

Shropshire Council begin their journey to operational efficiency



In 2021, Flexiroute and Shropshire Council went through a competitive procurement process to significantly upgrade the Council's management of home to school and adult social care transport. Emily Goodhead (Customer Experience Project Manager at Shropshire Council) and the team has given such positive feedback on the journey so far, and kindly agreed to sharing this with us.

“Our Transport team have fallen in love with Flexiroute.”

Emily Goodhead,
Customer Experience Project Manager
at Shropshire Council

Background

Shropshire Council's Transport Department is responsible for the safe transportation of 5,500 mainstream school children; 1,000 SEN children; and 220 passengers accessing adult social care services.

Utilising an internal fleet of 30 vehicles in addition to 200 third-party operators, working across 1,100 transport contracts, it is imperative that the service is managed efficiently.

Before moving over to Flexiroute

Emily began by explaining that whilst working on another project involving the transport team, she quickly realised that the solution they had was not going to work for them.

She shared, “we needed to go through a process of descoping the team from the original project and rescoping their needs, along with a business case and extensive research to decide how best to move forward.”

She continued, “the team needed something that was not just ‘an entitlement piece’, but something that was truly operational and would help with the management of the full service, incorporating adult social care as well as home-to-school.”

The entire Transport Team were involved and invested from the beginning of the process. Starting with initial research, they spoke to other Local Authorities to obtain recommendations and advice on the solutions available.

Emily added, **“all the other Local Authorities that we spoke to recommended Flexiroute”**. Following research and demonstrations from multiple suppliers, Shropshire Council decided that Flexiroute was the way forward and procured it via the G Cloud Framework.

“Flexiroute won the overall procurement process purely because of how good the product is. The whole team was really impressed with the system, with how engaged the team were, and their ability to answer all our questions.”

Emily Goodhead,
Customer Experience Product Manager,
Shropshire Council

Getting started

Onboarding with Flexiroute is a tailored process, planned to offer dedicated support and assistance in setting up the system and ensuring a smooth transition from previous processes.

The Shropshire Council project needed to be swiftly implemented, as the support on their previous software was coming to an end and had been highlighted as a potential risk. Beginning the project in September 2021, Emily described the process as “a really nice experience from start to finish.” The Council took a copy of their entire database from their previous system and shared this with the Flexiroute team to extract the data that was needed.

Speaking candidly, Emily commented, “It was a breath of fresh air that the team were so open and honest about the fact that they had never done a CapitaOne migration before. Most suppliers would not admit this, but we appreciated the transparency and the communication from the start.”



“We wanted to make sure that we allowed extra time for the migration as it was the first of its kind that we had done, and it was important that we managed the Council’s expectations. We were pleased to have been able to work with the complex data and deliver the project on time.”

Dean Richardson,
Product Manager,
Flexiroute

We firmly believe that one of the most important parts of the onboarding process is UAT (User Acceptance Testing). We were pleased to be working with such an invested team that were excited to get started.

User Acceptance Testing allows us to identify any areas of the system that may need to be tweaked or may require extra training. We prepared testing scripts to help the Council get used to the actions they would be taking in the system.

The feedback from the training was excellent. We have never seen a supplier do user testing in this way; we were particularly impressed with that part of the process.

Emily Goodhead,
Customer Experience Product
Manager Shropshire Council

Working with our in-house team

The project has been a success from start to finish, taking just five months from engagement to training and testing. Emily added, **“it has been quite a journey, but it’s been done really quickly by Council standards. We needed a quick solution and Flexiroute worked hard with the team to get it right. The team have been a dream to work with. The communication was excellent throughout the project, and we are looking forward to moving onto the next phase.”**

As part of the implementation process, Flexiroute conduct penetration testing using an impartial third-party organisation to demonstrate the security and efficacy of the system. Emily expressed surprise at the results, saying **“I was massively impressed to see that even before sharing the results, the minor issues had already been identified and addressed.”**

The Future with Flexiroute

Shropshire Council is only at the beginning of their journey with Flexiroute and already looking forward to further enhancements to the system. As part of the solution, the Council will begin rolling out the Driver App to enable them to have clear tracking and improved data security for their passengers.

Emily shared, “The Driver App will be key for us to remove paper from the process and give us greater control of information. We’ll be replacing the sheets of paper that get passed to the drivers each day containing their journey and passenger information. We’re aware of the security implications of sharing our data in this way, and the Driver App will help us to eliminate this risk. It will also help us to track fuel usage, which will be really helpful.”

Phase two of the project will include integrating the with the existing finance system to enable swifter invoice management and managing transport applications online through the customer portal. This bespoke piece of work will integrate the Council’s four specific application forms into the portal, allowing greater flexibility and convenience for parents and guardians applying for transport, allowing the Council to better

Final thoughts...

“The team love how interactive the system is; the mapping gives them greater visibility of the full fleet and all passengers. We can also easily track all of the contracts that we have and we no longer need supplementary spreadsheets, that were problematic.

For more information
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