

**About Reading Borough Council:**

- The Borough of Reading in the UK is located in south eastern England
- The Council is responsible for all aspects of local government across the Borough
- Reading's population of over 143,000 relies on the Council for the full range of public services including: health and social care, education, building control advice and licensing, transportation and streets, and housing
- [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)

**For Reading Borough Council, Insight Reporting™ for Oracle EBS increases efficiency with flexible, real-time financial reporting and inquiries**

**“** *As every local government, we need to work as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. Insight Reporting for Oracle EBS enhances our efficiency with flexible, real-time reporting that enables users to drill down from high-level totals to the transaction level with a single click.* **”**

**Julie Stringfellow**

Financial Systems Manager

Reading Borough Council

**Organisational Challenge: Flexible reporting from a single system**

Reading Borough Council's substantial responsibilities expanded even further in the late 1990s when the Berkshire County Council was abolished. With this change, the Reading Borough Council became a unitary authority responsible for providing public services and delivering all aspects of local government across the entire Borough.

As separate government entities, Berkshire and Reading ran in different financial environments. Now the combined organisation needed a financial system ready to handle the increased requirements.

The time was right for a change, according to Julie, Financial Systems Manager, Reading Borough Council. "Reading Borough's financial system had been in place about ten years and needed an upgrade," Julie explains.

In 1998, Reading Borough Council replaced its financial system with the Oracle E-Business Suite, implementing several Oracle EBS modules including General Ledger and Accounts Payable. Julie states that Oracle EBS was chosen because it is comprehensive; integrating a full suite of financial applications, and also it has excellent scalability.



## Benefits of Insight®:

- Reports and inquiries are easy to create and modify to meet information needs across many different areas of responsibility
- Quick drill-down from high-level totals to transaction-level information increases efficiency and reduces costs
- Real-time financial information supports rapid, informed decision making
- Council employees can spend more time serving the citizens of Reading Borough and less time extracting data
- Users producing inquiries and reports independently enables a proactive focus in the Oracle Team
- Cost-effective efforts in the back office help preserve limited resources for front-line services
- Distribution of inquiries is instantaneous through the Console part of Insight

## Solution:

Insight Software Suite for Oracle® EBS

- Insight Reporting™

One challenge however, was in reporting. Julie explains “The information was in the Oracle system, but it was difficult for users to get at the exact data they needed.” Users turned to a combination of methods to extract data, but no one solution offered enough flexibility to meet all of their needs. As users required new reports and amendments to reports, they relied on Julie’s Oracle Team which is responsible for managing the Reading Borough Council’s financial system.

“We needed to make the reporting process less cumbersome and complex for our users and less time-consuming for our Oracle team, and we began to look for a solution,” said Julie.

A key criterion was to find one solution that could meet users’ needs regardless of the level information that was needed. “Whether for high-level totals or transactions, we wanted one, single reporting system that users could go to every time they want to produce information from the general ledger” Julie states.

## Solution: Insight for Oracle E-Business Suite

Julie investigated available solutions and talked with other public sector Oracle EBS users about reporting. She learned about Insight Reporting™ for Oracle EBS at a UK Oracle User Group conference where she spoke with members of the InsightSoftware.com team.

“With our previous reporting methods, we had never been able to build an inquiry showing high-level totals that enabled users to drill down directly to transaction-level information. When I saw that this is fast and easy with Insight, I knew we had found what we needed,” Julie says.

Insight Reporting™ was installed in about a day at Reading Borough Council. “The implementation was rapid and there were no problems at all,” Julie says.

“It was also very easy to learn,” Julie adds. “InsightSoftware.com trained me and a colleague, and their team has returned on numerous occasions to help us improve our skills and learn additional techniques. InsightSoftware.com is providing very good support.”

**“ Insight Reporting is a great tool, and we definitely expect it to pay for itself in terms of increased efficiency for a wide range of data inquiries and reporting. ”**

**Julie Stringfellow**

Financial Systems Manager

Reading Borough Council

As Reading Borough Council rolls out the Insight Suite across the authority through the Console, Julie will train additional users in groups. “I expect the training to go very smoothly,” she states. “Everyone who has seen Insight is very eager to get up and running, and I expect they will be using it all the time,” she adds.

There are approximately 1,000 Oracle EBS users across the Reading Borough Council, with about 50 budget holders and finance team members using InsightSoftware.com’s solution to look closely at general ledger data on a regular basis.

### **Benefits: Increased Reporting Flexibility, Efficiency, and Cost-Effectiveness**

“The real-time aspect of Insight Reporting is invaluable, and it was an important reason that we chose the system,” Julie says. She emphasizes that real-time data is essential for quick, informed decision making.

