



Sheffield  
City Council

## SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL – CULTURE CHANGE & EFFECTIVE TRANSFORMATION: HOW A COUNCIL CONSOLIDATED MULTIPLE TEAMS, SAVING £Ms

### Executive Summary

As one of the largest City Councils in the UK, Sheffield needed to make dramatic cost reductions without a loss of service – they faced the increasingly common challenge to ‘do more with less’.

As part of a wider transformation programme, a flexible blend of tools and services from Transcend helped enable a £5 million saving over 6 years. This effective reduction of back office costs was managed without compromising efficiency or performance.

### Creating a culture that works for you

Working culture has to be tailored to your team or organisation. At times of change this may mean changing the focus of your culture slightly, but it should always embrace the elements and beliefs that are central to the way you want to employees to act and feel.

5 central elements for Sheffield City Council were:

- Valuing People
- Customer Focused
- Clarity of Purpose
- Quality Focused
- Cooperation



### Strong partnership & process

With a well-managed process and a strong partnership between teams and external organisations, it is possible to build, enhance and sustain a positive culture, even during times of change.

## Challenges

In 2008, Sheffield was one of the largest city councils in country with a £1.4 billion turnover offering over 40 different services across 5 departments.

Each department had its own portfolio of HR and Finance staff, but with a need for significant cost savings, centralisation was necessary.

The transformation had to be accomplished without a loss in efficiency, at the same time as ensuring that staff continued to feel valued.

In addition, there was a need to maintain consistency throughout operations and procedures.

## The right solution

Having seen the excellent results Transcend had already achieved with the Council's Adult Social Care and Management Development teams, they were approached regarding the centralisation project.

It was clear from the outset how they could add value with an adaptable solution that addressed the long-term challenges facing management, as well as meeting the immediate needs. They also had an approach that engaged staff, inspired confidence and managed expectations.

The fact that the system was so flexible, the team accommodating and responsive meant that they were selected to ensure a smooth transition at a time of significant change.

## Three-stage project

The project had 3 stages, each supported by the right technology and an experienced consultant

1. Defining the new organisation and capabilities
2. Processes for performance assessment and management
3. Consistent training and development

*"As part of the World Class Financial Management programme, we turned to Transcend for a fair and rapid way of assessing our workforce.*

*We needed to ensure that we had capable, well-trained staff in the right roles, working within an agreed culture and engaged with us on the multi-year change journey.*

*Consequently, we delivered £2m of headcount & efficiency savings in the first 2 years, embedded a lasting performance management discipline and targeted our training budget on those things most needed by our staff.*

*We could not have achieved all of this in the time available without an efficient tool suite and Transcend's unique expertise. This work has been part of an on-going programme of savings, resulting in the removal of 50% of overall service costs over 4 years."*

**Eugene Walker, Interim Executive Director**

## A flexible approach

Of paramount importance to the success of the project was a process and system that was tailored to the needs of the council and equitable for all staff. The services team within Transcend worked closely with the project leaders to ensure the solution was right for them.

*“They had a flexible and transparent approach giving valuable feedback and creating a bespoke system which helped the process run smoothly.”* said Eugene Walker. *“The Culture and Capability modules were used to shape the organisation for the future, defining a clear and explicit set of expectations. With our top down approach to the centralisation and need for maximising efficiencies from the outset, this assisted with structuring and clarifying the way forward.”*

The desired solution included elements such as valuing people, co-operation and clarity of purpose. With staff from different departments coming together under a single service structure, it was important that capability expectations were managed from the start. It was also critical that individuals felt the process was fair and that they were involved, irrespective of what the outcome was for them personally.

A comprehensive system, tailored to the new structure and supporting the corporate Individual Performance Review (IPR) process was developed. This allowed elements to be blended from the original service delivery teams to achieve the best outcome for them and the overall Council.

The Capability and Performance modules, along with consistent training and development, enabled staff from different departments with varying experiences to be reliably assessed and then brought up to the same level of competence.

Trust in Transcend was also vital. *“We had to significantly reduce costs in a large bureaucratic service with over 300 staff. Trusting that our partner would manage it sensitively, considering employee reactions and backgrounds was key”*

### Flexibility /fleksɪ'bɪlɪti/ noun

*“the ability to be easily modified”*

*“willingness to change or compromise.”*

For many clients, when asked for the single biggest way in which Transcend added value, the answer that comes back from them is Flexibility.

The system and services can be tailored to your needs, which will be critical to your project's success.

The right mix of technology and human expertise will help you define your culture as well as measure capability and performance based on your organisational needs.

When implementing any major transformation programme that has to balance employee engagement against necessary reductions, it is important to solicit feedback and put in place a system that addresses this.

