

Local Government Partnership
Working **together** to delight
you and your customers



Supporting the very best working practices in local government

Over the past two decades, we have been working with councils to transform the way in which they deliver services. We've also made significant contributions to the quality of the services they provide, their appropriateness and the levels of customer satisfaction.

At the same time, we've enabled our local authority partners across the country to benefit from efficiency savings adding up to several hundred million pounds. These savings - around £50 million for Liverpool and £30 million for Edinburgh alone - have either been ploughed back into core services or, in the case of Edinburgh, been used to minimise increases in Council Tax payments.

We've helped a number of our partner councils to transform into some of the most rapidly improving local authorities in the country. And we've just formed a partnership with South Tyneside, which was recently voted the top performing local authority in the country. The prime objective there - apart from enhancing already high levels of achievement - is economic regeneration.

We do all this through investment and by utilising modernised ICT infrastructures to support the very best working practices in local government, based on the redesign and reengineering of mission critical but non-core back office services.

You've only got to look at the impressive list of accreditations our partnerships have won, along with literally dozens of performance awards and commendations, to appreciate that relationships with BT really do deliver results.

While all our partnerships deliver multiple services for the local authorities they care for, we've concentrated on just one aspect for each of them in this publication. With [South Tyneside](#), it's the economic regeneration I just mentioned. With [Sandwell](#), we look at the cultural issues associated with transferring people from the public to the private sector.

In [Suffolk](#), we're particularly proud of the unique and highly effective approach we adopted to dealing with adult social care. [Liverpool's](#) shining star is its growing ability to win new customers, while [Rotherham's](#) is procurement and [Edinburgh's](#) is the way in which ICT redesign has revolutionised service delivery. I do hope you find this small sample of our experiences of working with key councils both interesting and inspiring.



Chris Sayers
Director, BT Local Government

Accelerating economic and social regeneration in South Tyneside

Across South Tyneside, it's estimated that the BT brand, investment and physical presence (two business centres) will act as a catalyst for up to 2,000 jobs. BT will guarantee an average of 750 of those jobs, peaking at over 1,000 sustainable jobs, as part of a strategic partnership with South Tyneside Council.

In phase 1 - BT, ONE North East and South Tyneside Council have secured the investment of one of India's largest technology companies to invest in South Tyneside as part of the partnership. Tech Mahindra, a trusted BT delivery partner for more than 20 years, expects to create up to 500 sustainable new jobs in the area over the next 5 years.

BT and Tech Mahindra will deliver UK on-shored services for the public sector and beyond in one of two shared services centres in Jarrow on the riverside. BT Local Government will also build a new headquarters on the riverside, in South Shields. In addition to providing local employment, this regeneration will look to reduce high levels of unemployment in the borough.

The combined impact of the job and business developments in the area is expected to contribute over £200 million to South Tyneside's economy over the term of the contract.

The Leader of South Tyneside Council, Councillor Iain Malcolm, commented: *"The ultimate objective of this partnership is to set about the sustainable development of a knowledge economy in the area. This would not be possible without the full range of measures proposed by BT, tailored to the local economic and demographic requirements of South Tyneside."*

One of the new purpose built business centres - The Hawthorne Building in Jarrow - is also BT Global Services UK Centre of Excellence for Shared Services. This centre can provide all the facilities and resources a business could ever need to guarantee outstanding levels of service.

This facility is also one of national significance, driving UK Public Sector shared services across BT and Tech Mahindra contracts, delivering outstanding levels of service and affordability to the clients of both companies. Businesses can also look forward to major savings on overheads from the day that they move in, which is vitally important in these challenging economic times.

The BT partnership with South Tyneside Council saw about 450 of the Council's 7000 employees transfer into BT under TUPE plus contract arrangements, protecting their conditions of service for ten years. The people who moved were drawn from the IT, Human Resources, Financial, Customer Services and Procurement teams.

The transfer of these people and service areas into BT is projected to deliver substantial savings to the authority over the term of the 10 year contract, via the service transformation programme we're implementing.

