

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council saves £2 million with Advanced's software

Cloud-hosted finance system replaced disparate software and paper-based processes, Implementation of a single, integrated solution has supported a £2million saving, 100,000 invoices now processed electronically every year and the System was replicated at the Doncaster Children's Services Trust.



Doncaster
Metropolitan Borough Council

Doncaster MBC is the local authority responsible for the provision of services to the borough's population of more than 300,000 citizens. We have 5,287 staff employed within Doncaster MBC.

A single, integrated system for visibility and accuracy

We selected the system from Advanced due to their expertise in the local government sector, the quality of the software and its cost-effectiveness, following a tender via the Local Government Sprint II Framework. We now have more than 1,200 users of the system, which was implemented as part of the Council's wider strategic plan to save £109 million by 2016/17.

Prior to implementing the software, we were reliant on a heavily paper and Excel-based system with manual data entry into multiple solutions.

e5 is now used as our general ledger system and a central place to manage all financial processes such as the full procure to pay process for raising purchase orders/paying supplier invoices, bank reconciliations and raising invoices/ managing debt collection.

Previously we had a solution for general ledger and processing supplier invoices, a bespoke outdated mainframe for raising invoices/ managing debt collection, spreadsheets for bank reconciliations and purchase management processes were paper-based or non-existent.

Automation increases strategic analysis

All of the other solutions feed into e5, meaning all financial processes are automated and can be managed end-to-end within the finance solution.

Requisitions are raised within eProcurement, which automatically updates the general ledger in e5. As this moves through each stage of the process, being converted into a purchase order (PO) and receipted, this is again reflected in the system.

Invoices received by suppliers are scanned using Optical Character Recognition technology with V1 Capture, and matched to the purchase order receipt within e5 to be processed for payment. The documents are electronically archived and can be easily accessed via the finance solution. Previously this was a manual, paper-based process to process supplier invoices received.

"We now have a single version of the truth with staff able to access one accurate, up-to-date source of data. With electronic purchase-to-pay processes we have greater visibility of spend and can ensure compliance. By choosing to have our solutions hosted by Advanced we were able to take advantage of their resources and expertise on this complex project."

Steve Brown >
Financial Systems Manager >
Doncaster Metropolitan
Borough Council

Section headline over one or two lines

Collaborative Planning is used by all financial management staff as well as circa 300 budget holders for revenue monitoring and forecasting. Data is automatically imported daily from e5, ensuring staff have access to the latest, relevant information.

Brown adds, "Our budget holders are empowered to self-serve and manage the budgets themselves, while finance staff are now able to do more analysis to support strategic decisions. From mid-2017 we will also be using Collaborative Planning for capital monitoring, which is currently managed on spreadsheets, in order to reap the same rewards we have already achieved with the revenue model."

In September 2015 we also gave staff at 50 schools, whose payments are processed by us, access to the budgeting and forecasting solution. This has enabled school staff to view their information – including drill-down access to invoices, without waiting for a monthly report from us.

Electronically processing 100,000 invoices per annum

Our schools are also benefiting from the Council using the V1 electronic document management technology to automate the capturing of data from PDF invoices, which are then exported into e5.

Brown says, "There is very minimal manual intervention involved in our invoice management process now, which has been key to driving efficiency savings. Electronic document management is an important element of our financial management system as part of our digital strategy to be as paperless and cashless as possible."

Investment in technology is key to significant savings

So far we have achieved £2 million in savings aided by the implementation of the Advanced solution, with a remaining £100,000 anticipated in the 2016/17 financial year due to the additional efficiencies that will be delivered when we implement new modules and upgraded systems.

The solution has been so successful that we shared the entire system when we established the Doncaster Children's Services Trust, to run our children's services.

Brown concludes, "By implementing this integrated suite of software we have increased visibility and control of finances, streamlined process efficiencies and decommissioned several legacy systems, including a 20-year-old mainframe, which led to reduced licensing and support costs. We recognise the need to utilise technology to deliver process efficiencies and release significant savings. We have transformed our financial systems, and are continuing to invest in Advanced's technologies by adding new modules and upgrades to the solutions we have."

"At Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) we have saved £2million enabled by using a financial management system from Advanced since 2013. The solution consists of the e5 finance and procurement management solution Collaborative Planning the budgeting and forecasting software and document management technology powered by V1. All of the software is integrated together and hosted in the cloud by Advanced, and in 2015 the entire system was replicated at Doncaster Children's Services Trust, set up by the council to run the borough's children's services."

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