

Warrington Borough Council (WBC)

Improving efficiency through ERP shared services.

WBC is a unitary metropolitan council that was established in 1998 and serves nearly 200,000 people in the north-west of England. It has an annual budget of around £490 million. By 2030, it aims to be recognized as one of the best places in the UK in which to live and work, with its citizens enjoying an outstanding quality of life. It has approximately 4,500 employees, with a further 6,000 based in schools.

THE CHALLENGE

WBC faced a substantial growth in demand for front-line citizen services, caused by rising unemployment as a result of the economic downturn and the increased longevity of older people. There were also clear indications that national government grants, or settlements, would decrease. At the same time, central government was already pressing councils to make significant savings.

If it was going to maintain the quality and availability of services, the Council needed to relieve pressure on its non-mandatory spending by lowering the costs of internal services and increasing their efficiency. This would free funds for citizen services. WBC's aim was to save £3 million a year by 2015—enabling funds to be redirected to protect vital frontline services.

WHAT WBC NEEDED

The Council's existing applications platform was near the end of its useful life. At a minimum, WBC needed to bring in new technology to handle information for financial, procurement and HR administration services—but it could do a lot more.

The Council's thinking had focused on the tactical advantages of a change in technology rather than strategic transformation sparked by changing the way it operates its internal services.

In the months before WBC issued its open tender, we discussed the options. They realized that IT + transformation would save much more than new IT alone—provided that they had the right partner. They chose us.

OUR ANSWER

We implemented SAP shared services for finance, procurement, payroll and HR, with a self-service HR portal, as part of a wider transformation program to change the way the Council administered itself. Project Enterprise was expected to pay for itself in 36 months. We focused on WBC's business needs, ensuring that all the Council's support services could be based on the same data model.

CASE STUDY

GOVERNMENT

State and local government

“Something that felt right from the outset was this sense of partnership and CGI's willingness to adapt and be flexible. In terms of working with CGI, I'd say to another authority: ‘Trust them’.”

Simon Bavin

Project Enterprise Project
Manager, WBC

Using our local government framework, we installed standard processes and procedures and we focused on changing the culture of the way the Council worked. Where necessary, these were customized to meet specific needs. Because this was our thirteenth public service SAP implementation, we were aware of potential pitfalls and were able to plan around them.

Up to 40 people worked with Warrington implementation staff. The partnership was so close that it became difficult to tell who came from which organization.

Our transformation consultants helped people to understand why and how they needed to change their internal processes. Workshops covered topics ranging from system migration to cultural change.

We also sat on the executive program board, which included the director of People and Improvement. Active engagement by council leaders and senior executives was crucial to the successful transformation.

A SUCCESS STORY

The new system went live within 10 months. Key success factors included:

- Strong Council commitment at every level, based on a clear project identity and comprehensive, regular communications
- A proven SAP model—simple to install and easy to adapt to individual needs
- Our deep understanding of local government and wide experience and expertise in business transformation
- Comprehensive knowledge transfer— helping to establish a SAP support center within the council, staffed by their own experts, to provide advice to employees

WBC changed its organization in line with our best practice business processes configured within our preconfigured Business Transformation template. The result was more efficient, cost-effective internal services, with staff freed from administration to concentrate on their jobs.

The self-service element means data is entered only once, preventing re-inputting mistakes, ensuring a better control system and giving management a clear overview. And WBC is on course for its £3 million a year savings—and more.

WHY WORK WITH US

- Partnership: we work with you as a team, committed to achieving your goals
- Value: reasonable costs and high quality, delivered on time
- Experience: we understand how to work with local government across all business areas
- More than IT: we match our skills in enterprise resource planning with proven business transformation

About CGI

With over 69,000 professionals in 40 countries, CGI fosters local accountability for client success while bringing global delivery capabilities to clients' front doors. Founded in 1976, CGI applies a disciplined delivery approach that has achieved an industry-leading track record of on-time, on-budget projects.

The project referenced in this case study was delivered by Logica, which CGI acquired in August 2012.

KEY BENEFITS

- On target to achieve £3 million savings a year
- Less bureaucracy – and self-service allow workers to focus on their core concerns, not filling in multiple forms
- Better, more accessible information leads to quicker decision-making and more efficient internal services
- Project Enterprise is the start – our continuing support service provides back-up and advice whenever they are needed

"They definitely give you value for money. CGI's contract came out spot on."

Councilor Keith Bland,
Deputy Leader of the Council,
WBC