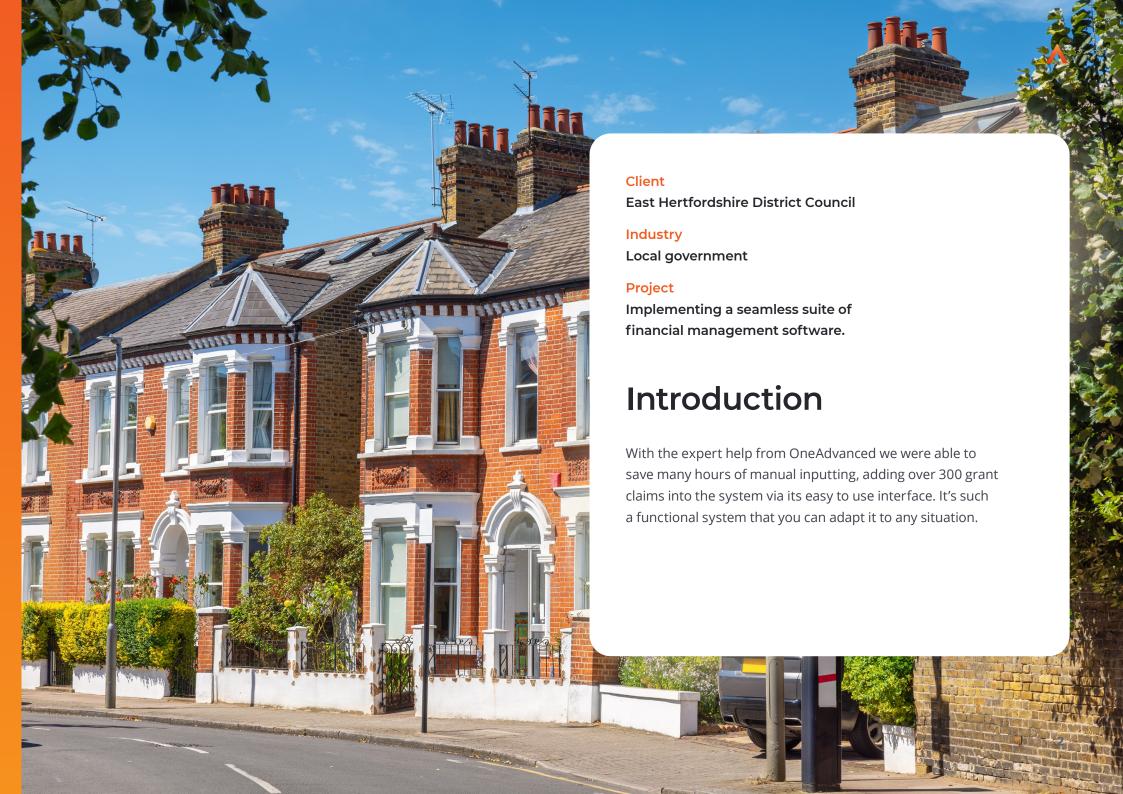oneAdvanced

East Hertfordshire District Council

Automates, integrates and streamlines its financial systems, easing the extra workload caused by Covid-19

East Herts Council

Client
East Hertfordshire District Council

Industry
Local government

Project
Implementing a seamless suite of financial management software.

Introduction

With the expert help from OneAdvanced we were able to save many hours of manual inputting, adding over 300 grant claims into the system via its easy to use interface. It's such a functional system that you can adapt it to any situation.

Background

East Hertfordshire District Council supports a population of approximately 144,000 and covers about 480 square miles on the eastern side of the county of Hertfordshire, north of London.

As Rob Winterton, our Financial Services Manager explains, our vision is to provide residents and businesses with a future that is prosperous and sustainable. A number of strategic objectives have been developed, which allow us, in conjunction with our many partners, to focus on the key issues. Many of these have a direct relevance to our Finance department and its management systems.

Eradicating manual processes

We had inherited a 'clunky' finance system, which wasn't an enabler for the majority of our employees. It was easy to use, but in order to evolve we needed to eradicate manual processes and switch to a system that was scalable, configurable and easily tailored to our requirements.

Change isn't always easy there is always a slight resistance in changing systems because many of our everyday users were familiar with the software, and the question that was most commonly asked was – why change.

However, as a Council, we are constantly looking at our budget, and how we can do more with less. It is also important for us to alleviate the burden of managing these budgets for our Finance Team.

The importance of the right technology

In order to ease the transition for our users, it was paramount that the new system was simple to use. We also needed a system that helped to streamline accounts and improve efficiencies, by giving us the freedom to focus on financial analysis and insightful reporting, instead of admin work and manual monitoring.

We would also spend too much time worrying about legislation changes, which took our attention away from value adding tasks. Therefore, it was vital we purchased a system that is quick to act when these changes arise.

An integrated solution

To help us take full control of our finance function, after a market test and mini competition via Crown Commercial Services framework, we selected OneAdvanced's financial management system. It has integrated Collaborative Planning budgeting and forecasting, plus document management - which enables us to reduce the use of paper and instead use electronic invoicing through Optical Character Recognition (OCR). With the increased pressure of government carbon footprint reduction requirements, we believe switching to paperless processes helps us to adapt and become more environmentally friendly. OneAdvanced document management brought efficiency to our Procure to Pay process, meaning that there was no manual intervention required between the Purchasing Management and Accounts Payable modules. It has also meant that we can reduce storage, as we no longer have paper copies of invoices.

Having an integrated solution means all our financial processes are automated, and can be managed end-to-end within the finance solution.

Implementation

When it came to going live, OneAdvanced had inputted text support at the bottom of the page within the software, ensuring our employees were quickly brought up-to-speed. There are shortcuts within the system that are very handy and immediately improved efficiencies within our Finance Team.

Soon we began to see workload decreasing thanks to the automation and integration of systems working as one. We are still in the process of implementing the purchase order software within the facilities department, but once in place it will benefit them greatly.

Easily adaptable to 'new normal'

Over the recent months, as the world struggles through a pandemic, we as a Council have been offering extra services to those who are most in need. In line with government requirements, we have been paying grant claims made by the public, which normally would be a very difficult task. With the expert help from OneAdvanced we were able to save many hours of manual inputting, adding over 300 grant claims into the system via its easy to use interface. It's such a functional system that you can adapt it to any situation.

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Robert Winterton, Financial Services Manager, East Hertfordshire District Council

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