BT is equally committed to continually improving the already high standards of service delivery being achieved in the area. For example, in the departments that are now managed by BT, we've stated that we will improve 70% of key performance indicators year on year, while maintaining upper quartile performance.

For its part, BT remains excited by the thought of a partnership that will unlock the future potential of the region, by promoting a genuine knowledge economy through a combination of job creation and regeneration.



Putting people at the heart of service transformation in Sandwell

Commenting on Transform Sandwell – their partnership with BT Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council’s Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategic Resource, Councillor Steve Ealing, says: *“Just over a year in, we’re making great strides forward and seeing changes coming through to drive service transformation.”*

Transform Sandwell is taking the authority beyond a commitment to improve efficiency in core services like ICT, risk and insurance, finance and customer service. It’s providing 450 new job guarantees and encouraging regeneration with a multi million pound investment as an anchor tenant in a new business centre.

The secret of the partnership’s success was having people on the ground early, planning the transition with council managers. Importantly, it also had access to a reliable set of council measurements before actually taking on services. In other words, the partnership knew what it had to aim for from the outset. It also knew that it couldn’t afford a dip in service.

Partnership CEO Steve Smith, explains: *“So much of our work is about technology and systems that it’s all too easy to forget that people are at the heart of what we do – citizens, council staff and of course our own people. We didn’t fall into that trap. We acknowledged that people transferring from council to partnership employment would be doing so with a certain amount of trepidation.”*

During the first few months, the partnership spent a fair amount of time helping people to understand what it was looking to achieve – its vision, if you like. It also wanted people to accept new ways of working with open minds and ensure that they were confident about having jobs going forward.

In order to help managers and leaders understand the complexity of Transform Sandwell’s transformational agenda, the team applied the proven changefirst© methodology to ensure that the people risks associated with the introduction of the new customer contact centre and the delivery of employee self service were identified and factored into the solutions being delivered.

The partnership is now taking on additional services, such as procurement – an area in which the council spends around £80 million a year in bought in goods alone. Plus it’s working with the authority to deliver back office efficiencies to further enhance customer service.

Transform Sandwell is particularly proud of the children’s referral and assessment service it set up. Within a very short space of time, significant efficiencies and service improvements were realised. For example, 90% of assessments completed were ‘right first time.’ The same level of success applies to the anti social behaviour service, which captures requests and concerns from the public online and passes them to the police.

On the risk and insurance front, the council had a lot of problems with metal theft, such as the removal of drain covers. The hotline the partnership set up has enabled the relevant authorities to respond faster and reduced the number of thefts of this nature.

The partnership has also used BT’s corporate social responsibility funding to promote an anti-bullying campaign in six primary schools. And it is actively looking at how it can improve the delivery of customer service over a series of life events, such as births, marriages, crises at home and deaths.

In addition, the partnership has provided consultancy in a number of areas, most recently in the evaluation of the council’s residential education service. Its report has been approved by the cabinet and recommendations on how to run the service more efficiently are being adopted and rolled out.



Liverpool’s proven success at managing services attracts 30 new customers

The BT partnership model with Liverpool City Council is particularly innovative, in that it’s making its advanced IT infrastructure available to 30 customers across the public and independent sectors; via what is, to all intents and purposes, a shared services platform.

Even in the early days five years ago, when the focus was on transforming poorly performing services into best in class, this partnership was thinking ahead; specifying platforms and applications that could be scaled up to handle other business at some point in the future.

However, they weren’t after just any business. The partnership wanted to attract customers who would be a natural fit from the capability perspective. In other words, the requirements of potential customers had to broadly match their existing business activities.

The contract the partnership won to process licences for the private security industry with the Security Industry Authority is a good example of this capability matching.

The partnership was aware that BT was already looking after document handling, validation and payment processing – as well as the production and dispatch of corporate cards – for other customers. So we worked with BT and the council to re-engineer an already proven application and re-shape their technology platform to fit it.

The only other qualification for prospective customers is that they put added value and performance excellence ahead of simply ‘lowest cost’. The partnerships sees itself becoming increasingly involved in business activities that require high quality people, supported in a high quality ICT environment.

