councils, we needed some report customisation to have it meet our requirements," explains Mr John Bradley Turner, who had joined the Spelthorne team at the start of the pandemic and was tasked to oversee its implementation. "CS Lucas worked closely with us to understand our specific processes and what information we needed to get out of the system. From there, they worked out how to customise the solution to our needs."

CS Lucas remained proactive in solving any operational or technical issues that arose, a key level of support that the Spelthorne team has come to appreciate. For example, early in the system's implementation, slow server response caused delays in uploading data to the system. However, once this was brought to light, the CS Lucas team immediately investigated and the matter was quickly resolved.

Working in stages

The council has a small team and the pandemic response placed additional constraints on already stretched resources. For this reason, Spelthorne and CS Lucas delayed implementation of the cash visibility module to a later stage.

"We didn't start on the cash visibility module until the summer of 2021," Mr Turner recalls. "But we've been using it on a daily basis now since September 2021. Our next step will be to work with the system towards a 12-month rolling basis, then move on to monthly reporting. We are confident that we can get even more out of the system. As it is, we have good visibility of our investment and loan portfolio and the TMS does most of the work for us."

The Outcome**Clear insights for better decision-making**

Today, the CS Lucas TMS supports the council in its daily financial forecasting and the team is now starting to look at the long-term forecasting component, which will allow the council to use TMS in longer-term decision-making.

Improved productivity

Before the council implemented the CS Lucas TMS, all data was being entered onto spreadsheets. Maintaining data on the system has saved time and reduced human error, thereby increasing productivity. In addition, alerts and reminders generated by the system ensure that nothing gets missed or forgotten.

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Built-in, easy-to-follow SOPs and security compliance

The CS Lucas TMS provides data security compliance through its ISO 27001-certified environment and offers built-in SOPs for fund management, delivered in clear and easy-to-follow, non-technical training guides and videos. "This will make it much easier for new team members learning the system," says Ms Russell, "which is important for a small team with a lot of other, non-treasury, responsibilities."

Ongoing support

CS Lucas meets the Spelthorne team on a monthly basis and its tech support team is available 365 days a year to solve any technical issues that arise. "On the rare occasions we need tech support, we raise a ticket knowing that, when we come back to work the following morning, the issue will be resolved," say Mr Turner.

With CS Lucas, Spelthorne Borough Council enjoys effective treasury management through an affordable, secure and compliant SaaS solution that provides 360-degree visibility on funds for informed decision-making and increased productivity for a resource-poor team.