**IBM**

# Bradford Council begins major transformation to improve customer service and efficiency

## Overview

■ **Business challenge**

*Bradford's vision to be one of the best councils in Britain required greater focus on customers and improved efficiency in the delivery of services. A major transformation to IT infrastructure, systems and business processes was needed to support this vision.*

■ **Solution**

*Bradford and IBM entered into a 10-year Strategic Partnership. The Bradford-i transformation programme is already achieving significant business change in customer service and internal business processes. As part of the agreement, Serco provides day-to-day management of key IT services through a newly created data centre.*

■ **Key benefits**

• *Improved customer access to Council services*

• *Better care for citizens thanks to improved tracking and follow-up of enquiries*

• *Customer satisfaction increased by 10% (a net change of 25%)*

• *Estimated efficiency savings rising to £5million a year within three years.*

The area served by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council has faced a number of challenges in its recent history. The Council is working hard to address economic regeneration while dealing with over 600,000 customer interactions every year.

As commercial organisations continue to improve their customer service, citizens expect to see the same level of improvement from public bodies and, a few years ago, surveys showed that customer satisfaction with Bradford was low. Access to Council services was often difficult with no single point of customer contact. People frequently had to make several telephone calls or visits to gain the outcome they required. There was a lack of common systems and integration between departments and, with over 20,000 employees working from a number of different sites, it was impossible to offer customer-focused service.

*"IBM has helped us put in place the foundations for a major transformation that will benefit the whole of the Council and every Bradford resident. Over 10 years we are examining each service area and IBM will work with us to make improvements wherever there is a business case for change."*

*– Wallace Sampson, Strategic Director of Customer Services at Bradford Council*

# *Achieving value through government transformation*

## Business benefits

- Improved customer access to Council services
- Better care for citizens thanks to improved tracking and follow-up of enquiries
- Customer satisfaction increased by 10% (a net change of 25%)
- A high proportion of customer enquiries now dealt with satisfactorily first time
- Estimated efficiency savings rising to £5million a year within three years
- Better decision-making through improved management information
- Effective transfer of skills into the organisation
- Foundations in place for major transformation.

*"The principal reason for engaging with IBM and Serco is about improving customer services. We've changed the way that we structure the town hall, how we actually front-up and use IT to interact with the customer. It's about better access and it's about better quality services."*

*– Kris Hopkins, Council Leader at Bradford*

### Customer-centric transformation

Prompted by a desire to improve service to its citizens, Bradford developed its "20-20 vision" - to become one of the best councils in the country within five years and to be recognised world wide for the regeneration of the district.

Making the transition from a service-centric to a customer-centric organisation is a vital factor in achieving this vision and the Bradford-i programme is a key enabler. Its main objectives are to:

- *Simplify processes*
- *Provide seamless access to an organisation-wide knowledge base that will enhance working practices not only between Council departments but also with partners in the district*
- *Reduce the administrative burden on Council staff, enabling them to provide better front line services*
- *Offer improved customer access to services through new channels*
- *Deliver efficiencies and significant cost savings over time.*

### Strategic partnership for change

Bradford realised that it needed support to bring about such significant changes. Wallace Sampson, Strategic Director of Customer Services at Bradford Council and Executive Sponsor for the Bradford-i programme explains: "We didn't want to bring in new technology that simply sat on top of existing practices – we were far more ambitious than that. New technology had to go hand-in-hand with a fundamental review of what we do and how we do it, focusing on the delivery of services from a customer point of view."

The Council wanted to develop a long-term strategic partnership that would help support business change across the organisation as well as providing technical expertise. "We liked IBM's approach to change management and could see that the organisation had strong consulting expertise," says Wallace. "We also recognised that working alongside IBM would transfer valuable skills into our organisation over the course of the Bradford-i programme."

IBM was selected to work with Bradford Council and local authority services specialist Serco Solutions in a 10-year partnership.

### Transition champions

Right from the start, the Council and IBM recognised that if a new, integrated way of working across the organisation was to be successful, time and effort had to be spent bringing a sense of corporate cohesion to service areas used to doing things in their own way.

A joint change team was formed which included professional change managers from IBM and individuals from each Council department. The combination of IBM's wide experience and expertise coupled with Council employees' deep understanding of their own service areas was very successful. The team carries out change readiness assessments, benefit analysis, looks critically at the Council's business processes to see where improvements can be made, and provides a Council-wide communications programme that keeps everyone informed of progress.

