

oneAdvanced

CASE STUDY

South Staffordshire Council move to the cloud with Financials



**South
Staffordshire
Council**

Client

South Staffordshire Council

Industry

Local Government

Project

Graduation to Financials

‘We’ve been able to have really open conversations with the OneAdvanced team.’

Andy Hoare, Assistant Director for Business Transformation and Digital Technology at South Staffordshire District Council



About South Staffordshire Council

South Staffordshire Council is a district council within the wider two-tier structure of Staffordshire, which includes a county council and multiple district and borough councils. The council delivers a range of place-based services, including local planning, waste collection and housing.

South Staffordshire Council has a strong community identity and consistently high levels of resident satisfaction, making service continuity and stability particularly important as the council undergoes Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The proposed changes will replace the current two-tier system with two or more unitary authorities across Staffordshire, removing all existing councils.

Andy Hoare, who we interviewed for this case study, has been with South Staffordshire Council for six years, following a long career at the City of Wolverhampton Council. He has led cloud migration and digital service transformation programmes, and is currently joint workstream lead for Staffordshire's LGR Digital, Data and Transformation (DDaT) programme, coordinating cross-council activity ahead of the government's decision on LGR.

THE PROBLEM

Local Government Reorganisation has created uncertainty, as the final structure determines which teams, systems and data must be brought together – often with very little time to align everything ahead of Vesting Day (day one).

THE SOLUTION

Moving from an on-premise finance system to OneAdvanced's cloud-based Financials.

THE RESULT

While still in the early stages of implementation, the move to Financials is expected to support standardisation, improve data readiness and reduce Day 1 risk. Rather than delaying, the council took a pragmatic decision to invest early in a modern cloud solution, recognising that waiting would only store up greater risk as LGR timelines accelerate.

A question of risk

Local Government Reorganisation has created a complex and uncertain landscape. With the final structure yet to be confirmed, future organisational and operational boundaries remain unclear, including which councils will ultimately be grouped together. This lack of clarity has made it difficult to plan with confidence, particularly as any future model could introduce multiple systems, contracts and data structures that would need to be aligned.

Alongside this structural uncertainty, the council faced the risk of system fragmentation and highly compressed timelines once decisions are made. Aligning systems, processes and organisations ahead of Vesting Day would require significant effort, with no guarantee of post-LGR system consolidation in the short term. Against this backdrop, the council weighed whether delaying action would reduce risk or simply defer it, particularly given the limitations of their existing on-premise system and the unknown timescales for wider convergence.

More broadly, councils navigating LGR should consider how investment decisions align with realistic delivery timelines. Even once new structures are agreed, existing systems are likely to remain in place for several years before being retired or adopted as part of a consolidated standard. In this context, entering into an agreement for a modern, cloud-based solution now aligns well with the LGR timetable, even if existing systems continue to be used in the short term.





Planning ahead

A structured and practical approach was taken, underpinned by a dedicated project team and a clearly defined programme of activity. This included an initial three-month planning phase, with a strong focus on areas such as refining the Chart of Accounts before moving into implementation. A robust data migration and reconciliation strategy was established early, alongside an iterative testing approach comprising multiple cycles, each supported by regular issue review sessions to maintain momentum and resolve challenges quickly.

A comprehensive training strategy was also put in place to support adoption. This combined a “train the trainer” model for the finance and project team with in-person sessions for staff involved in day-to-day procure-to-pay activities. Supporting materials, including short videos, how-to guides and quick reference resources, were developed to reinforce learning and provide ongoing support.

Throughout the programme, particular emphasis was placed on communication and planning, especially around cutover and maintaining business continuity during a defined period of downtime. Strong collaboration with OneAdvanced and a clear understanding of internal capability ensured the right level of support was in place, alongside a continued focus on internal readiness and helping people adapt to the change.

Customer perspectives

On the previous system

Prior to graduation, South Staffordshire Council had been using an on-premise finance solution from OneAdvanced for circa 20 years. As Andy explains, the team were very happy with the system, telling us:

'The platform has been absolutely brilliant.... it has been really stable, and the support great. It does what it says on the tin,'

On working with OneAdvanced on the move to Financials

As long-term partners, South Staffordshire appreciated the continuity of staying with OneAdvanced for their move to the cloud and the openness of the partnership.

'We've worked through challenges and have a very strong relationship. We've been able to have really open and really honest conversations,' says Andy.





Key takeaways

Andy tells us that the approach taken by South Staffordshire Council was centred on acting early to reduce risk, rather than allowing uncertainty to drive inaction. In a context where future structures remain unclear, the focus was placed on what could be controlled now to create greater stability for what comes next. He has three key takeaways for councils undergoing LGR:

- **Don't confuse delay with risk reduction** – waiting for clarity may feel safer, but it often defers and compounds existing risks, particularly where legacy systems are concerned.
- **Use core systems as anchors for transformation** – investing in core platforms such as Financials creates a stable foundation, making it easier to standardise and integrate as future structures emerge.
- **Sequence change deliberately, don't stack it** – separating major transformation activities helps reduce complexity and enables organisations to manage change more effectively.

As Andy concludes, Local Government Reorganisation will bring enough complexity on its own. Carrying legacy systems into that environment risks making an already challenging transition significantly harder to manage.



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Our mission is to power the world of work through software and services that effortlessly get the job done for our customers, giving them the freedom to focus on thriving for their customers, people and communities.

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