A customer the partnership certainly didn’t turn away was the Building Schools for the Future programme, under which they will provide a managed ICT service for 8 secondary schools. It’s based on an advanced infrastructure that BT has delivered for other schools and other customers, including local authorities, private sector organisations and central government departments.

Other partnership customers include, Northumbria Police, the Amateur Boxing Association of England (websites), the Grace Academy (ICT), One Vision Housing (resourcing services) and BT Local Government Services (Payroll and HR) and over 300 individual schools.

With each new business win, the partnership extends its capabilities a little more, developing a new skill set to add to its core service strengths. For example, ISO27001 accreditation supports their work with the Security Industry Authority. Under the Liverpool Direct banner, they are looking to be one of the first companies in the UK to be accredited with BS25999 for Business Continuity. And their green credentials include ISO14001.

The last word goes to the external assessors who undertook an intensive inspection of the services the partnership provides, as part of the process for achieving Customer First UK accreditation. After finding them compliant against all 32 of the criteria sections in the standard, the assessors concluded that: *“There was a clear vision and a set of objectives fully understood by staff, who then excelled in delivering service excellence.”*

No wonder the partnership has so many delighted customers and is attracting even more external interest as we speak. That’s one of the reasons why Liverpool City Council committed £325 million to extend its partnership with BT until 2017.

Closer working between social workers and contact centre staff provides faster access to care in Suffolk

The Suffolk partnership - which looks after Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council - is the only example of fully integrated front and back office services in a two-tier setting in the country. It's delivering the transformational change that has resulted in more accessible and more responsive service delivery; sometimes in quite unexpected ways.

For example, the partnership is particularly proud of the close working relationships it has developed with council staff at all levels. Nowhere is this more true than in Adult Social Services, where their achievements have been both remarkable and quite unique.

When the partnership started looking at the calls their contact centre agents were taking from clients with social care related issues, it quickly became clear that many of them didn't require the direct intervention of a social worker.

However, the way the service was operating at the time meant that all calls were being passed onto social work teams, regardless of client need. The outcome could only be described as a bottleneck. Clients were waiting for far too long before their requirements were met.

The relationship the partnership had developed with the Director of Adult & Community Services and his management team in Suffolk County Council resulted in the development of a new and faster client experience; as well as a far more cost-effective one for both councils - the latter being particularly important because social care makes the largest budgetary demands on funding, due to the growing number of elderly and vulnerable residents in their catchment area.

Contact centre staff, backed by senior social workers in situ on a rota basis, now handle 75% of all assessments at the first point of contact. The remaining 25% of complex requirements are passed to professionals, with many being managed over the telephone to improve the speed of response and reduce travel and the associated impact on cost, time and the environment.

Care professionals can now respond faster and maximise the time in which they can deliver the most benefit to those needing most help.

The majority of citizens are now obtaining the information and advice they need during their first call. Assessment for basic equipment is being delivered far faster than was previously possible, typically within 48 hours.

As importantly, people with complex requirements are getting the time and attention they deserve. The equally good news is that both councils now have a much better handle on what they're spending in adult social care and exactly where the money is going.

Creating a beacon status procurement service in Rotherham

The Rotherham partnership has helped Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to streamline the way it buys in goods and services, achieving beacon status for procurement efficiency in the process. Their procurement service is saving the council over £3 million a year, with over half of all third party spend now purchased locally.

This money is being ploughed back into improving front line council services, with the result that residents are benefiting from even greater investment in those services, along with improved access to them.

The streamlining on the procurement front has led to 180 different processes being amalgamated into a single, integrated and automated eProcurement solution, resulting in efficiency savings of more than 20%. Additionally:

- 90% of spend is now under contract and managed centrally
- 57% of third party spend is spent locally
- 99% of purchase orders are sent electronically
- 40% of invoices are received electronically.

Stats apart, virtually all goods and services can now be requisitioned and ordered online. So far fewer documents need to be posted - 80,000 per year at the last count! This has resulted in huge savings in time and paperwork, contributing to the council's sustainable agenda.

