

**STCS PROJECT PROFILE**

---

# Homes and Communities Agency Business Objects v5 Migration



**STCS**

## HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY

---



The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the national housing and regeneration agency for England, with an annual investment budget of more than £5bn. The HCA was formed on 1 December 2008 through the transfer of the functions and assets of English Partnerships; the investment functions of the Housing Corporation; a number of delivery programmes from Communities and Local Government and the transfer of the Academy for Sustainable Communities.

The Homes and Communities Agency is a non-departmental public body and their sponsor government department is Communities and Local Government (CLG).

The statutory objects of the HCA, as listed in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 are to:

- improve the supply and quality of housing in England
- secure the regeneration or development of land or infrastructure in England
- support in other ways the creation, regeneration or development of communities in England or their continued well-being
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and good design in England, with a view to meeting the needs of people living in England.

**“Thanks for those who gave up their weekend to assist with the migration and testing, we couldn’t have come this far with out everyone’s help. We have a great team.”**

**Head of I.T Service Delivery  
Homes and Communities Agency**

## PROJECT REQUIREMENT AND SCOPE

---

As part of the setup of the Agency several of the Agency’s systems were transferred from an outsourced IT supplier, to HCA’s data centre in Gateshead, so that the services could be supplied and supported by their in-house IT department.

Part of this transfer included an Investment Management System (IMS) and its supporting reporting facilities using Business Objects and InfoView. Shortly before the migration, it was determine that some of the hardware wasn’t being transferred to HCA, including the Business Objects servers, so alternatives would need to be provided. STCS were already involved in the project, assisting with migration and configuration of the application servers. Due to STCS’s track record with the agency, we were asked to take on the task of migrating the Business Objects and InfoView facilities to new servers. This was complicated by the lack of knowledge within the agency about the existing setup; the inability to access the existing servers; and the use of out-dated hardware and software, including Business Objects v5 and Oracle 8.1.6 database.

Our main tasks included:

- Multiple installations and configurations of the Oracle 8.1 and 9 database client software on Windows 2003 and Citrix Servers to support both the IMS application



software and Business Objects/InfoView.

- Multiple installations and configuration of Business Object v5 and InfoView against a Windows 2003 server environment. Previously the Business Object v5 and InfoView installation was supported on a Windows NT/2000 server environment, this is no longer the case, support has been removed fully by the software supplier due to age of the software. Installation against a Windows 2003 environment has never been supported by Business Objects, but we were asked to install in that environment anyway due to the need to fit in with the Data Centres IT infrastructure.

It was also necessary to perform the installation and configuration without direct access to the existing system. We were provided with the installation files and the Business Objects database repository, but no other information about the existing configuration.

We used our expertise to install and configure Business Object v5 full client on Citrix Servers, and with our knowledge of Microsoft Internet Information Services (IIS) 6.0 we were able to complete the InfoView part of installation even though the standard installation routines failed due to the unsupported newer version of the operating system.

Utilising knowledge of key users of the existing system, STCS were able to reduce the differences in the systems, and minimise disruption for users.

- Creation of documentation covering the installation process, for use during the go-live and to provide a starting point for in-house support staff to enable better support of the systems.
- Provision of a Proof of Concept (PoC) upgrade of Business Objects v6.5 InfoView server to show that the system could be easily merged into a Business Objects infrastructure already held in the Agency's Data Centre, reducing maintenance and cost overheads and providing a more-integrated solution for users.
- Provision of on-going support for the migrated environment.

This migration was a temporary measure and was a stepping stone towards a major upgrade, migration, integration and technology refresh based upon Business Objects XI v3.1, Windows Server 2008 R2, and Oracle 11 database.

## **TECHNICAL APPROACH**

---

STCS worked closely with HCA to understand the requirements and work out a plan that would limit the disruption to the users, whilst providing the new server as quickly and efficiently as possible. One of the key aspects of the project was to transfer the knowledge STCS had of the installation to HCA's in house technical support team. This was achieved by guiding HCA staff through the various steps of the installations and providing documentation which had been lacking from the previous supplier.

## **KEY TECHNOLOGIES USED**

---

The system has been built using the following technologies:

- Business Objects v5 and InfoView
- Windows Server 2003
- IIS version 6.0
- Citrix 6.1
- Oracle Database 8.1.6
- Oracle Database Client 9.1