



The data landscape — 1,460 requests, 11 indicators, 940 hours

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12 months of request log, reconciled against five applications and 340 spreadsheets · fictional document

Fictional document — demonstration example

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Fictional document, produced for the demonstration. **The measurement covers the department's QUEUES and LEAD TIMES, never what a named member of staff does. The 11 indicator sheets are written, each with its scope, its cut-off date and its plain-language query: the department reads eleven sheets, not 1,118 answers.**

Where the year's 1,460 figure requests come from

Requester	Requests	Share	What it costs today	What changes
Elected members — committees and full council	486	33.3%	6 days average lead time; the answer mobilises 3 people	Within the minute for the 11 indicators, with scope and cut- off date

Requester	Requests	Share	What it costs today	What changes
Chief executive's office	312	21.4%	Urgent requests that displace the rest of the queue	Served without displacing the queue
The 14 operational departments	524	35.9%	Each department rebuilds its own figures in its own spreadsheet	One point of entry, one figure, one written scope
Audit bodies and external organisations	138	9.4%	Rebuilt on demand, with no trace of the query used	Query attached, rerunnable identically
Total	1,460	100%	—	—

The 11 indicators covering 1,118 requests — and the dated source of each

Indicator	Requests	Reference source	Scope written into the sheet
Real operating expenditure	214	General ledger + final accounts	Main budget, excluding ancillary budgets and social action centre, chapters 011/012/65/66/67
Budget execution by department	186	Commitments and payment orders in the finance software	14 departments, main budget, cut off at month end
Payroll	142	Chapter 012 of the finance software	Full chapter 012, including elected members' allowances and statutory insurance
Headcount	118	HR system	Staff in post at 31 December, all statuses, career breaks included

Indicator	Requests	Reference source	Scope written into the sheet
Absence rate	104	Time and absence management	Working days, excluding annual leave, minimum grouping 5 staff
Supplier payment time	92	Finance software	From receipt of the invoice to its settlement
Capital carry-forwards	78	Finance software, capital section	Main budget, cut off at 31 December
Grants to associations	64	Account 6574 + community life department's table	Cash grants; in-kind support is counted separately
Facility attendance	48	Booking software + tills	Entries counted, school entries distinguished
Meals served	42	Catering software	Meals served, of which meals billed to families
Contracts awarded	30	Procurement module of the finance software	Initial contracts; variations counted separately
Total of the 11 indicators	1,118	76.6% of the 1,460 requests	—

The remaining 342 requests go to the management controller — with the file already assembled. The question as asked, the sources concerned, the possible scopes and the figures already extracted. **She answers knowing, instead of answering while searching**, and that is where most of the returned time is won: it is not the hard question that costs, it is the consolidation that precedes it.

The three items in the fiche's « the gain » section, costed against your own diaries

Item	Share of time today	After	In time	Annual volume	Hours returned
Preparing a committee dashboard — extraction, consolidation, formatting	60%	18%	15 h 36 → 4 h 40 out of 26 h	32	349 h 26
Cross-referencing several source files — reconciling identifiers, scopes and vintages	23%	10%	1 h 09 → 30 min out of 5 h	240	156 h 00
Answering an elected member's figure request — actual keying	8%	6%	32 min → 24 min out of 6 h 40 of circuit	1,460	194 h 40
Statutory reports — gathering and formatting the data	—	—	38 h → 11 h out of 62 h	6	162 h 00
Monthly budget positions	—	—	9 h → 2 h 30	12	78 h 00
Total	—	—	—	—	940 h 06

On the third item the fiche is cautious — 8% to 6% — and rightly so: what shifts is not the keying time, it is the LEAD TIME. An elected member's figure request comes back in 6 days today because it crosses three people and two applications, not because it requires six days of work. After: within the minute for the 1,118 requests that fall under the 11 indicators. The hours gained on this item are modest; the credibility gained in the chamber is not.

940 h 06, rounded down: 940 hours returned over the year. On the statutory working-time basis — **1,607 hours a year, 151.67 hours a month, 35 hours a week** — that is **more than six months of work**, or **more than twenty-six weeks**, returned to a nine-person department. **Rounding is always taken downwards:** a gain rounded

up is a gain an elected member can dispute in the chamber. **No post cut, no post created** — it is time returned to analysis, budget preparation and management control, which until now existed only as an intention.

What reconciling the five sources surfaced — and what nobody had measured

Finding	Volume	What it costs	What fixes it
Indicators presented to committee carrying two values depending on the source	9	5 of them have already been presented in both values over three financial years	Scope declared at the top of every figure
Arithmetic errors within those 9 gaps	0	—	The problem is not the addition, it is the missing word
Departmental spreadsheets reconciled once a year, at closing	340	Corrections discovered too late for committee	Monthly reconciliation proposed for 3 departments — 118 spreadsheets
Scope divergences found across 36 months of released figures	447	96 dashboards and 18 reports examined	4 control rules, 414 covered — 92.6%

The rule this demonstrator defends, and which holds up everything else: NO FIGURE LEAVES WITHOUT ITS SCOPE DECLARED AT THE TOP — which budget, which departments, which employment statuses, which cut-off date. **And two different scopes are never compared in the same chart. A change of scope is announced BEFORE the commentary, never after an elected member's question.** This is not a matter of form: **it is what makes it possible, in the chamber, to argue about what the figure measures rather than about where it came from.**

Version of the 11 indicator sheets settled by the director of finance and performance,
on: _____

Next review of the indicators and their volumes — proposed at six months — set for:

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