

Breaking new ground with local government

Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire,
Falkirk, Perth & Kinross and
Stirling Councils



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Hedra, a Mouchel Group company, worked with a group of Scottish councils to significantly improve local authority service delivery.

What was the challenge?

The delivery of higher quality, more customer-focused and innovative public services in Scotland has been a key priority for the Scottish Executive since the creation of the Scottish Parliament.

Councils in Scotland continue to look for ways to address the increasing demand for services without any corresponding increase in funding. shared services has been identified as a central component of the national efficiency programme.

Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, Perth & Kinross and Stirling Councils established a partnership to review the potential models for shared services in the areas of finance, HR, payroll and procurement. Their shared objectives were to improve their provision of common services and at a lower collective cost.

The councils engaged Hedra, a Mouchel Group company, to help them to develop a vision for how a shared services organisation could fulfil their ambitions and produce a robust and comprehensive business case that could win the approval of local politicians and the National Shared Service Board.

How did Hedra support the five councils?

Hedra worked closely with all of the partners to produce a fully costed business case and associated operating model for shared services. This demonstrates how a cost-effective and customer-focused service can be delivered across the participating councils using best-in-class processes and technology, whilst maintaining local governance and accountability.

Hedra also provided each organisation with recommendations for improving their individual performance to the benefit of local stakeholders. As a result, the five councils now have a clear understanding of their current capabilities and relative performance levels in the chosen areas.

A collaborative approach was instrumental to the significant progress that has been made. Hedra's consultants had to be sensitive to local concerns. It was also necessary to understand and relate to the decision making criteria of the various members of the partnership steering group to win their backing for this innovative new approach.

What was achieved?

This is one of the first projects in the UK to attempt to bring together a group of socially and politically diverse local authorities, to jointly deliver a range of services through a scaleable and replicable shared services model.

The proposed model offers potential for significant economies of scale and corresponding savings for the taxpayer. The transparent governance arrangements and the inclusion of quality assurance mechanisms will support continuous improvement to reach best-in-class performance and benefit delivery.

In the meantime, the project is one of a number of schemes that is beginning to contribute to an improved public sector service environment for Scotland. Each council now has the opportunity to pursue local opportunities for performance improvements to the immediate advantage of their stakeholder communities.

The predicted business change and associated efficiency savings to be achieved by the councils are likely to send a clear message to the wider public sector about the transformational potential of shared services in the near future. Given that shared service models thrive on scale, the argument for greater investment is overwhelming. At a time when funding is tight and must be managed with care, this is a solution that offers escalating returns.