

## Redesigning administrative services at West Sussex County Council

Re-shaping the back office to reduce costs and enhance service delivery



### The challenge

West Sussex County Council wanted their administrative office services function – the platform from which many front line services are delivered – to be streamlined, resilient and more efficient across the entire council. By re-shaping the way office services were delivered and through enhanced use of technology, the aim was to reduce the cost and time of running administrative operations while improving customer service levels.

### Our solution

As part of a 10 year strategic partnership, Capita has worked closely with West Sussex and its employees, to re-design the way administrative functions are delivered across all services. It has achieved £2m worth of savings to date and by taking a holistic view of the administrative tasks across the Council, a combination of consolidated administration hubs, resilience services and specialist administrative teams have been put into place to best meet individual service needs and skills across the workforce. West Sussex now has the right level of resource and specialist knowledge to support service delivery. And, through a specially designed training and development programme, employees have been up-skilled to work in multiple service areas meaning resource can be managed in line with demand.

"West Sussex had made good progress in making changes in our back office but the partnership with Capita has enabled us to really make the savings we needed to. With Capita's support, we now have a more streamlined and resilient administration function which was achieved without any impact on service delivery - a great example of partnership working."

**Head of Business Change,  
West Sussex County Council**

## Background

In 2012, Capita began a 10 year strategic partnership with West Sussex County Council for the delivery of support services including finance, HR and payroll, office services, online service delivery and pension administration.

The office services workstream provides administrative support on behalf of the Council. It covers a range of services, including minute taking, diary management and invoice processing, right through to supporting specialist processes such as child protection and adult safeguarding. At the start of the partnership, there were approximately 120 specific administrative roles which were carried out at 18 different offices located in five regions across the county.

The Council was looking for a long-term solution that would re-shape and resource manage the office service function to:

- Achieve cost savings
- Increase resilience through an enhanced multi-skilled resource structure
- Remove single points of failure
- Standardise processes
- Implement technologies to decrease paper-based processes
- Improve management information
- Guaranteed service levels

## Redesigning processes

Following this analysis, Capita introduced a new service delivery model that consisted of three core office service functions, including:

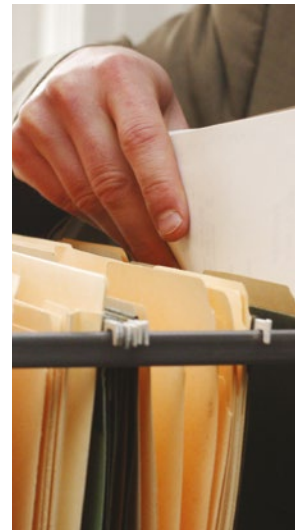
Service area	Responsible for	Examples of services included
Office resource hub	This is a newly formed shared service administration hub based in the Council's offices in Chichester. It now handles generic processes across a number of service areas and those that are not reliant on a specific location to carry out the work.	Ordering stationery and support to Learning and Development.
Specialist administration	This specialist team is responsible for delivering administrative functions that have a dependency on location, interact with a service specific system and require a degree of face-to-face interaction with the service user.	Minute taking for a social worker on a child protection case.
Embedded administration	Within the embedded administration team, employees carry out tasks that are location dependent and require face-to-face interaction with the service user.	Operating the 'children's access point,' at West Sussex - the single point of contact for referrals to children's social care services.

## Understanding the administration requirements

Employees within the office services operation carry out hundreds of different administrative tasks and processes to support service delivery across the Council. Before recommendations could be made on re-designing the office services delivery model, it was important to understand how each of these tasks worked and their reliance on systems, locations and the Council's employees.

Capita worked alongside the office services team and employees at West Sussex to establish all of the core processes. A comprehensive service mapping exercise was also carried out to demonstrate exactly where administration functions were undertaken across the multiple locations and service areas. This also meant that an impact analysis could be done to understand the dependency on location and how any changes to service delivery would impact the end user, the customer and system it was delivered from.

As a result, Capita was able to assess the volume of common or duplicate processes occurring across the Council and the level of specialist administration needed to support specific services areas, such as social care.





