

South Norfolk and Broadlands District Council

Integra Centros Case Study

“ I don't think anyone who had used Integra before has had any trouble moving on to Centros. I think most people saying it's an improvement, particularly with the workspaces.”

The Customer

South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council are two separate autonomous local government organisations located in Norfolk, England. Despite being separate entities, they have developed a close working relationship that enables them to collaborate and share resources to better serve their communities.

To make savings improve service delivery and enhance the quality of life for their residents, the two councils work together to share a variety of services. They also collaborate on major projects and initiatives.

As they navigate the complexities of financial stability and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, the councils rely on the leadership of their Assistant Director for Finance, Rodney Fincham, who serves as the Section 151 Officer for both councils. This case study will explore the challenges and opportunities encountered by the councils as they strive to manage their finances effectively while balancing the unique needs and priorities of each organisation.



The Challenge

Both councils were using different systems for their financial management operations, with South Norfolk using Integra and Broadland District Council using a separate system. The councils recognised the need to harmonise their financial systems and processes to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in their operations.

To address this challenge, the councils undertook a thorough analysis of their existing systems and identified Integra Centros as the best solution that would work for both councils. They ultimately decided to upgrade South Norfolk to Integra Centros, and then bring Broadland District Council over to a Centros so a single system would serve both councils.

This decision was based on several factors, including the functionality and features of Integra Centros, as well as the potential cost savings that could be achieved through the consolidation of their financial systems.

Multi company

A major factor influencing this decision was the true multi-company functionality in Integra Centros, as it provided the councils with a single system that could handle the financial management requirements of both councils while maintaining separate accounting and budgetary control. This allowed the councils to streamline their financial

processes and eliminate redundancies, resulting in significant cost savings. The move from different financial management systems to a single system in a tight time frame was a significant challenge for South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council. The project was required to be delivered by April 1st, 2022, which imposed a strict deadline on the councils to ensure the transition was completed on time.

The councils needed to ensure that the chart of accounts for both entities was standardised and aligned to ensure seamless financial operations across both councils. This required significant planning and collaboration between the councils to ensure that the chart of accounts was reworked and standardised in time for the transition to the new system.

Data Restructuring

The transition to a single financial management system for both councils presented significant challenges, including the need to rework and standardise the chart of accounts, migrate all transactions accurately and work to a strict deadline. However, through careful planning, collaboration, and effective project management, the councils were able to overcome these challenges and successfully deliver the project within the tight time frame.



The Outcome

The successful transition to a single system has enabled the councils to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in their financial operations and highlights the potential benefits that can be achieved through effective partnership working.

User Friendly

Integra Centros has proved to be more user-friendly than the previous version of the software. Staff have found it to be intuitive to use, and most have adapted well to the new system. This ease of use has helped to increase staff productivity, as they can now work more efficiently within Integra Centros.

The move of both councils to Integra and the subsequent upgrade to Centros has provided several additional benefits to the councils. One of the main benefits was that the councils were already familiar with Integra, as it was previously being used by South Norfolk Council. This familiarity enabled a smooth transition to the new system, as staff already had a knowledge base and could easily buddy up and support each other. The training provided on the new system ensured that staff were upskilled and ready to use Integra Centros effectively.

Workspaces

The new workspaces feature in Integra Centros has been a significant benefit to the councils in bringing their processes into one place. This feature provides a dedicated space for Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Orders so teams can manage their tasks and workloads.

The workspaces have proven to be particularly useful for managers, who can easily keep track of all orders in one place. The feature has also made it easier for general users to understand their orders and how to raise orders, as everything is located in one area. This new feature has been well received by staff, as it has enabled them to work more effectively and efficiently.

Improved Reporting

One of the key benefits the councils found of standardising the chart of accounts, is the ease of reporting across both organisations. The new coding structure has made it effortless to generate financial reports and compare data between the two councils.

South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council now share the same coding structure, where all Broadland codes start with 'B', the same code at South Norfolk will start with 'S'. This means that staff no longer need to memorise multiple codes or decipher different formats, making the reporting process much simpler and more efficient.

Reduced IT support

Another key benefit of upgrading to Integra Centros is having only one system to upgrade and maintain, this saves the IT team a considerable amount of time and effort. This consolidation of systems will also make it easier to manage updates in the future. Having only one system to use will also reduce the workload for council teams. They no longer need to carry out training on two different systems, and they will only need to use one set of procedure notes.

This will save time and make it easier for council teams to collaborate and work together. It also reduces confusion and errors that can arise when using different systems.

Cost Savings

In the long term as part of the amalgamation process, the councils have set an ambitious goal to deliver significant human resource savings in the long term. They believe that by consolidating their operations, they can streamline their processes and reduce unnecessary duplication of work, resulting in significant cost savings.

Drill Down Reporting

Moreover, they appreciate the ability to design and drill down into reports, as well as extract data, which supports their governance process and facilitates faster decision-making. Integra Centros offers a strong platform for flexible reporting and data abstraction. The capacity to incorporate additional requirements through forms and drill-down functionality will help future-proof the system.

The Council credits meticulous planning and resource allocation by their project team, tailored to meet the organization's specific needs, as well as access to an experienced project manager from IBSS, as the keys to delivering a successful project.

 It was one of the smoothest upgrades I have ever been involved in.... We did our twelve-month review after the project, and we've said it was definitely worth doing. It's been a real success and a thumbs up from everyone. It's been a really good thing to have done."



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