

The Shared Service approach Northamptonshire Licensing Consortium

Mike Deacon, Head of Environmental Services for East Northamptonshire Council (Host Partner for the Licensing Consortium) - commented:

“One of the problems encountered with this project was achieving ‘buy-in’ from the partners and then keeping them ‘bought - in’. By engaging RSM Tenon we were able to demonstrate that the review was independent of any particular partner or partners views.

We stipulated that the review should retain its independence and that it should look at the project ‘warts and all’, it was important to learn from this project, perhaps as important as actually achieving the primary objective of delivering the new licensing regime.

In order for us to be able to do this we needed the review to be robust and where necessary critical.”

Background

RSM Tenon was asked to analyse and define the success or failure of this partnership (comprising the Councils of East Northamptonshire, Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough, Daventry and South Northamptonshire) in terms of:

- Efficiency, economy and effectiveness; including an overall evaluation of the value for money delivered to the member authorities through the Shared Service approach of the Licensing Consortium in response to the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003
- The identification of future improvements for the Licensing Consortium operations that might present further value for money opportunities
- How the authorities involved, along with wider stakeholders i.e. the police and County Council, might use the Shared Service model to deliver other services, particularly those where volume processing is prevalent

Our approach

The assessment required us to work closely with each partner organisation to assess three key components. Firstly, how effective the existing partnership model was for ensuring good corporate governance, the management of risk and the measurement of performance. Secondly, the relationship between each organisation involved; with a view to understanding any individual sensitivities or barriers that might impede future success. Finally, working with the individual licensing unit, hosted by East Northamptonshire Council, to identify where operational processes could be improved to achieve better efficiency and improve customer satisfaction.

We mapped internal processes and applied a Lean methodology to assist with this assessment, supplemented by discussion and appraisal with key stakeholders, collation of external benchmarking data, analysis of operating costs and the results of customer satisfaction surveys.

The outcome

We concluded that the Shared Service approach alleviated the service pressures and demands on the individual councils, which the new licensing legislation would have produced. The Shared Service approach also helped to mitigate risk through a better risk / reward ratio.

We were also able to demonstrate that the approach worked in practice as well as in theory; economies had been achieved through realising a lower unit cost in comparison to other councils, service effectiveness had been improved through the creation of better capacity, capability and resilience and there was a definite improvement in customer experience.

This has enabled the Licensing Consortium to continue in the absorption of other licensing activity and drive investigation amongst the Northamptonshire Councils of other shared service opportunities.

For further information please contact:

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