## Relocating services

A significant number of office services functions were common processes. This meant a large volume of processes could be consolidated within the office resource hub in Chichester. As a result, approximately 40% of employees within office services were relocated from multiple Council offices to the centralised administration function.

To ensure the relocation was handled appropriately, Capita carried out a thorough consultation process with employees and unions, where regular updates, information and opportunities for two-way communication were provided.

The relocation was delivered in phases to minimise any disruption to service delivery. By November 2013, the complex move of people, systems and equipment was complete - to agreed timescales and without any impact on targets and performance indicators.

The tables (right) demonstrate the changes across the sites before and after the process was redesigned.

The number of employees that were relocated to the centralised hub in Chichester significantly increased. These employees have been multi-skilled to deal with a range of generic tasks. Now even more employees can support a wider range of council services which has created in-house resilience to deal with workloads during peaks in service demand.

### Previous office services service delivery model

Site and function type	Administration function	Number of office services employees (%)
Chichester	Mixed	31%
Bognor Regis	Mixed	16%
Worthing	Mixed	22%
Horsham	Mixed	31%

### New office services delivery model

Site and function type	Administration function	Number of office services employees (%)
Chichester*	Centralised hub	50%
Bognor Regis*	Specialist pooled admin	14%
Worthing*	Specialist pooled admin	14%
Horsham/Crawley*	Specialist pooled admin	20%

\*There is a small amount of embedded resources all the locations.



"My role has been completely transformed since working with Capita. As part of the transformation of the administration service, I have progressed into a business analyst role and continuously working to improve business processes. The onsite training I have received has equipped me with the knowledge and skills I need and I am now even supporting other Capita partnerships to share best practice across their services."

**Business Analyst, Capita**

## Training and career development

Capita has a strong focus of empowering its people, ensuring they have the right skills to deliver services effectively and provide development opportunities to help them prosper. As part of the service redesign and ongoing business as usual activity, employees are part of a continuous training and development programme. This enables employees to become cross-skilled in multiple areas of administrative delivery within the office resource hub. This played a significant role in supporting the transition of services.

The new delivery approach also opened up a number of promotional and career development opportunities for employees. And, through multi-skilling employees, it offers better resilience for the service and helps to eliminate single points of failure.



## The results

- Cost savings worth over £2m across the service area through re-designing the process and skill requirements
- Greater resilience across the service area through the provision of consolidated teams of multi-skilled resources
- An auditable end-to-end process delivery allowing users to know where a task is in the system and when it will be completed
- Focus on core services by releasing capacity to focus on front line delivery in sensitive service areas such as child protection and adult safeguarding
- Eliminating duplication to improved efficiency and consistency of processes
- Improved visibility of work volumes and management of service targets
- Reducing accommodation space for administration services from 18 offices to just five. This is supporting the Council's accommodation strategy, contributing towards cost savings and bringing environmental benefits
- Enhanced management information to monitor key performance indicators, which are checked regularly and discussed at service review meetings
- Increased staff morale and team work through multi-skilling, improved performance management, creating clearly defined career paths and supporting staff through training.

"We are really proud of how far we have brought the administrative function, since the partnership commenced. The administration function across West Sussex is now far more robust, employees have better career progression paths and we have delivered over £2 million worth of savings for the Council. As the partnership evolves, we will continue to work together to explore further opportunities to create savings for the Council and improve services for its users."

**Business Services Director, Capita**

## Looking to the future

The culture for developing ongoing service improvements and efficiencies to help West Sussex achieve their objectives is prominent throughout the partnership. Capita and West Sussex are continually working together to further transform the delivery of office services across the Council. The ability to create standardised processes within current systems and developing solutions based on insight and analysis is ever present and will be integral to ongoing service delivery and improvements. But new technology will also play a part. Looking ahead, solutions such as the planned implementation of Capita's workflow tool will provide even better standardisation, productivity and analysis to deliver a truly end-to-end business administration function with full management control for the future.



## Find out more:



[locgovservices@capita.co.uk](mailto:locgovservices@capita.co.uk)



[www.capita.co.uk/localgovernmentsservices](http://www.capita.co.uk/localgovernmentsservices)



Follow us on Twitter: @Capita\_LGS



Capita local government services