



## Wokingham Borough Council

Wokingham Borough Council saves £2M in nine months,  
with Unit4 Business World in the cloud

Wokingham Borough Council's digitally enabled back office is one of the most technologically advanced in the UK. Having transformed processes, technology, culture and behaviors, it is on course to save £4M per annum by 2020 and is helping the council maintain frontline services in the face of reduced funding and increased demand.

### The situation

"Wokingham is the lowest funded unitary council in the country," explained Andrew Couldrick, CEO of Wokingham Borough Council. "Our demands go on increasing; our funding from central government will have disappeared completely within the next two years, so we have no choice but to find a different way of operating."

Since 2010-11 the Council's net funding has reduced by 28 percent. Although it collects business rates from the thriving community of companies located within its borders, going forward this revenue will also be lost or significantly reduced as a result of the new business rate levy.

Adding to this pressure is an increase in population and a subsequent rise in demand for services.

Wokingham, like other councils, faced a stark choice of either cutting frontline services or making sweeping changes to become more efficient and effective.

There are multiple frontline services needing to be delivered, with a particular focus on several areas:

- Investment in new primary and secondary schools
- More elderly and frail people will require further investment in care, including the need to support people safely in their own homes for longer.

- Its ethnic minority population is small but growing. A consequence of living in an affluent area can be exclusion of smaller groups, the council must be aware of this and help maintain social cohesion.
- Increased housing pressures must be balanced.

“Within local authorities I don’t think there is the option to do nothing. To stay as we were would have meant we wouldn’t have been able to continue to deliver the services we are here to provide, so we had to do something different, and for us we had to do something radical that would allow us to maintain the level of support that our residents need,” said Sally Watkins, Head of Customer Services and ICT at Wokingham Borough Council.

### The needs

The council wanted to transform the way it operated and implement a new business model it called “21st Century Council” (C21). Programme leaders realized that advances in technology and changes in customer and resident behavior meant different forms of service delivery are now possible that were not available five to ten years ago.

“Our 21st Century project is a combination of both changing the way we operate internally and with our resident customers, using the benefits of technology,” commented Andrew Couldrick.

### The solution

Having evaluated the product’s next generation digital roadmap, Wokingham selected Unit4 Business World hosted on the Microsoft Azure Cloud.

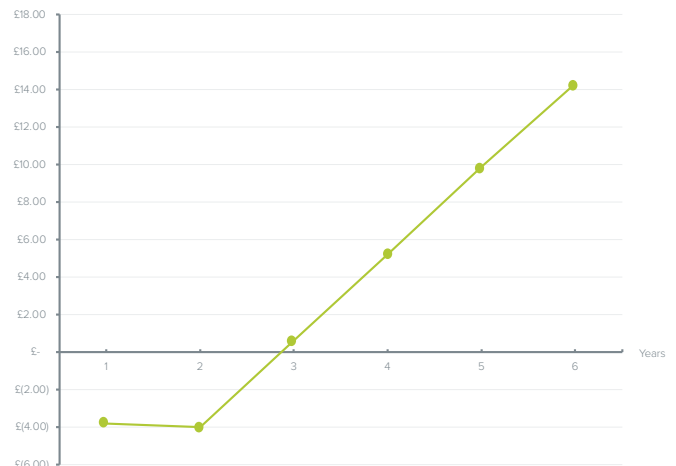
“Within Wokingham, we are using Business World for HR, Finance, Payroll and Procurement. In addition to that, we are rolling out Budget Books to give our managers access to their budgets. Also we are about to introduce the Income Manager module for payments both internally and externally, which is really exciting,” commented Sally.

### The benefits

#### At a glance...

- One of the most extensive uses of digital back-office technology by a UK Council
- £2M savings in nine months positively contributing to frontline services
- Expected £4M annual savings by 2020
- 24 percent of business process have been eliminated.
- 9 percent of processes now completely automated
- Business World enabling back office IT consolidation from 115 business systems down to less than 50
- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from internal customers

Cumulative saving (£M)



Supported by Unit4 Business World, Phase One of the C21 project is already achieving many of the aims set out at its beginning.



“Unit4 Business World is making a massive contribution to what we are trying to do,” continued Andrew Couldrick. “It’s enabling managers to take responsibility for their financial activity, to report and manage their budgets in a slick, easy fashion – all of which makes us more resilient, robust, and able to divert our resources to the places where they need to be.”

In the first nine months, the project has already saved £2M from more efficient working practices, Wokingham expects savings to rise to £4M per annum. Features like Employee Self-Service, which 65 percent of employees now use to a significant degree, have helped improve productivity and release capacity in the organization.

Managers are now more self-sufficient. They can more easily find the information they need, enabling them to be more in control of department spend, without having to call upon expensive specialists in Business Services. Additionally, because the solution is on the Microsoft Azure Cloud, it is available on any internet enabled device, employees can use it at a time and place that is convenient for them. This is particularly useful to a workforce that operates out in the borough, mobile capabilities within Business World will often prevent costly and time-consuming visits to office locations.

So far C21 has seen 70 percent of business processes redesigned, this has resulted in significant improvements. An important part of C21 was for the council to break down silos and leverage data across the organization, Business World supports this. Assistant Directors oversee multiple functions so they can understand the bigger picture, all the while supported by lead specialists for finance, procurement, human resources and payroll.

“Wokingham is looking to address the challenges by taking a holistic view of the services we offer, looking to consolidate and implement a different way of operating, literally introducing a new target operating model for the authority. This is radical, but for us is built on a technology foundation which makes sure that we can continue to provide services to our residents.” continued Sally Watkins.

The benefits of this are multiple, it has helped the council remove 24 percent of unnecessary business steps and automate 9 percent of processes, doing away with the need for manual intervention in these areas. This has helped the council redirect resources from the back office to frontline services.



# UNIT4

“With Unit4 Business World, we are able to get that golden thread of information, particularly around our finances, so that we can see what’s happening day to day, in detail, and how that all links up to a corporate overview of our finances, it’s much easier for us now.” said Matt Pope, 21st Century Programme Manager, Wokingham Borough Council.

The digital end-user experience is proving popular at the council. Being used to easy-to-use apps in their personal lives, the digital interface in Business World is providing the same level of intuitiveness at work. This has led to rapid end-user engagement in the new ways of working.

“I’m immensely proud of what we are doing at Wokingham, there is something about having that passion about what we deliver and how we deliver it, and to feel that we really are going to make a difference not just for now, but for the future years, is fantastic.” concluded Sally Watkins.



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue of close to 600M Euro and more than 4200 employees worldwide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale, financial services and education benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

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