

From Efficient Printing to Digital Transformation

“Our Vision 2030 transformation programme aims to make Sandwell a better place to live and work. We’re supporting that vision with back-office transformation, and Xerox is playing a key part in helping us deliver.”

– James Trickett
ICT Strategic Lead
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council



OUR CHALLENGE

“Before Xerox came on the scene we had no central control over our print environment. A culture of personal printers meant we had around 1,500 printers serving just over 3,000 people — effectively, one between two. There were multiple brands, models and feature-sets. Individuals bought their own toner and ink, and attempted repairs when things went wrong.

As part of a wider project to drive efficiency savings at Sandwell, we set out to rationalise and reduce the costs of office print. Xerox® Managed Print Services helped us do that, and introduced new capabilities at the same time.

Now we’re ready to look at how to make printing even more efficient, and introduce new services to support our Vision 2030 ambitions for Sandwell.”

OUR SOLUTION

“When Xerox came on board, they worked out that we could replace all our printers and fax machines with just 210 multifunctional printers (MFPs) — and give everyone a better service than before.

As part of the managed service, Xerox provided onsite engineers to maintain the MFPs, keep consumables stocked, and fix any issues.

As the contract came up for renewal, we started thinking again about the council’s ambitions and the services needed to support them. We were very happy with Xerox, but felt we needed to go to tender to explore the market for a new service that could deliver further efficiencies and help us transform our use of paper. Xerox came out on top again, with a compelling pricing model and a roadmap for innovation.”

OUR RESULTS

“Our initial managed print service contract with Xerox took away the pain, delivered efficiency savings and introduced new capabilities. Our new contract builds on those achievements and allows us to develop a vision for transformation.”

- Printer fleet down by 85%, from 1,500 to 210
- 30% reduction in costs over initial contract lifetime
- Additional savings projected with new contract’s reduced click charge
- Improved information security and compliance with data protection regulations with pull printing
- Increased printer availability and reliability
- Enhanced printer capabilities available throughout the council
- Improved understanding of printing practices using analytics
- Platform for transformation and innovation.

MAKE THINGS BETTER

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, which serves around 300,000 people in the West Midlands, wanted to free up resources to protect and improve delivery of front-line services. It put together a programme of activities to drive efficiency savings throughout its operations, including office print.

The council transitioned from around 1,500 unmanaged printers (including many desktop devices), multiple brands and variable functionality to a fully managed print service from Xerox.

All the printers and fax machines were replaced by 210 MFPs from Xerox, offering consistent output quality and increased functionality. On-site Xerox engineers keep everything up and running, maintaining the MFPs and keeping them stocked with consumables.

Pull printing — which requires users to enter a PIN code at the MFP to release their printout — improves information security and compliance with data protection policies and regulations (such as GDPR), as documents aren't left lying on printers.

It also increases flexibility, as users can print to any device — even one in another council building. This capability will become ever more useful as Sandwell looks to increase employee agility with more flexible working policies, including hot-desking.

SET NEW AMBITIONS

“As pleased as we were with the Xerox® Managed Print Service, we knew that we wanted to continue our digital transformation journey,” says James Trickett, ICT Strategic Lead at Sandwell. “What we had was working really well, but we wanted to think about our future aims, and understand what the market could offer to support our Vision 2030 ambitions.”

Vision 2030 is the council's programme to transform many aspects of life in Sandwell, including education, housing and employment. “It's about doing everything better,” says Trickett. “So better back-office processes enable better delivery of front-line services.”

Those processes could include options such as digital mailroom services and online alternatives to paper — all of which Xerox could support Sandwell with, should they decide to proceed.

At the same time, as part of the renewal Xerox and Sandwell have refined various elements of the original service. For example, the level of support required from the Xerox engineers.

“We originally had three engineers checking our printers daily,” says Trickett. “But to be frank, the printers we use now are so reliable that we can manage with weekly checks.” This has contributed to a click rate reduction, helping Sandwell meet its new cost-saving targets.

TRANSFORM AT THE RIGHT PACE

Over the course of the next few years, the council intends to reduce its office print volumes. Analytics services from Xerox are helping it to identify which teams and users print the most, so that it can investigate alternative approaches and ways to re-engineer processes.

Trickett is already looking at directing large print runs currently done on office printers to the council's central print unit, which Xerox also manages. As an example, he cites the printing of rent statements — a huge job. “The central print unit could do the printing for less, and no-one would have to stand at the MFP while the statements print,” he says.

He imagines that, in the future, the central print unit could be equipped to do the folding, enveloping and franking, too. Ultimately, he'd like to see the council combine centralised print and an online customer portal to make even further reductions in print.

“We know you can't do everything all at once, so we're approaching transformation as a journey,” says Trickett. “With Xerox by our side at every step, we're confident of realising our transformation ambitions at the speed that's right for Sandwell.”

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