

The Challenge

This London borough council had committed to a wholesale programme of organisational change. As part of its change programme, it had made the decision to transfer as many of its services as possible onto digital platforms.

Ameo was engaged nine months into the transfer, by which time the Council had bought and installed a number of new systems, but with no strategy in place to complete the programme. Being the first local authority to have attempted change on this scale, our client was keen to explore its options without losing valuable momentum.

The Outcome

With Ameo's support, the authority has become a model for digital working among councils, and is now widely held as an exemplar of how to make the switch.

Specific successes have included:

- the migration of key services onto a cloud server
- implementation of a Dynamics CRM system
- installation of a voice-activated AI system
- a new, cloud-based digital platform to run housing services and social care

We left the Council with a fully-functioning data warehouse and CRM system, an in-house ICT function and clear governance in place to complete its digital transformation.

The Engagement

The first challenge our consultants faced was the lack of programme governance. One of our earliest actions, therefore, was to build a proper business case around each new platform. We refocused the programme around the data, identified priorities for capital spending and introduced Systems Thinking.

Perhaps the greatest change in thinking we brought was our focus on priorities. The first wave of change had cost £20m, but there was still no endpoint in sight. We created a change management function from what had been merely a project management office. We pulled together a business case for the next wave of spending and obtained funding and agreement for this. At our suggestion, this included 'catch-up' work such as extending the wireless network across all Council-owned buildings.

In anticipation of the digital switchover, the Council had removed 40% of its back office staff, greatly reducing its ability to do business. At the start of our engagement, the average time taken to answer a phone call was twelve minutes. Upon completion of our programme, the time was down to two minutes. We encouraged officers to look at service delivery from the customer's perspective. With our support, they agreed both to revisit staffing and to undertake an audit of their own working culture.