At Buckinghamshire County Council, transformation is seen as a key enabler to improving operations and improving service delivery. However, the organisation’s document management and print service was not in a fit state to support change.

But a Ricoh Managed Document Service has helped transform the way staff work making them more flexible and efficient, and impacts how the Council delivers services to the community.

**Executive summary**

**Name:** Buckinghamshire County Council  
**Location:** Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire  
**Size:** 4,000 employees  
**Activity:** Local Government

**Challenges**
- Deliver a transformation programme designed to save £22m from a range of service improvements
- Fragmented, departmental approach to handling print and documents
- Unable to get a clear and accurate overview of document and print costs or operational processes

**Solution**
- Ricoh Managed Document Service

**Benefits**
- Helps to deliver transformation in the working environment
- Support the Council’s initiative to improve service provision out in the community
- Reduces 500 devices to just 180 and reduces monthly print volumes
- Makes operations efficient, streamlined and more cost effective by delivering detailed, accurate data on print activity
- Makes change much easier to implement and easier for staff to accept
Challenges

Buckinghamshire County Council, in South East England, has taken some innovative steps to deliver value for money and improve services. It has combined many back office functions into a single, centralised operation to reduce costs and deliver economies of scale.

A key part of the Council's drive to improve services and deliver value for money is its Transformation Programme, which aims to save around £22 million over three years. The Programme involves initiatives such as rationalising assets and refurbishing the main Council building to house more staff and give them a more flexible working environment. Part of this meant bringing in new technology - particularly around document and information management - to help improve the working environment for staff, which in turn would help them deliver better services to the community.

Corinne Newman, EDRMS & MPS Solution Owner within Buckinghamshire County Council's Corporate Applications Team, says, “When we looked at our document and printing services we found that there was no secure printing, there was no monitoring of services and each area of the Council was responsible for its own equipment. Nor did we know what our print volumes or costs were. There was no centralised co-ordination. But we knew there were benefits to be gained from things like economies of scale, rationalising the existing resources and having standard products across the organisation.”

The Council’s public tender to transform its print operation was won by Ricoh. Newman says, “Although its tender was very cost competitive, our choice to partner with Ricoh was not solely based on cost. Ricoh was able to offer us what we were looking for, but also tailor that offer to meet our changing business needs and scale its solution going forward.”

Solution

Using a Ricoh Managed Document Service (MDS), Buckinghamshire CC has consolidated its highly fragmented printing processes into a single, managed, enterprise-wide system. The Ricoh MDS comprises software applications to manage documents and printing across a fleet of 180 Ricoh Multifunction Products (MFPs) and Ricoh Desktop Printers. In the first phase of the project the MFPs have been distributed across 13 floors of the Council’s head office tower block in Aylesbury and several other key offices. The Ricoh MFPs and printers have replaced 500 existing devices. The next phase will see the Ricoh solution rolled out to Adult Learning centres, libraries and any touch-down Council locations across the county with around 60 additional Ricoh MFPs.

The Ricoh MDS includes eCopy, which connects to the Council’s electronic document and records management system, so that documents can be captured and processed into digital information that can be distributed and shared across the organisation. Equitrac and @Remote are used to monitor how and where devices are being used, as well as monitor device performance and efficiency.

Equitrac helps with billing because the Council can now accurately monitor exactly what is being spent. Equitrac accurately tracks document and print activity for every department and even individuals, so that budgeting is handled centrally and costs can be consolidated under a single charge-per-click and allocated to each department.

“Before, each department would just go out and buy the boxes of paper and toner they thought they would need. They didn’t know if what they were printing was necessary or relevant. With the Ricoh solution we know what printing is happening, who is doing the heaviest printing and we can then go in and perhaps help them to see if it is necessary or could it be sent electronically. It allows us to manage and challenge much more effectively,” says Newman.

One of the challenges for the Council during roll out of the MDS was managing change. “We faced some difficult cultural issues, such as defensiveness, information confidentiality and arguments why people needed to keep their own machines. Ricoh stepped in and was great in helping us overcome this with training and ‘touch-and-feel’ days where we could show people how the new system would benefit them. The light, informal touch that we and Ricoh applied to these issues worked extremely well and once communicated, immediately people liked the change,” says Newman.

continued overleaf
In addition to the MDS, the Council has also deployed a Ricoh Production Print solution. Ricoh professional presses are used in the Council's central reprographics operation, which produces creative work and urgent, critical work, such as agendas or fostering and adoption documentation that need to be turned around quickly.

Benefits

Part of the Council's Transformation Programme was to improve the way staff work and it has enabled the Council to increase capacity at its main office from 800 to 1,700 staff with more open-plan and group working. The Ricoh MDS has played an important part in delivering this change.

Newman says, “The Ricoh solution is very important because it has helped transform the way we work. Aside from the financial benefits it is starting to deliver and the ability to manage our document operation efficiently, it has increased confidence among users that the information they manage is secure. Staff are able to work in a much more fluid way. They can create documents in one place and then work from any other location across the Council and continue to change, manage and print the same documents.”

The Ricoh MDS is also helping the Council improve the services it delivers to the community. “We are moving from a paper based environment to a more electronic information environment. The way we tend to conduct business is that we take our laptops out to customers and use them to manage services, instead of giving out reams and reams of paper. So albeit indirectly, the Ricoh solution is a key part of us being able to deliver a better quality service to the community,” says Newman.

The Ricoh solution has also increased speed and efficiency. Newman says, “Previously, staff would go out to customers, then type up the notes at the office and then send them out, only to go back out into the field again. These days it is much more efficient. A staff member might be in the north of the County and rather than coming back to the office, they can send something to print remotely and if they are close to a remote office, they can go there and print any documents they need. It’s a much more flexible option; you don’t have to be in one particular building printing from one particular machine. The Ricoh Follow Me print option really is very beneficial to us.”

Alongside transformation of working processes, Ricoh is also helping the Council to streamline its document and print operations. Newman says, “We know from the information we are getting back from Equitrac that the Ricoh solution is driving down print activity significantly. People are printing less, we’re ordering less paper and overall we’re saving money.”

The advantage of the Ricoh MDS is how it makes it easier to choose whether or not to print. Newman says, “I might send something to print and a few minutes later someone sends me an update. With the Ricoh MFPs, I have the option to print the document or delete it. In the past, that document would have been printed and would be a waste. So staff are already using this capability to be more considerate about what they print.”

The partnership with Ricoh is seen by Buckinghamshire CC as highly valuable. Newman says, “Our relationship with Ricoh is very strong and I don’t think we could have a better account manager who has worked very hard for us. It doesn’t matter what we ask of Ricoh, the company will always try to deliver for us. We always get an honest opinion from Ricoh and if it’s not a good solution for us it is not pushed. Despite its own business objectives, we feel that Ricoh’s whole approach is very much focused on what we need to achieve.”

The Ricoh Solution/Products
- Ricoh Multifunction Products
- Ricoh Desktop Printers
- eCopy
- Equitrac
- @Remote
- Ricoh Production Printers

“*The Ricoh solution is very important because it has helped transform the way we work. Aside from the financial benefits it is starting to deliver and the ability to manage our document operation efficiently, it has increased confidence among users that the information they manage is secure. Staff are able to work in a much more fluid way. They can create documents in one place and then work from any other location across the Council and continue to change, manage and print the same documents.*”

Corinne Newman, EDRMS & MPS Solution Owner, Corporate Applications Team
Buckinghamshire County Council

www.ricoh.co.uk