



It is more than just partnership working, it is about providing one service

1. Summary

In July 2007 the decision was taken for Adur and Worthing councils to work together in partnership by creating a single officer structure and providing joint, shared services to both communities. The Adur & Worthing Partnership is proving to be a nationally significant collaboration model, the first one of its kind. A project which for 2011/2012 achieved savings of 2.3M with projected savings of 6.5M for 2012/2013. The project involved amalgamating most services employed across both councils. This included developing one Corporate Information Team to become responsible for the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG); Geographical Information System GIS; Street Naming and Numbering and the Public Sector Mapping Agreement (PSMA).

This case study outlines how Adur and Worthing have successfully managed to achieve this large scale change with specific reference to the functions listed above; make significant financial savings and still manage to produce excellent quality LLPG data to Gold Standard, used throughout the councils and also by the wider public sector.

2. Background to the project and organisations and who was involved

Worthing is a diverse authority with just over 100,000 residents according to the 2010 mid-year population estimates and both are on the South Eastern Coast of England. Adur is an urban authority with 61,600 residents and borders Worthing.

As part of the drive toward efficiency savings across the public sector, all local authorities are looking to work more effectively and efficiently. Adur and Worthing agreed to make savings through combining their services



and working in partnership to share services, systems and staff to make significant savings but still offer excellent service to citizens.



A wider phased project plan brought all sections of the council together. This involved strategic level activity, including engagement with Members as well as Human Resources, legal and financial departments.

This case study focuses exclusively on the activity involved only with the departments responsible for the creation and maintenance of the LLPG, GIS and SNN information.

3. The problem

The first problem was where to begin. It was decided to analyse all systems and working processes across both Councils to formulate a project plan defining the way forward to maximise on efficiency and cost savings.

The project was too vast to cope with LLPG, GIS and SNN at the same time. Differing systems and loaders required decision making as to what system should be used by both Councils.

It was necessary to consider how to bring together two Corporate Information Teams into one smaller team at one location. The staff had different skill sets, ways of working and different knowledge of the different systems required to maintain the information.

Another key area was the question of how to facilitate the merger of key Council systems address data and how to replace the manual address feed systems with automated loaders whilst ensuring no downtime to these systems. These systems included Planning, Environmental Health, Electoral Registration and Land Charges. The systems employed at Adur and Worthing were at different stages of upgrade

Crucially, the team wanted to implement one GIS system, underpinned by the LLPG across both councils. They also wanted to do this prior to the contract renewal of one of the previous GIS systems.

There were different LLPG processes in place. In Worthing there were automated loads of data for some departments such as Planning and Electoral Role and manual feeds for Council Tax, CRM, Non Domestic Rates, Land Charges and Environmental Health. In Adur, there was different manual feeds for Planning, Electoral Roll, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates and automated feeds for Environmental Health and Land Charges. The LLPG was also maintained by different systems too.

It was necessary to set up different systems and data loaders on other Council servers. Adur Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates (NDR) systems were managed and maintained by CenSus – The Central Sussex Partnership. Liaison with the CenSus system administrators and remote system access via the CenSus server was essential to ensure consistent processes across Adur and Worthing. Adur and Worthing Planning intended joining CenSus with their newly merged system requiring extensive address data matching and the implementation of new loaders on the Horsham server.

The unique property reference number (UPRN), which is a unique key used to identify individual properties and non-addressable objects, was populated



differently in Worthing and in Adur – this required extensive data matching to apply consistency across Adur and Worthing.

A further problem encountered was that there were two completely separate IT systems in place for both councils, with their own firewalls and applications. Furthermore, issues were encountered regarding IT security policy, especially in relation to Government Code of Connection compliance. IT support was slower than usual being under pressure with all the joint working demands across the Councils.

The two councils were also working under different policies. This was particularly true with street naming and numbering (SNN) activity. Neither council were following a formal policy. Adur did not have a SNN process in place, the result was that there was a relatively poor record of the historical SNN and little feed of intelligence from departments across the council regarding address change intelligence.

A further common problem encountered relates to the difficulties faced by staff during periods of change. The project team found some staff were resistant to the change, in particular working with a new GIS system and a change in LLPG processes. However once the benefits of the new ways of working were realised, the majority of staff saw the benefits of the change.

Further consideration was required because under the Public Services Mapping Agreement (PSMA), two PSMA contracts would still be required because the separate legal status of the councils, and also two LLPG's were required because of this legal status. This meant some additional work to ensure these requirements were met within the new ways of working.

Despite these large issues, there were day to day deadlines to meet including preparation for the Census 2011, VOA matching, and address matching for council systems to migrate to merged automated address feeds. Other data matching work required for the National Address Gazetteer meant there were large volumes of data to check and match. The team also has to maintain excellent quality LLPG data because it was used extensively by council services and by the wider local government sector.

4. The solution

The team had a large task ahead. One software solution was implemented for both Adur and Worthing LLPG's.

