

Customer-focused services at Ashfield District Council

Results & ROI

On completion of this project, the identified benefits included:

- Reduced cost which will achieve a ROI of 14:1 on Ad Esse consultancy costs in year 1
- Defined structure, roles and staff levels for several service delivery model options
- Defined purpose for each of the Regeneration Intervention Areas of the Joint Economic Masterplan
- More efficient, responsive and business-like Regeneration process

The client

Ashfield District Council and Mansfield District Council are the local authorities for their respective government districts in western Nottinghamshire. The Councils serve a combined population of over 226,000 across both districts. Facing the pressures of increasing customer demand and required budget reductions, both Councils (in partnership) were investigating the potential of sharing services and applying Lean Thinking in designing new processes/structures.

The challenge

The Regeneration Shared Service project was chosen to pilot the new combined approach. The Regeneration Service is a strategic, policy-based service (rather than the usual transactional service) – aimed at developing the most effective and efficient service model for delivering the required outcomes of a Joint Economic Master Plan. This Plan was being developed in parallel, recognising the common issues facing both districts as being part of the same functional economic area.

The approach

Both councils were interested in using a Rapid Improvement Workshop (RIW) approach for this project. The objective of a RIW is to conduct the diagnostic, the new process design and the implementation in an intensive period (with many changes delivered within a 1-week workshop) – thereby delivering improvements and benefits much more quickly. For those improvements that cannot be

immediately delivered during the RIW, the team are left with a detailed 1-week, 1-month or 3-month action plan.

Ad Esse developed a bespoke RIW to address the Councils' joint situation; it contained a mix of Lean Systems Thinking, Strategy and Transformation. The new process design part involved the application of creative thinking and Lean innovation to ensure a transformational improvement was made (and not simply an exercise in removing wastes). Based on the 'current state' analysis, the team developed several unbounded 'ideal state' designs for the new shared service regeneration process.

The benefits

The team were able to design the future state regeneration service. The future state design was bounded by the project sponsors' expectations and limitations – it was therefore a more realistic representation of the service model that could be implemented. Each component of the future state design was defined in detail and has greatly assisted the development of roles / job descriptions for the future service. The RIW also produced a range of structure options with reduced staff numbers, each encapsulating the values of a more business-like, proactive and customer focused service.