



Ricoh and Southend on Sea City Council Case Study

Southend on Sea City Council formed a strategic partnership with Ricoh via direct award through Procurement Services frameworks and deployed a range of digital services to increase efficiency, make operations more sustainable, reduce costs and strengthen cyber-attack defences.

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The Challenge.

When Southend on Sea became a City in 2022, it was a platform for the new City Council to develop a better, more inclusive environment for the City's residents and visitors. It prompted the council to develop a new strategy tasked with delivering several corporate priorities which include wise spending; digital-first investment; ensure services are diverse and high quality; security, and sustainability with the aim of becoming net zero by 2030.

To help achieve these goals, Southend on Sea City Council has established key partnerships. One of the most significant is with Ricoh covering three key service areas: print, mail and cybersecurity.

Under a digital-first strategy, the council is using technology to transform the way it delivers services to the community. The council produces millions of documents every year for both internal administration and communicating with residents. The council wanted to streamline processes, reduce print volumes and steer staff towards producing and using more digital documents. As with print, the council was keen to make its mail operation less burdensome for staff and more cost-effective.

Digitisation is transformative; making services easier for people and staff to use. But digitisation also increases vulnerability to cyberattack as paper documents become electronic and information is held in computer systems, especially cloud applications.

“One of the biggest threats for the council are invoices sent as email attachments. Because they are about money and often appear urgent, people are more likely to open or process them.”

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The Solution.

The council's reprographics centre is staffed and managed by Ricoh employees using Ricoh digital colour production printers and associated finishing equipment, with a fleet of 80 Ricoh Multi-function Printers (MFPs) distributed across the City.

The reprographics service prints and manages documents for the council's legal and democratic functions producing items such as public meeting papers as well as general and specialised print work. Reprographics used to print letters, but that is now handled by a Ricoh Hybrid Mail service. Initially the service was used by Revenue and Benefits, but now there is an ongoing process to roll it out to other departments with over 25 of them already using it every month.

Any letter or document that needs mailing is created at the council then sent electronically to Ricoh's print centre in Birmingham where it is printed, associated flyers and documents attached, enveloped, franked and delivered to Royal Mail. In January 2023 the Ricoh service handled almost 10,000 letters for Revenues and Benefits and Buildings Control, 5,000 related to housing stock and 12,500 items from other departments.

Helping to tackle cyberattack threats is Ricoh's RansomCare cybersecurity solution. Currently, it protects on-premises systems and applications such as the file store but will be migrated to the cloud as the council moves most of its IT environment to the cloud. RansomCare monitors systems and applications for any unusual activity that could indicate an attack. When it does spot something, it will lock down the relevant device to stop the attack and enable IT to investigate.



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The Benefits.

- Supports the council's drive to net zero by 2030
- Reduces mail costs by 44%
- Productivity up by 2 mins per person, per letter
- Reduces postage costs
- Cuts print volume from 3 to 1 million items a year
- Print costs reduced by 17%
- Makes print operations sustainable and energy efficient
- Increases security and peace of mind
- Supports local community social value

“The print services from Ricoh are vital to the council and services it delivers to the community. They are particularly important for regulatory services like printing and issuing births and marriage certificates and print devices in local hospitals for critical social care services.”

“The Ricoh Hybrid Mail service is an important part of revenue generation for the council. It has made our mailing operation quick, cost-effective and less time consuming.”

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