The team took a staged approach to the issues, beginning first with the integration of the Adur and Worthing LLPGs into all council merged systems under their one address policy. This ensured that the majority of departments within both councils used the same address data, sourced from the LLPG, enhancing efficiency and cross departmental working. The team have a service level agreement in place with all departments to respond to address queries within two hours, this helped to win and maintain trust of the service administrators.



The team undertook an audit of the GIS based datasets held by both councils. This involved interviewing all departments to find out how many and what datasets they used and created.

Results of the audit found that Adur had approximately 300 disparate data layers. Worthing had approximately 1205 datasets. After the data audit, the joint service had 65 core datasets and a total of 1265 datasets overall. Now all GIS datasets for Adur and Worthing are combined and are held centrally to facilitate the Councils with their joint working. . The GIS data is displayed on a central GIS system, via an intranet and on the internet where appropriate. This enables the team to demonstrate further added value with the data. In one department, the centralisation of data resulted in a saving of £15,000. This was because the department were to outsource the data management, but as this was managed centrally this resource was not required.

The team undertook a review of SNN processes. As previously outlined, neither council had formal procedures in place. The team therefore took the opportunity to implement new procedures and to integrate a new SNN process at Adur. This included the purchase of new software to support SNN activity for both Adur and Worthing.



The team have also written a formal SNN policy shared across both councils, which is now pending a decision from the Cabinet for implementation. When approved this will further cement the joint working practices shared by both councils.

As previously outlined, many council systems were supplied data manually. The team found there were too many differing manual systems. The team developed a new policy that required all processes to be automated to free up staff time to increase efficiencies further. Now there are automated data feeds to the majority of joint departments including Environmental Health, Electoral role, Planning, Colony, CRM, Waste Services, Concessionary Fares and others to come include Land Charges and other departments.

A significant part of the migration project involved merging two teams involved with the LLPG, GIS and SNN. It was a challenging time but the team managed through the use of standard staff review consultation and support. The team undertook a review of the optimum staff structure, irrespective of the current structure. It was found this was the only way to objectively reach the optimum arrangements, rather



than be distracted by the current arrangements. The new team at one point consisted of only two members of staff – who had to manage the day to day activities as well as implement the changes necessary under the new partnership arrangements. New staff were appointed and it was found that new staff meant that it was easier to implement new processes and ways of working.

As previously mentioned, as well as managing the changes required under the new joint working arrangements, the team also had to maintain excellent quality LLPG data because it was used both by the majority of councils departments but also used by the wider local government sector in the form of the national gazetteer. The team managed to achieve this by very careful planning of tasks and division of labour. They successfully managed to do this and achieved Gold standard with both the Adur and Worthing gazetteers.

5. Outcomes and impact

The project has been very successful. There have been many benefits as a result of the changes, with more benefits likely in the future. Positive outcomes include:

- cost Savings: there is one team which covers both Councils resulting in staff cost saving of £18,000; a further £10,000 saving from GIS systems because only one central system is now required; a further £4,000 cost saving due to administration assistance not being required
- better service delivery across both Councils: LLPG datasets are now created and maintained as one; GIS datasets as one and displayed in one place
- because the team took the opportunity to improve processes resulted in more efficient ways of working. There is one process for LLPG/GIS/SNN across both Councils, enabling better communication between staff across both councils. It also results in a smoother creation and maintenance process for the LLPG. Furthermore, the team have to only manage one series of data loaders and dataload thereby supplying information more effectively to council systems
- there is now one SNN policy, based on the 1925 Public Health Act; and one LLPG policy which states that the LLPG will be the main source of address information across both councils
- same LLPG/GIS/SNN software being used for Adur and Worthing, one system serving all services
- automated hub updates cross both Councils.

6. Next steps

The project has not finished. The next phase of the project includes integrating automated LLPG cross reference loading across both Councils to replace manual loads. This is anticipated to save two days work. There are also plans to match the few service areas not yet receiving LLPG data to enable them to benefit from an automated supply of LLPG data.

To assist with VOA data matching and the analysis of address data in all Council systems to ensure the LLPG is in sync with these systems, the team have almost completed a web services reporting tool. These are sql reports with links to the LLPG



and all other Council systems to determine what entries and alterations have been made on each system. Planning and Building control reports identify new SNN; Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates changes are picked up detecting VOA changes which can be queried and acted upon; differences in Electoral Registration and Council Tax data can assist with fraud detection in relation to non-rate paying; other systems can view new insertions, changes and classification lists from Adur and Worthing gazetteers.

7. Key lessons from the project

- good project planning essential
- plan the optimum end result, don't be distracted by legacy systems or ways of working or team structures
- communicate early with stakeholders to include staff, software suppliers, IT
- develop your tenacious side. This will help you overcome the many barriers
- system and process analysis essential
- look at what others have done
- great opportunity to refine systems and work processes cutting out unnecessary tasks,
- quantify the savings you are achieving, this will assist you with ongoing buy-in to the process
- don't underestimate the extent of the project
- empower staff and utilise their skills
- keep focussed on the end game – don't get distracted or sidelined.

8. Further information

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