Each Council department has also appointed a "transition champion" to work very closely with the change management team. This has been crucial in both easing the rollout of changes and also assessing the detailed impact in each area. The change management team acts as a central pool of knowledge and expertise for the transition champions, providing training and education that can then be fed back to departments. A very positive Gateway Review by the Office of Government Commerce picked out the establishment of transition champions throughout the organisation as an example of good practice.

**Building success on flexible foundations**

Creating a better-integrated experience for Council staff and customers required a flexible and scalable IT infrastructure that would not only meet current needs but also accommodate future innovations. IBM designed and implemented an open architecture for simple and secure access, which can be expanded easily, and a new, state-of-the-art data centre based on IBM System p servers and blade technology.

Serco has day-to-day operational responsibility for the new centre and, under an innovative employment model, around 100 Council staff were seconded to work for Serco for the 10 years of the contract.

IBM Global Financing has enabled the initial upfront investment in the IT infrastructure. This will be repaid over 10 years, matching the savings that the Council makes as its Bradford-i programme progresses.

**Delivering efficiencies**

For internal services such as HR, payroll, finance and procurement, IBM and the Council have implemented new systems and processes based on SAP. These support the entire organisation with easily available, high quality business information and have completely transformed many historically costly and inefficient processes such as procurement.

The Council will shortly be launching a portal that will provide a consistent entry point to all Council systems. From the portal, employees will be able to perform their own administrative tasks, such as processing expenses and requesting holiday. Increasingly, manual, paper-based activities are disappearing, freeing Council officers to focus on providing better customer service.

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**Key components**

*Software*

- IBM WebSphere Portal
- IBM WebSphere Portlet Factory
- IBM Workplace Content Management
- IBM Tivoli Access and Identity Management
- SAP

*Servers*

- IBM pSeries
- IBM BladeCenter

*Business Partner*

- SERCO

*IBM Services*

- IBM Global Business Services
  – Strategy and Change
  – Customer Relationship Management
  – SAP
  – Business Technology Integration
  – Application Management Services
- IBM Global Technology Services
- IBM Software Group
- IBM Global Financing

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**Transformation at a glance**

*To achieve its vision to be one of the best councils in Britain, Bradford began a major transformation that would enable it to be more customer-focused while delivering services with greater efficiency. A joint Bradford/IBM team is working on a 10-year transformation programme to support business change, and design improved business processes and a new IT infrastructure. Two years into the programme, an integrated environment has already brought customer service improvements and efficiency benefits. The Council has built the foundations to achieve its vision and estimated savings are expected to rise to £5million a year within three years.*

## Customer benefits

One of the objectives of Bradford's 20-20 vision was to improve customer access to services through the provision of customer service contact centres, face-to-face information centres and "one stop shops". IBM and Serco have worked together to improve Bradford's existing Customer Relationship Management solution and this is reaping benefits as the Council moves the first point of customer contact out of individual service areas.

Information about each customer contact is now held corporately rather than in individual departments. Wherever a customer makes contact, the Council can tell how many times they have been in touch, what about and the resulting outcome. Citizens no longer have to make several telephone calls or contact different departments to resolve an issue. Councillors also have access to the CRM solution, enabling them to answer more questions from citizens without having to refer to Council officers.

The Council's Planning department provides concrete evidence of the benefits gained from the CRM solution. More than 80% of routine planning enquiries are now dealt with satisfactorily first time by the contact centres. Only more detailed enquiries have to be routed to planning officers, freeing them to process planning applications more quickly.

The Council is also in a far better position to monitor and follow up situations effectively. If there is a need to liaise with external organisations for example, Council officers have a full history, which they can pass on to improve outcomes.

Kris Hopkins, Council Leader at Bradford says: "The principal reason for engaging with IBM and Serco is about improving customer services. We've changed the way that we structure the town hall, how we actually front-up and use IT to interact with the customer. It's about better access and it's about better quality services."

## Ready for major transformation

Chris O'Connor, Bradford-i Programme Director at Bradford Council says: "The productive working relationships that have developed between IBM and Council employees are a great success. Officers working on the Bradford-i programme take expertise in areas such as business process analysis back into their service areas and that benefits their department now and into the future."

Less than two years into the 10-year programme, the Council is seeing a desire for continuous improvement beginning to permeate throughout the organisation. There are early indications of a net 25% improvement in customer satisfaction and efficiency savings are predicted to rise to £5million a year within three years.

Wallace concludes: "IBM has helped us put in place the foundations for a major transformation that will benefit the whole of the Council and every Bradford resident. Over 10 years we are examining each service area and IBM will work with us to make improvements wherever there is a business case for change."

## For more information

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