

Canterbury City Council

A programme to deliver customer-focused services and cashable efficiency savings



In brief:

- **Canterbury City Council needed to review its services to ensure that they were operating efficiently and that they were sufficiently customer-focused.**
- **Alexander was selected to support the reviews because of their Lean expertise, experience and flexible approach.**
- **Parking services, being a front-line and income-generating service, were chosen as a pilot for the proposed project, which resulted in cashable savings of £90,000 and improved processes resulting in better customer service.**
- **The wider programme of Lean service reviews identified £435K of cashable efficiency savings.**

Think with us ...

If you're reading this, then you're probably just like us, always curious about new ways of working.

The aim of our case studies is to promote sharing of knowledge and from it **thought leadership**. We hope this study helps you think through and explore some of the issues we now face.

Your questions and feedback are welcome.

Call us on 023 8022 5020 or email kay.bocock@alexander-ecc.com

Case Study

In brief:

Canterbury City Council concluded that, in order to cope with changing customer demands for services and an anticipated pressure on funding that would result from a CSR settlement, they needed a corporate approach to improve customer focus, service and efficiency.

It was apparent to the senior management team that, to affect a programme successfully, a systematic, customer-focused improvement approach was needed. It was also clear that, as an organization, they needed to acquire the skills and build the capacity to make these changes sustainable.

Angela Waite, Head of ICT, attended one of Alexander's Open Knowledge events that looked at the Lean Systems approach and how it applies to local government services. Following this event, Canterbury appointed Alexander to support them in their work.

Initially, Alexander was asked to support a pilot project in Parking Services; this area was selected because it was a front-line service and involved income generation. The concern amongst the management team was that, without some intervention, inefficient working practices would have continued with a consequential reduction in customer satisfaction and revenues.

Alexander provided Canterbury with their Lean methodology and supported the project team to apply it within a phased project. The team applied key tools including Value Stream Mapping, Value Add Analysis and Root Cause Analysis, which resulted in £90K of cashable savings. There was some initial surprise at how well the approach worked and at the level of staff openness towards the process-driven changes.

The pilot project built organizational confidence in the notion that, by working together with Alexander's support, they could own and deliver change successfully.

Following the success of the pilot project, the council appointed an internal consultant, Paul Bartlett, at a continued role to provide:

- Guidance on the selection and use of the Lean methodology, tools and techniques
- Facilitation and analytical support
- Objective challenge
- Change management experience and expertise

“They were flexible, pragmatic and willing to share their experience and help us learn as an organisation”

Angela Waite, Head of ICT & Central Services, Canterbury City Council

Case Study

Project teams then carried out the programme of services reviews, which successfully identified efficiency savings in the following areas:

- Central Services; post, facilities management, text production and document imaging. The project team proposed savings of £150K (£71K of which was revenue increase) with £70K being accepted and with another £60K agreed in principle.
- Commercial Health; Licensing and Environmental Health. £45K cashable savings were accepted.
- In Museums and Tourism the figure agreed was £90K.

Further work was carried out within Parking Enforcement. As the reviews were conducted in a planned and systematic manner, there were no adverse effects to service levels. In fact, in many cases the quality of the services improved and the total cashable efficiency savings amounted to £356K.

The Policy and Improvement department carried out the review themselves without support and proposed £41K of which £41K was agreed.

The key to Canterbury's success was the early recognition of their need to take ownership of their programme of work and provide clear, unequivocal leadership.

Alexander's Project Director, Stuart Bestwick, commented:

“Canterbury was clear about what they wanted to achieve and, very importantly, how they wanted to use consultants. We listened to them and adapted our approach to suit their situation. I have really enjoyed working with the project teams and helping them to improve their own processes.”

During the next phase, the project teams looked at Development Service, Regeneration and Economic Development.

In some areas a more transformational approach was needed and like most councils, Canterbury looked at opportunities for shared services with some of their neighbours. They felt that the methodology and tools they have learnt to apply so successfully in their own organization allowed them to develop shared services confidently and ensure that the outcomes were beneficial to their community.

Alexander is an independent change management consultancy that specialises in strategy alignment, performance management and improvement.

For further information please contact Kay on 023 8022 5520 or email kay.bocock@alexander-ecc.com.

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“Working with Alexander has enabled us to develop a strategic review programme that is flexible and effective for all services. The methodology has enabled all staff to be actively involved in the development and improvement of their own service. The results have proved motivating for the staff and encouraged them to continue improvements after the review. A very positive outcome to the programme”

Angela Waite, Head of
ICT & Central Services,
Canterbury City Council

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Alexander People - what we believe

Alexander people are business people who are passionate about public services. We take what's good from the private sector and shape it to meet the demands and challenges of public service. So when we look at the world and see what's wrong, our instinct is not to complain about it, it's to do something about it. This means that, when we look at our own company, we don't just look at its performance as a business; we look at the difference we make to changing public services and society for the better.

The people who manage and deliver public services today face huge challenges. They deserve someone to think with and people who can help to do the things they haven't the capacity to do themselves.

That's why we **engage** and connect with the people at all levels in public services who face these challenges.

Then we help them **challenge** the way things are.

So that they can deliver real **change** for the better.

That's what we do: **Engage. Challenge. Change.**

There's a belief that, without a profit motive, there isn't enough to drive public services to be better. We say that the stakes couldn't be higher. For people who work in and with public services, if we fail, society fails. **We believe this is the most powerful driver there is.**

Alexander People - what we do

Knowing where to go and how to get there

- Strategic & organisational review and diagnosis
- Shared vision
- Transformation strategy
- Transformation blueprint
- Stakeholder engagement
- Change readiness
- Communications

Delivering customer value with less resources

- Lean Systems Thinking
- Service transformation, design and improvement
- Shared services
- Function and service reviews
- Options appraisals and business case development

Enabling change to happen

- Programme and project management
- Change Management and benefits realisation
- Building capacity to change
- Skills and knowledge transfer

Making change sustainable

- Leadership development
- Management development
- Continuous improvement strategy and culture
- Skills and knowledge transfer

We work with...

Alexander works with people & organisations in the public sector, including:

- District Councils
- Unitary Authorities
- County Councils
- Housing Associations
- Police Services
- Health Services

If you'd like to talk about how we can help you, call us on 023 8022 5520.

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