

LOCAL AUTHORITY CASE STUDY

Isle of Wight Council

Paycheck data helps
reveal the true picture of
local housing needs

The background of the slide features a scenic coastal landscape with cliffs and the sea under a sunset sky. This image is partially obscured by large, overlapping geometric shapes in shades of magenta, orange, and white. The 'Highlights' section is contained within a dark blue rectangle with a white border.

Highlights

- Granular, current household income data
- Trusted decision-making information to create consensus
- Interactive data visualisation in PowerBI for maximum impact and clarity
- Affordable, reusable datasets for in-house analysis
- Trusted Local Authority sector knowledge

About the Isle of Wight Council

The Isle of Wight Council is a unitary authority located on the Isle of Wight near the south coast of England. It is made up of 40 councillors from 39 wards. The Council is responsible for all local government activities on the Island.

The Isle of Wight is a beautiful, interesting and relaxing place to be. While the pace of life may be slower on the Island, the Isle of Wight Council is an innovative, forward thinking and dynamic organisation. The Council has an ambitious corporate plan with a vision for the Isle of Wight to be an inspiring place in which to grow up, work, live and visit.



The challenge

Affordable housing development for our community

While the Isle of Wight is a place with abundant natural beauty and open space, it also has a challenging housing target. As in many areas, this creates conflict, with some residents resisting further development. The tourist industry is very important, but there's frustration that buyers from the mainland push up housing prices and perceptions of affluence, while Island workers and their families struggle to afford a home.

The Isle of Wight Council wanted data that would help inform the discussion around why housing is needed and what types are in short supply. The team needed trustworthy information that would help establish and articulate what is affordable for residents on the Island and where the need is greatest.

The approach

Anonymised income data matched to Island households

Danika Barber, Public Health and Strategic Analytics Lead explains: "We looked at what other councils had done to quantify affordability and knew that we needed to understand incomes across the Island in order to put house prices and rent costs in context of the local, permanent population."

Danika and her team recognised that they needed to account for the typically more expensive second homes and holiday rentals on the Island, as well as a 'hidden homeless' population such as extended and overcrowded households, those in unstable tenancies and those key workers in less well paid roles who are vital to the Island economy.

CACI's Local Authority expert, Stewart Eldridge, had already been in discussion with Danika about the potential of data to help inform a range of Council programmes. He recommended the Paycheck data set. Danika and her team used it to build an insight report in PowerBI that revealed the missing information. Danika confirms:

“

We created an interactive map in the tool, showing affordability by area. . It used housing data from Rightmove and Paycheck information about household income. The map shows purchase or rental cost vs household income, broken down in detail for each of the Island's 39 wards. We used both median income data and lower quartile income data as the latter is particularly important when looking at housing inequality.

”

The solution

A true picture of Island housing need

The work was commissioned by the Island Housing Conversation, a Regeneration Department project designed to inform and work with local councillors, housing providers and developers. The goal is to support stakeholders in building new homes of the right types and sizes in the right places to meet our local population's needs.

Danika and her team used land registry square footage data to show how affordable the different sized properties are. It's true that on the Island, unlike some other areas of the UK, more residents can afford to buy or rent a flat. But most can't afford to buy a three-bedroom home to accommodate a family.

Looking at the overall UK picture, house prices appear cheaper on the Island. But salaries and incomes are much lower. Connecting house prices with real earnings at a granular level showed true affordability in each ward.

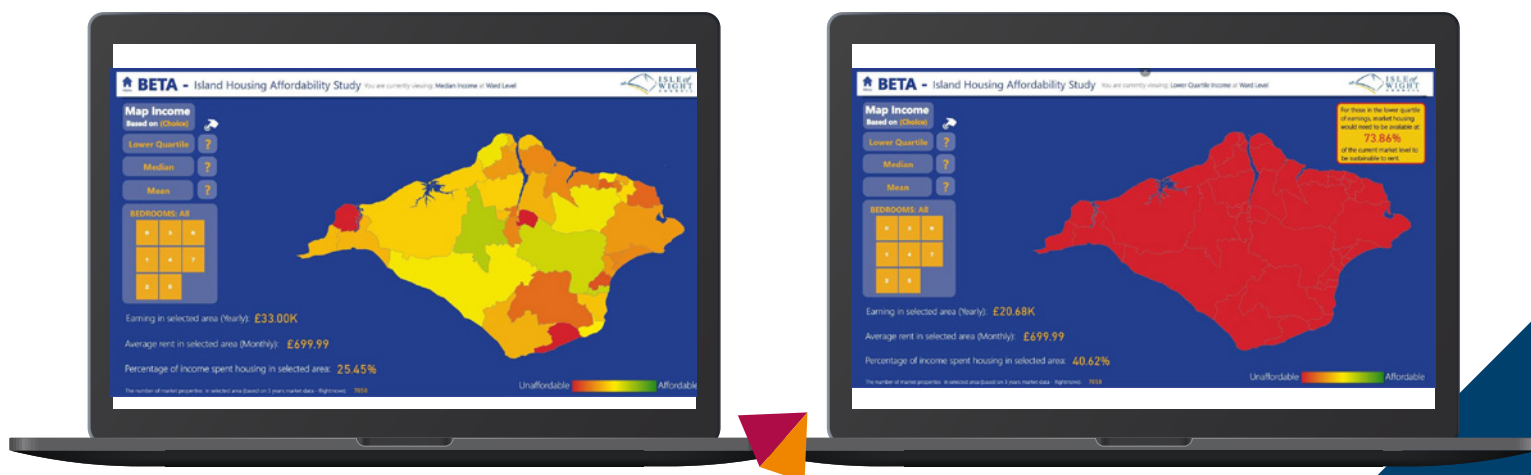
The benefits

Visual data that everyone can understand

"The interactive tool is really powerful, making the information and data meaningful and impactful," Danika says. "People understood the implications immediately. When we showed the interactive map for lower quartile income affordability, it raised a gasp from the audience. Residents in this group cannot afford to buy or rent anywhere. It's vital that we address this, for the well-being of our population and the health of the local economy."

