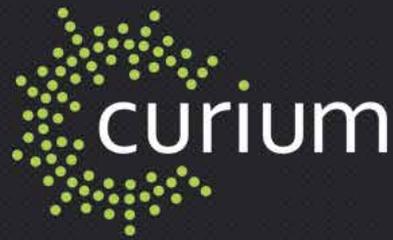


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## Helping Swindon Borough Council to optimise its Business Support Unit

### Problem

Swindon Borough Council is a local authority serving a population of more than 200,000 people. With a gross annual budget in excess of £400 million and approximately 2,000 staff, it delivers education, social care, highways, waste and recycling, economic regeneration, library, registration services and transport services.

Like many public services, Swindon BC has the strategic aim of providing value for money services that better serve its customers, within the context of decreasing financial resources. To support this aim, the council is harnessing the power of digital to provide the best possible services to customers in the right way.

A Business Services Unit provides a range of support services, including finance, ICT and HR. To achieve the ambitions of its digital programme, Swindon BC recognised that it needed to optimise its support functions, such as the Business Support Unit, to provide the firm foundations on which all other improvements could be built.

### Goal

To provide a best practice, sustainable and cost-effective Business Support Unit as a foundation to support the council's change ambitions.

### Curium's solution

Give the Business Support Unit visibility of customer demand, so that it could best organise resources to meet that demand.

Curium's data capture tool, adjusted to best meet the council's requirements, allowed us to capture and analyse key operational data, such as work position, and metrics including efficiency and productivity.

Alongside implementing the tool, Curium took team leaders and supervisors through an accreditation process, which included three workshops to improve knowledge around the principles of best practice back office operations. These educational workshops help to embed the mindset and skills required to put these operational disciplines into practice.

The focus on developing the individuals and the behaviours and mindsets that drive operational success made the project effective and sustainable.

## Results

- Through workflow management and optimisation of resource to best meet shifting demand, the Business Support Unit identified the opportunity to achieve a **22% capacity benefit, the equivalent to £165k per year**. With continued support and embedding, this could stretch to **30% or £260k per year**.
- The capacity benefit does not include any benefits associated with process improvement. Now that the team has visibility of demand, additional benefit can be sought through process improvement. The data and insight provided by Curium's tools and methodology can **pinpoint exactly where the highest return on investment can be achieved**.
- Swindon BC has invested in developing the operational management capability of Business Support Unit's leadership team through Curium's accreditation process. By investing in its people, the council has ensured that its team has the skills and knowledge to drive forward operational best practice, improving team performance and making this a sustainable change.
- The Business Support Unit now has a data-driven and targeted approach, which has improved the operation's ability to most effectively organise its resources to meet customer demand.
- By understanding what the workflow data say about the skills of its people compared to its highest effort tasks, operational managers are able to identify key training requirements and put in place a plan to close the highest-impact skills gaps.

## What Swindon Borough Council says

"This is not old-fashioned time and motion, it is a transparent productivity management tool that has far-reaching benefits – something a lot of teams across the council would benefit from using."

"I feel privileged that my team was chosen to implement this model. Having accurate data at my fingertips has empowered me to manage effectively and efficiently. The coaching delivered by the Curium consultants completely transformed me personally with regard to self-belief and this, in turn, improved my leadership style and approach. The nature of the project and its success have raised my profile within the organisation and given me opportunities I possibly would not have had without it."

"The project was entered with trepidation and scepticism having previously had involvement in projects relating to the setting up of productivity and work management tools. At times, during the first few weeks, it was extremely hard work bringing all of the necessary data together and getting to understand what we were trying to achieve."

"However, after attending targeted management and team-building workshops and having the on-site support from Curium, the results have been highly beneficial. I no longer feel I have to rely on my gut feeling when asked challenging questions relating to resource and work management."

"Now, I have the information at my fingertips in real time. The data capture tool also gives us greater visibility over the work the team has to do which has allowed us to improve our resource planning, have better task resilience and overall, the team is in a much more sustainable state for the future. But the work goes on..."