Until recently - and as in many other councils around the country - Rotherham had multiple devolved purchasing agreements with suppliers and relied almost entirely on manual, paper-based procurement. There was no alternative. That was how the system worked.

The partnership helped the council move to a position of central governance in the procurement arena, enabling them to gain more value from their suppliers, streamline processes - including purchase to pay - and reduce costs as a result.

The procurement model they adopted - which was developed by BT specifically for local authorities - is managed by a single, central procurement team and based on Category Management. A Category Manager looks after all the requirements within their remit, working with departments and end users to agree the best procurement route in each case.

With the partnership and the council working closely together to manage procurement and purchase to pay as part of a fully-managed, end-to-end service linked to output based results, backed by strong governance and comprehensive management reporting, Rotherham is making real, tangible savings.

Additional benefits of this joint 'best practice' approach to procurement include improved control over spend and suppliers, streamlined ordering, delivery and payment, increased cash flow certainty, clear visibility of spend and the ability to quickly adapt to supply market changes.



Standardisation of IT service delivery results in significant education and business improvements for Edinburgh

As the importance and complexity of ICT in Edinburgh's schools developed, it became clear that a more structured and standardised approach to infrastructure and applications was required to meet fast growing and changing needs. The same core issue applied to their corporate estate.

Against this backdrop, the BT partnership set about working with The City of Edinburgh Council to standardise the delivery of IT services across both estates, rationalising infrastructure and applications to deliver substantial cost savings.

As a result, a pupil, teacher or member of staff can now move across locations and still access the same documents and email. Everyone has the same desktop, and applications must be centrally approved (thereby eliminating performance issues resulting from unauthorised software use).

Both estates now also have dedicated single point of contact phone numbers on which staff can report day-to-day issues. The majority of basic PC problems are fixed remotely, without the need for costly site visits. And all 20,000 workstations are now controlled centrally and administration rights are only granted where there's a proven business need, so users feel confident that they are working in a secure manner.

In schools, the modernised infrastructure can support modern teaching software to engage young people. Staff and students alike have access to a secure virtual learning environment, where files can be shared and enhanced and printing and storage facilities are uniformly available.

Office based staff can share desks and work remotely, supporting more flexible working patterns and facilitating the rationalisation of council buildings.

In HR & Payroll, the partnership project team successfully brought 15,000 new users onto the system, resulting in significant cost savings and ensuring that HR records are up to date.

In Planning & Building Standards, time consuming and costly paper based processes have been replaced with an electronic system that delivers a better and more efficient service, with the ability for citizens to submit planning applications and check their progress online.

In Housing Services, the migration of disparate Housing and Revenues & Benefits data to a new server has enabled a far more efficient service. Claims processing times have been reduced by up to two thirds, leading to fewer citizen enquiries by phone, which in turn gives contact centre agents more time to deal with calls that require special attention.

To sum up, the partnership is enabling council staff to work more efficiently and deliver better services, while keeping costs down through the intelligent implementation of technology and simplified, standardised business processes.

In fact, Edinburgh's ICT service redesign has been so successful that Microsoft referenced it as the best example of infrastructure optimisation it has ever witnessed in local government anywhere Europe.

Why BT?

The success of BT's partnerships with local authorities is proven beyond doubt - not once, not twice, but several times over.

We've been replicating that success since 2001 - with City councils, Metropolitan councils, Two-tier councils and County councils.

While we earned our spurs with failing authorities, we're currently gaining even more kudos by working with the best local authority in the country - South Tyneside.

Referring specifically to the Liverpool and Sandwell partnerships - although these sentiments could be equally true of all our partnerships, John O'Brien of Ovum*, says: *"They are clearly a strong endorsement of BT's offering to the local government IT services markets. We believe BT's key strength is its willingness to be a true partner to its clients."* We couldn't agree more.

*The respected organisation that advises on the commercial impact of technology and market changes in telecoms, software and IT services.





Contact us

To see how we might work in partnership with your local authority, contact your BT Account Director or contact [Andrea Foord](#) on + 44 (0)780 1040673 or via email on andrea.foord@bt.com