CASE STUDY

Consolidating five councils and unifying payment solutions

paygate works like clockwork. I used to be ringing the controls and systems offices up as Easter was approaching to ensure adjusted processing dates were in place, but I don't need to worry about that now. Everything just runs so smoothly

Formed on 1 April 2020, Buckinghamshire Council arose as a major unitary authority in the UK through the amalgamation of five previous entities. It succeeded Buckinghamshire County Council, along with Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks, and Wycombe District Councils.

Comprising most of the county of Buckinghamshire, the county boasts Pinewood Studios and Silverstone racetrack among its notable assets. With its substantial tax base, collecting over half a billion pounds in council tax annually from its 236k households, Buckinghamshire Council faced the unique challenge of navigating the complexities of a newly formed unitary authority amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a steadfast commitment to driving positive change for local communities and businesses, Buckinghamshire Council embarked on a transformative journey aimed at enhancing service delivery. However, this transformative endeavour was not without its challenges.

The challenge

Following the merger, Buckinghamshire Council faced the formidable task of consolidating disparate systems inherited from its precursor organisations.

With fragmented payment systems across the council's districts, redundant processes, and the need for streamlined operations to better serve its residents, the urgency for efficient, cloud-based solutions were now critical to business continuity.

Moreover, with the onset of the pandemic, the council faced the urgent need to transition to remote working which further amplified the need for reliable and accessible cloud-based solutions to keep their operations running smoothly.

Clive (Head of Revenues and Benefits) explains:

"My primary project focus was consolidating the revenues and benefits district systems that were doing council tax and business rates. We needed to get them all on one system. There were four of those from three suppliers. But at the same time, we had two banks. In tandem with the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to remote work for everyone, the task appeared daunting".

The solution

To address these challenges, Buckinghamshire Council initiated a comprehensive consolidation project aimed at harmonising its payment systems.

Leveraging the G-Cloud process for procurement, the council seamlessly transitioned to a unified payment system with paygate, marking a significant milestone in its journey towards operational efficiency and enhanced service delivery.

From the initial stages of planning to the final implementation, the transition was completed with ease and simplicity. With paygate's seamless migration process, the move enabled hassle-free adoption by all councils involved.

The migration process is underpinned by an experienced support team. Their experience was critical to managing the migration project and ensuring it was completed on time. Working closely with Buckinghamshire Council's internal team, their support and clear communication enabled the different councils to transition to the new cloud solution with confidence.

Embracing paygate's automation, Buckinghamshire Council optimised workflows allowing for the reallocation of resources towards strategic initiatives, streamlining operations and enhancing overall efficiency and service delivery.

We have real peace of mind to know that with paygate's contingency plan, we can keep going if the unforeseeable happens

I can only speak very highly of paygate that they did everything that they said they were going to do. It was a demanding schedule that we had put in place and it was part of a much bigger project but paygate delivered. I don't think paygate could have done anything more”

The outcome

With paygate's seamless transition process and exceptional support, the task of consolidating five council payment solutions was successfully accomplished.

A notable 20% reduction in staffing requirements highlighted the efficiency gains achieved through streamlined processes and automation. Operational tasks, once labour-intensive, now run seamlessly, requiring minimal oversight from managerial and contract personnel.

The reliability and performance of paygate's solution are further evidenced by its seamless operation during critical periods, such as Easter processing, without manual intervention.

Enhanced business continuity planning with paygate, facilitated by cloud solutions, provide peace of mind should unforeseen disruptions occur, ensuring uninterrupted service delivery for both colleagues and residents of Buckinghamshire Council.

Beyond operational enhancements, paygate's unwavering support during the consolidation process emphasised its commitment to customer success. Technical experts from paygate provided invaluable guidance, simplifying complex infrastructure scenarios and ensuring seamless execution of critical tasks.

Clive explains:

“I found paygate very, very supportive. The technical experts at paygate attended the calls laid out the process flows and infrastructure scenarios to make it simple for me to understand because it's not something I do on a day to day basis. They talked us through what was needed and asked us the appropriate questions for us to be able to proceed. It was very smooth and extremely well supported.”

The future

Looking ahead, Buckinghamshire Council remains committed to leveraging paygate's innovative solutions to drive continued efficiency and resilience.

As Buckinghamshire Council moves forward in its new structure, their partnership with paygate will continue to provide the expertise to support their focus on agility, innovation and customer-centricity.

The migration to robust cloud solutions has already achieved secure anytime, anywhere access for remote workers and transformed contingency planning. The valuable cost and operational efficiencies they realise are reflected in tangible benefits to their employees and to the residents they serve.

Buckinghamshire Council is now well-placed to look to the future, confident that their payment infrastructure is resilient, and built to grow and adapt as new technologies emerge and customer demands evolve.

Interested in discussing a risk free, smooth migration to achieve cost and process efficiencies?

We're here to help

LET'S TALK

Key points

The challenge

- Disparate systems across 5 councils
- Inconsistent operations
- Complex business continuity

The solution

- Fast G-Cloud procurement
- Automation for time and cost savings
- Managed migration to cloud services
- Adaptable, future-ready solution

The outcome

- Significant efficiency gains
- Seamless operations
- Enhanced business continuity planning
- First class support