

## The Challenge

A district council in the home counties wished to overhaul its financial operations. A number of systems were not performing as they should have been, and had been earmarked for improvement following an audit. The Council had made several abortive attempts to resolve the shortcomings, but had made little headway, despite bringing in outside support.

Ameo was engaged to complete earlier work and to deliver a coherent review. The programme was to focus particularly on delivering a reliable flow of technical data, as well as ensuring financial reconciliations were completed regularly and logged centrally.

## The Outcome

We developed a financial manual for use across the organisation. Our manual contained:

- Theory and best practice on the importance of controlling the financial environment
- Processes to be followed and timetables for implementation
- Flow charts, procedures and named contacts
- Hyperlinks to take users directly to solutions

Our consultants trained staff on the use of the manual and explained the importance of financial control to those with finance responsibilities.

Where services did not have the resources or capability to adapt their ways of working, we escalated this to the Finance Review Board.

## The Engagement

We began our engagement by meeting the various heads of service and identifying which of these would benefit most from our support. From the start, the programme enjoyed a high degree of engagement and enthusiasm from senior managers. We were able to form relationships swiftly, which helped ensure buy-in across the organisation.

We developed process maps and tested existing processes to find out whether they were fit for purpose. In doing this, we made use of work which had been started during previous attempts to review the financial process, incorporating this into our own recommendations, where appropriate.

As a result of our involvement, we managed to bring the financial process to the attention of the Council's management board. This would not have happened otherwise. Where particular problems existed, such as with the waste department, we flagged these up and ensured the Council spent time discussing them.

Our manual was designed as a living document, to be updated a few times each year and to be revised following audit recommendations. As part of a wider process of training and explaining, we gave service managers the skills they would need to do this.