

Case study

Slough Borough
Council



↓ 01 Delivering continuous improvement:

Arvato and Slough Borough Council partner to improve services for residents and make a difference to the local community

↓ 02 Challenge: to improve efficiencies without compromising on quality

Slough Borough Council faced the challenge of significantly increasing efficiency while at the same time improving the quality of services for its >145,000 residents.

Having already implemented all the possible changes across its transactional services with the capacity it had available in-house, the Council decided to look for an outsourcing partner that could help develop alternative, innovative ways of delivering the services at a price it could afford.

Arvato was chosen because of its extensive public and private sector experience, its ability to use innovation to transform services and its credible commitment to the Council's values.

In March 2012, Slough Borough Council entered a 10-year partnership with Arvato to provide a range of transactional and corporate services, including revenues and benefits, payroll, finance services, HR and logistics services. The partnership was subsequently extended in December 2013 to include customer services and ICT.

In total, 198 Council employees were TUPE-transferred to Arvato.



Successes:

- arvato has achieved 99% of key performance indicators (KPIs) across all service areas since the beginning of the partnership in 2012.
- Council Tax and Business Rates collections rates have improved by 2.5% and 2.2% since 2012/13 respectively, collecting over £7.4m and £7.8m more annually in 2015/16.
- In customer services, service levels have been improved by over 15% while facing an increase in call volumes of 20%.
- 284,000 calls are handled annually, with 26% more telephone contacts now answered within 30 seconds and 28% more customers seen within 30 minutes compared to 2012/13.
- The partnership retained 100% of transferred employees and achieved 98% of its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) during transition.
- Following the Lean Six Sigma training, efficiency savings of well over £60,000 were identified, including cash savings of more than £2,000.

↓ 03 **Solution: to transform services through people, skills and technology**

Going far beyond the initial contractual commitments, the partnership embodies the true sense of collaboration by jointly working to meet the needs to the Council and the local community.

Delivering continuous improvements across service areas

arvato has implemented a combination of process improvements and intelligent technology which have produced significant results:

Boosting revenue collections:

- Annual council tax and business rates collections have been increased by 11% since the beginning of the partnership, totalling £150.2 million collectable revenue per year.
- This represents a 2% improvement on UK government statistics for collection performance since 2012, including a top three ranking for year-on-year gains.
- A data matching and property analysis exercise has identified new rateable properties valued at £4.639m and increased the commercial property rateable value by £2.878m, boosting business rate collections.

Streamlining customer service:

- Bringing customer services into arvato's state-of-the-art contact centre, together with a new telephone system, IT upgrade and the introduction of self-service technologies, has enabled employees to be more responsive and have more time to focus on complex enquiries.
- A new contact management system routes residents through the centre more efficiently with shorter waiting times.
- Social media, live webchat and WhatsApp channels are being trialled for residents to get in touch with the Council.

Digital transformation:

- Over 800 thin client devices have been installed to give staff access to secure, personalised 'virtual desktops' from any device, enabling flexible working and improved productivity.
- Online self-serve functions introduced to promote channel shift have collected more than £1.37 million through 11,300 transactions since April 2015.
- The roll-out of tablet computers to more than 40 Councillors has saved the Council £25,000 in annual printing and paper costs.



Ruth Bagley
Chief Executive, Slough Borough
Council

"The partnership is underpinned by collaboration, open and honest communications and a commitment to improving the lives of the citizens of Slough. Since the beginning of the partnership in 2012, we've made significant improvements in service delivery and efficiencies, which we couldn't have achieved without Arvato."

Putting people at the heart of the transformation

Investment in people and training has been a key strategy from the outset, to ensure the partnership has the talented people needed to drive transformation and deliver excellent services to residents.

At the beginning of the partnership, all transferred employees completed an introductory Lean Six Sigma training, a management technique designed to identify improvements and further efficiencies. Staff were then given the opportunity to review services, focusing specifically on their individual work area. An employee survey showed that people felt more empowered to make changes to reduce costs and improve services to customers.

As part of Arvato's commitment to provide 117 apprenticeships, a joint programme was created to offer local people aged between 16 and 18-years-old roles across a range of services from customer services to ICT, leading to an NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration. More than 30 apprentices have been hired since 2012 - 63% have subsequently secured full-time roles, compared to the 23% national average – with a further 40 brought on in June 2016.

Commitment to community engagement

As a partner sharing the same values as Slough Borough Council, Arvato is actively engaged in the local community:

- Arvato has created 200 new jobs at its Slough headquarters following a customer services deal with BMW.
- A recent 'Get into Technology' programme delivered with Fujitsu and the Prince's Trust saw two IT apprentices secure 12 month positions.
- Arvato's teams in Slough support various national and local charities, including the Prince's Trust and Thames Hospice and delivers workshops to local school pupils about poverty and the support available through Slough Borough Council for people in need.
- Arvato is a board member of Slough Aspire, a programme designed to help the local community develop employability skills.
- Arvato supports the Council's Employ-Ability scheme to help disabled people into employment.
- Arvato sponsors the Slough Business Awards and supports the Council's Smart Commute scheme.

Services:

to deliver a range of transactional services

- Revenues and benefits
- Payroll
- Finance services
- HR services
- Logistics services
- Customer services
- ICT