Reports are easy to create, modify for individual needs and deploy in Insight through the Console. This capability provides the reporting flexibility needed by Reading Borough Council, “With Insight, I can build and deploy one report that a user with responsibilities in education can run for their area. A user responsible for an aspect of social care can run the same report and get the details for their area only,” Julie says.

### **Streamlining Efforts and Increasing Efficiency**

Insight Reporting™ will streamline efforts and make financial reports and inquiries significantly more efficient for Reading Borough Council. “With Insight, reports will run more quickly, and it will make it easier for Reading Borough Council employees to do their jobs,” Julie notes. “If users need to produce high-level reports, for instance, they can easily drill down to details. In Insight, users will be able to see a total that’s been charged and just click a button to quickly drill down to the transactions behind it,” she explains.

In the past, a user would need to run the initial report using one tool, then go into another system to find the additional data. Insight eliminates the extra steps, enabling employees to spend more time serving the citizens of Reading Borough and less time extracting data.

### **Enhanced Cost Efficiency**

As every local government, Reading Borough Council does not have unlimited resources and is continually looking to increase efficiency and reduce costs. The aim is to have the back office working as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible so that the Council can focus its resources on front-line services for its citizens.

“Insight Reporting is a great tool, and we definitely expect it to pay for itself in terms of increased efficiency for a wide range of data inquiries and reporting,” Julie states.

“Those of us in the public sector don’t have the funds to set up and manage expensive data warehouses. Insight works in real time and extracts the data straight from Oracle, so there are no costs for additional data warehousing and the information is always current,” Julie says.

### **Security is Simplified**

The parameters for security and compliance in Insight mirror those in Oracle, so there is no need to duplicate effort to achieve the same levels of assurance.

“We save a lot of time in setup with Insight, because we can import the Oracle usernames, picking up their security around their responsibilities automatically,” Julie notes. “This is great for maintenance, too, because if a user’s responsibilities change, we just change them in Oracle and Insight automatically picks them up,” she adds.



### **InsightSoftware.com’s Solution**

Insight Reporting™ from InsightSoftware.com empowers users to create simple, real-time inquiries to answer business questions.

With Insight Reporting™ customers:

- Increase efficiencies
- Enhance revenues
- Reduce costs
- Optimize cash flows

## The Bottom Line:

For Reading Borough Council, Insight for Oracle EBS provides flexible, real-time financial reporting and inquiries. The ability to quickly drill-down from high-level totals to transaction-level information increases efficiency and reduces costs.

Reading Council employees can now spend more time serving the citizens of the Reading Borough and less time extracting data. Users can build inquiries and reports independently, allowing the Oracle Team to move from a reactive to a proactive approach to adding value to reporting.



## Streamlined Reporting

While users across the organisation have not yet begun to use Insight, Julie is collecting reporting requirements and already producing key reports with InsightSoftware.com's solution for the Finance Director and Chief Accountants.

"We've built one high-level report that enables users to quickly see, for the whole of education, for example, how much we've spent compared to our budget for the year," Julie says. "We have hierarchies built in Oracle Financials, and we can pull off totals at parent levels within the hierarchy and step down through the levels to review the breakdown of the spend at all of the levels. This would have required separate reports in the past and could have taken hours, and with Insight it's a matter of minutes," she notes.

"An additional benefit is that Insight software links to the general ledger hierarchies that we have in place in Oracle, so if we make any changes to those hierarchies, then any inquiries automatically reflect those changes," Julie adds.

## Looking Ahead to Further Increases in Efficiency

With users relying on Insight Reporting™, Julie's Oracle Team will be able to focus on more strategic efforts. "With our existing processes, the Oracle Team needs to build an awful lot of reports for users to retrieve information. When people are using Insight on a daily basis, we'll no longer need to build and amend reports. As a result, the Oracle Team will be more proactive rather than reactive, with more time to plan how to develop the system and provide even better information."

One area that Julie's team will review is how the Insight can help Reading Borough Council produce the data requested by national and other government agencies. "We plan to look at how we can better produce our government returns. Clearly, producing reports more quickly and efficiently for different government agencies will have a wide-ranging benefit," states Julie.

Improving purchasing information is another area where Insight Reporting™ is expected to have a positive impact. "Nearly everything we buy now relates to an Oracle Purchase Order, and in the coming year we plan to enable users to use Insight Reporting™ to easily view orders that are still outstanding," Julie says. "Users will be able to see if invoices have been paid against certain account codes, for instance. All of the commitments and encumbrances from those orders appear in their general ledger, and this capability using Insight will give them better management information in terms of keeping everything up to date."

For more information, please visit [www.insightsoftware.com](http://www.insightsoftware.com) or call +44 (0)845 467 4448

NORTH AMERICA: +1 855-INSIGHT

EUROPE: +44 (0)845-INSIGHT

Offices in: Costa Mesa | Denver | Houston | London | New York | Raleigh | San Francisco | Sydney | Toronto | Vancouver |