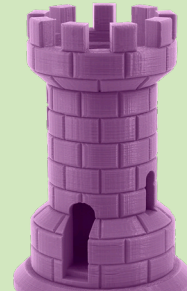


Maximizing the value of local authority resources



City of Lincoln Council



This relatively small local authority is using a smart, unified Unit4 finance and procurement platform to automate manual processes, make the most of its resources, and deliver more efficient, joined-up public services.

A single, shared view of financial and procurement data enables the City of Lincoln Council to apply trusted data to decisions, get more time back to focus on what matters, and accelerate digital-first transformation.

Key benefits include:

- Increased efficiency, reduced costs, and ensured council can quickly adapt to changes and regulations
- Introduced real-time financial analytics to support better decision-making and keep data secure
- Delivered significant efficiencies to the plan-to-budget process
- Provided more complete and accurate analysis of council's suppliers and spending patterns

Innovating modern digital services

City of Lincoln Council is gearing up for an ambitious future. This local authority in the English East Midlands – the city being home to a medieval cathedral, a copy of the Magna Carta, and a Wren-designed library – is on a digital transformation journey to streamline operations, improve productivity, and reduce costs.

However, the City of Lincoln Council is a comparatively small local authority, making it vitally important to make the most from its resources. Where possible, the council needs to adopt process automation to free people from repetitive, manual tasks and focus on citizen-centric service delivery strategy.

In response, the council has standardized on a Unit4 Financial Management platform. “The City of Lincoln Council is a relatively small local authority, making it more important than ever to do more with less and maximize the resources at hand,” says Jason Smith, Finance Business Partner. “By partnering with Unit4, we can streamline financial processes with a single system, freeing resources for other tasks. It’s intuitive, adapts easily to our changing needs, and connects seamlessly with our other platforms.”

Industry

Local Government

Location

Lincoln, UK

Size

Population approx. 99,500

Product

Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Challenges

Help comparatively small local authority maximize the value of its resources. Use process automation to free people from repetitive, manual finance tasks and focus on citizen-centric service delivery strategy.

Key metrics



AGILE

Faster insights mean faster change



SMART

Frees people to focus on strategy

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Jason Smith

Finance Business Partner, City of Lincoln Council

Unit4 Financial Management provides Jason and his team with a single, complete, shared view of core finance processes, including general ledger, accounts payable, and accounts receivable, ensuring real-time visibility and control over every finance process. These insights are helping to boost efficiency and reduce costs while ensuring the council quickly adapts to procedure changes and new regulations.

In the past, for example, cost codes were limited to only four fields – now they are limitless. “The coding structure is very fast and fluid,” says Jason. “Low-code and no-code tools enable us to quickly change, grow, and automate tasks and processes by connecting and creating extensions, integrations and applications.”

All of this results in smart, agile finance management processes. “Senior management and other stakeholders at the City of Lincoln Council have the real-time analytics and financial data at their fingertips to support better decision-making,” says Jason. “Built-in controls also keep the data secure and compliant.”

The council also uses Unit4 Procurement Management to automate and standardize every stage of the procurement cycle – from service requests and indirect purchasing and requisitioning to paying vendors. Single, centralized procurement provides the basis for

clearer, more complete, and more accurate analysis of the council’s suppliers and spending patterns, enabling budget stakeholders to aggregate spending via preferred suppliers and negotiate better terms and prices. Automated workflow also tailors approvals to match the requirements of each council department or type of spend.

“We can see every invoice – who has been paid, the value, history of payments to a supplier, and much more. We can query anything. This flexibility enables our people to move away from day-to-day operational tasks and focus on managing stronger supplier relationships and scrutinizing spend and purchase decisions,” says Jason.

Next steps: significant efficiencies to plan-to-budget process

The council expects to implement the Project Planner module to bring significant efficiencies to the plan-to-budget process. The team will then be able to input project data directly into Unit4 and produce a revenue and cost budget as a direct output.

According to Jason, this streamlined planning capability will be simple, accurate, and efficient. “We are using Excelerator to create informative spreadsheet reports based on browser enquiries. When we start to use

Planner, budget holders will be able to perform their own budget analysis and forecasting on everything from business rates and car park charges to council tax revenues. This visibility and control will shrink decision-making time and result in more accurate budget forecasts.”

Looking ahead, Lincoln City Council may migrate to a cloud-powered Unit4 ERP model. “As a comparatively small local authority, we need to maximize value at every step. The cloud will enable the council to adapt and change far more quickly, while delivering a lower cost operating model. It represents the logical next step in the council’s digital transformation journey,” Jason explains.