**Flexibility is the key!**

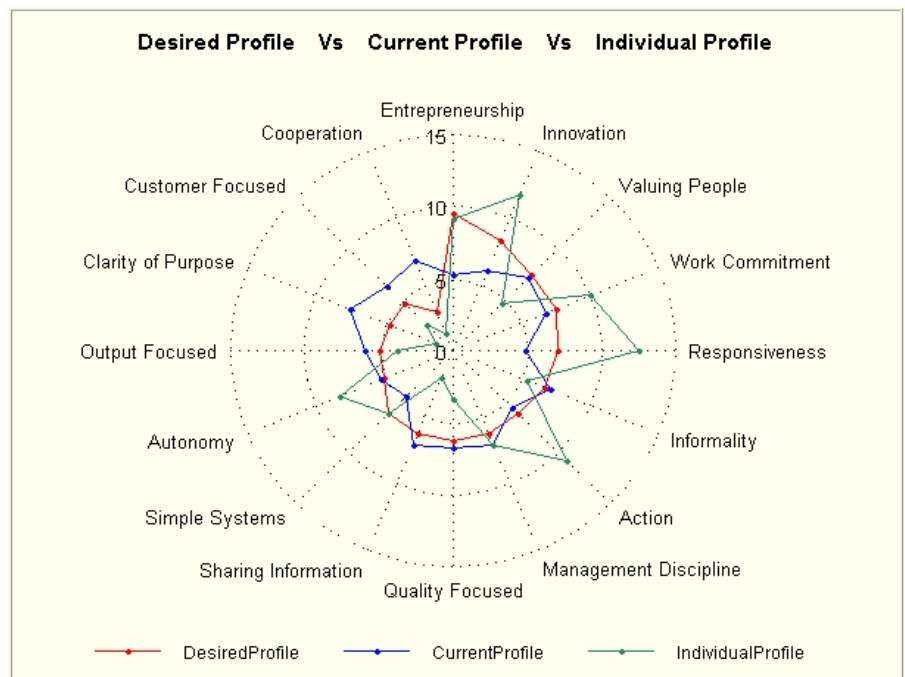
**For more information on how we can help, just call 020 7410 7420.**

## Delivering on the numbers

The goal of the project had been to dramatically reduce operational costs whilst maintaining quality of service. The flexibility of the system and insights from the partner team were invaluable in achieving this goal in a timely manner.

With an original headcount of 300 finance staff, reductions to 150 were achieved over 6 years - obviously a challenging and sensitive time for everyone. It was clear from the outset that the solution had the flexibility and robustness needed. It continued to be used for several years after the initial transformation to embed performance improvement throughout the team.

*“The ability to compare manager and staff information on team culture and staff capability was great and the graphical representation of manager vs individual vs peers was insightful”, says Eugene Walker.*



**Example output from the culture tool**

Knowing what the new organisation should look like culturally as well as structurally was very useful. The combination of Culture and Capability discussions provided employees with clarity on the new structure and their own competence, putting them in a much more engaged and informed position at what was a very sensitive period for them.

## Enduring employee engagement

Within the first 2 years savings were over £2million and this has risen to £5m over 6 years. The service has also managed to sustain employee engagement despite the centralisation, restructure, and ultimate headcount reductions.

This reduction in back office costs has been achieved without compromising efficiency or performance and as fairly as possible – an achievement that has been heavily supported by the flexibility and reliability of the partnership with Transcend.

*It was a difficult journey at times since many staff didn't want to move into a centralised service. Resistance to change is natural but the change was necessary to deliver better service outcomes and financial benefits. The great news is that with such a well-managed process, the culture is now a positive one, performance is improved and staff wouldn't go back to the old structure.*



### Measure

Define desired culture and compare with current culture



### Understand

Design a roadmap to achieve the desired culture



### Improve

Ease transitions (e.g. mergers, restructures, strategy change)

TRANSCEND OFFERS A BLEND OF TOOLS AND SERVICES TO HELP YOU MEASURE, UNDERSTAND & IMPROVE STAFF PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN TIMES OF CHANGE.

WITH A FLEXIBLE RANGE OF CUSTOMISABLE SOLUTIONS AND SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES, TECHNOLOGY BECOMES AN ENABLER SUPPORTED BY EXPERTISE & EXPERIENCE TO ADDRESS YOUR CHALLENGES. THE RESULT IS AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE THAT CREATES AND MAINTAINS HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS.

- OUR CULTURE TOOL ALLOWS YOU TO DESIGN ROADMAPS FOR TEAMS, INDIVIDUALS OR THE ENTIRE DEPARTMENT TO ACHIEVE A DESIRED WORKING CULTURE.
- OUR PERFORMANCE TOOL THEN ALLOWS YOU TO TRANSLATE THIS CULTURE INTO EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS & EMBED THEM INTO ONGOING PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPMENT OF ALL STAFF.

YOU CAN ALSO MAKE USE OF FURTHER SOLUTIONS OVER TIME FOR A BROADER SOLUTION IF REQUIRED.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US:**

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