



In 2005, Colchester Borough Council appointed Smith Bellerby to provide a comprehensive, proactive invoice management service for their gas, electricity and water bills.

The initial audit showed that the Council was processing over 1200 paper invoices each year with data being manually tabulated on record sheets.

Within the first six months, Smith Bellerby implemented a number of changes which streamlined the Council's administration procedures:

- Provision of consolidated bills and electronic billing data by suppliers
- Introduction of payment files for the Council's Finance Area—to eliminate the need for rekeying of data
- Transfer of straggler gas and electricity sites on to bulk contracts
- Optimisation of green electricity charges for the smaller sites
- Disconnection of dormant supplies
- Correction of numerous billing errors and overcharges
- Transfer of responsibility for liaison with suppliers and resolution of billing / account issues to Smith Bellerby
- Preparation of budget and accrual reports

By March 2006, direct savings of over £28,000 had been achieved—including a refund from one supplier of £25,000 for two year's worth of overcharges on just one site! There was a further £12,500 of indirect savings due to the reduced administrative burden for the Council.

Since then, the list of savings has continued to grow and has now exceeded **£245,000**. This has covered Smith Bellerby's management fees many times over.

But the benefits of Smith Bellerby's services have been more than financial. In 2007, the Colchester embarked on the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme (LACMP). This required the Council to have a detailed knowledge of energy usage and spend across its entire site portfolio in order to set benchmarks for improvement.

Lee Spalding, Building Services Manager, commented "using data from Smith Bellerby, we were able to produce the information with a minimum of effort and in good time to gain maximum benefit from the programme. Smith Bellerby also provide monthly updates of energy usage so we can monitor our progress throughout the project".

Lee Spalding from Colchester Borough Council and Jenny Smith from Smith Bellerby



"Their experience and support has been invaluable. If we didn't have the benefit of their services, we would have to employ our own in-house utility experts".

"Smith Bellerby provide a firm foundation upon which we can build our energy management improvements for the future".