The data insight was very well received at the meeting and afterwards. It was successful because of the combination of relevant, granular data and the visual presentation in PowerBI.

Other departments asked Danika what PowerBI could do for them – they wanted to be able to visualise data in a similar way and understand local differences and needs in the Island population. Danika's team has also been using PowerBI to present Covid-19 data and work is underway to develop a range of other similar dashboards for other business areas.



“

It was the single most impactful presentation I've delivered in 15 years in local government. It started to precipitate change.

”

“

The presentation to the Island Housing Conversation really made waves. We were asked to present at more meetings, because people wanted to understand the detail.



Danika Barber, Public Health and Strategic Analytics Lead
Isle of Wight Council

”





The future

Driving even more value from cost-effective data, in-house

Because of Covid-19, the new Island Planning Strategy and Housing Strategy has been delayed. But the insight from the Paycheck and Rightmove data model will form a key part of the evidence base when it goes ahead.

Danika adds:

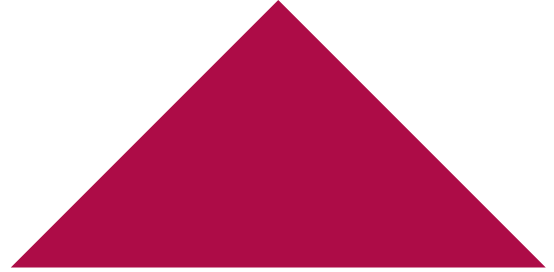
“

Developers have already asked us a lot of questions. We're happy to be able to share insights that will help them propose the right mix of housing in their developments. It's a win-win because they are more likely to get planning approval for schemes that meet clearly defined needs and bring the housing that local people need to the right parts of the Island.

”

Despite budget cuts, Danika has found it relatively easy to get the data subscription signed off again this year, because the budget decision-makers clearly understand the value. “It's a low-cost investment compared to the expense of using a consultancy to do the modelling and reporting. We plan to use the data for other things – for example spotting unmet need for free school meals to council tax and benefits uptake. We're already considering how to create a data warehouse that makes this and other data available across all departments at the Council.”

“We have a brilliant working relationship with Stewart on behalf of CACI. He is really willing to have a conversation about what data is available and useful. He understands what Local Authorities need and appreciates the constraints and limited budgets we work with. It's a real partnership approach. The Housing Regeneration project has effectively been a proof of concept for The Isle of Wight Council: other teams are eager to exploit the potential and value of visualising their datasets in PowerBI.”



“

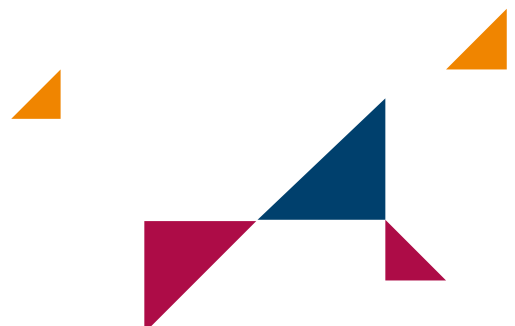
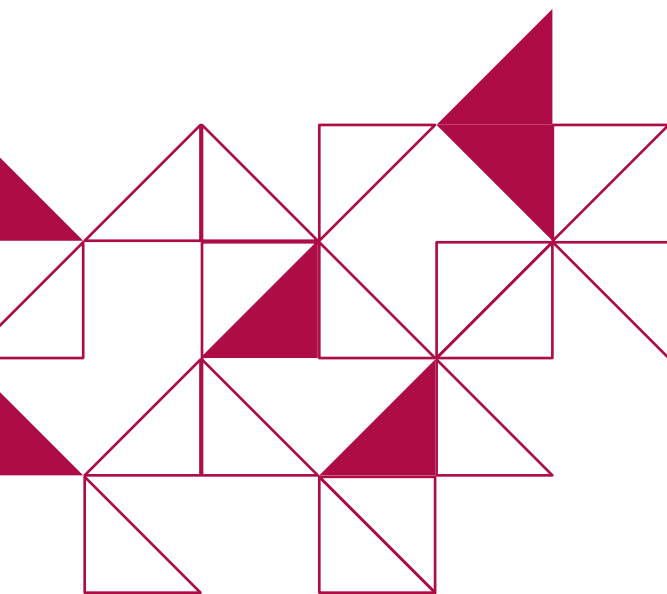
This is a very significant piece of work for our Housing Strategy, developing an innovative data tool for assessing what affordable housing means in an Island context. This can now be used for Planning Policy, Housing and Regeneration Strategies and cuts across Homelessness and Adult Social Care. It gives politicians answers to thorny questions about affordability in their wards.

Data consultancy firms would normally charge around 50K just for the wage and house price and rental data, leaving us with an overview and lots of printed tables. Instead, the team spent time with me understanding the complexities and methodology of housing and determining affordable rent levels. After we purchased the relevant data at a much lower cost, they created a visual interactive tool that can be used to answer tricky questions on an on-going basis.

With this tool, we can produce real service impacts going forward. We can identify the critical housing issues we need to address, and - importantly - the ones we don't.

Paul Thomas, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Isle of Wight Council

”



To find out more about how CACI can help you support your community, please get in touch:

Stewart Eldridge
Head of Public Sector Data



CALL 0207 6056 164

EMAIL SELDRIDGE@CACI.CO.UK

WEB CACI.CO.UK

CACI