

# Fully shared financial services a reality for South Ribble & Chorley Councils

First fully comprehensive shared services partnership chooses Civica



Chorley  
Council



**SOUTH  
RIBBLE**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL  
forward with  
South Ribble

"The move to a single solution, single premise shared services arrangement between South Ribble and Chorley Borough Councils has led to significant savings and real benefits to end users. Because we're only developing one system, all system costs are halved, so these savings can then be moved to other key projects."

Susan Guinness  
Head of Shared Financial Services, Chorley BC  
and South Ribble BC

## Background

South Ribble Borough Council and Chorley Borough Council together serve a combined population of 213,700 in South Lancashire. They are successfully operating shared financial systems based on a Civica Financials platform.

## The Challenge

South Ribble Borough Council had been using the same financial system since 1999. While it was a successful implementation, it was becoming unsuitable and slow as both the hardware and the underlying software aged. On top of this, the old software could not be updated to comply with new legislative requirements, such as International Financial Reporting Standards; this resulted in additional work for staff to manually ensure compliance with these regulations.

South Ribble and Chorley decided to set up a partnership to realise their objectives of renewing and improving financial services in both boroughs. Their Financial Services Partnership aimed to develop a single system that would drive the standardisation of working practices, and streamline and enhance processes as well as reduce administrative burdens on finance teams' staff.

Finally, the councils wanted to make operational efficiencies that would result in both long and short-term cashable savings.

## Benefits

- > Vastly increased efficiency with single-premise solution
- > Common working practices established across both councils
- > Flexible, web-based solution allows both authorities to continue to meet legislative requirements without installing separate software
- > Cashable savings passed on to other key projects.



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## The Solution

To help turn the Financial Services Partnership's vision into a reality, Civica worked closely with both authorities to design a software solution that met their differing operational requirements and network environments. It also has to ensure that the benefits of efficiency and commonality expected by the Shared Service were also delivered.

The multi-company functionality of Civica Financials enabled the councils to deliver financial systems from a mutually convenient, single physical premise, which resulted in real capital cost savings overall. During the implementation process, Civica consultants worked with South Ribble and Chorley Borough Council to highlight new and existing software functionality that both authorities could take advantage of, and advised on the best use of the technology so that the best business practices were implemented. This was done in conjunction with the two authorities' own process of aligning or adopting improved business practices to generate maximum efficiencies.

The Civica Financials solution is delivered via a simple web page, and so there is no software to install. This in turn meant there was no need to network two separate domains and install a rich client application. The web channel is streamlined to meet end users' day-to-day needs as it contains only the core functionality that adds value to their role, ultimately improving the user experience.

Finally, Civica's Electronic Document Management and Workflow systems have enabled both authorities' finance teams to work at optimum efficiency, therefore maximising staff productivity. They have also provided greater visibility into staff workloads, simplifying planning and project management.

## The Outcome

The Shared Financial Services Partnership's vision has hit performance targets, delivering a single multi-company system with one set of hardware and a shared service license fee, resulting in savings of £44,000 each year.

The single system has enabled the convergence of processes and the sharing of best practice, alongside the implementation of productivity software that has resulted in greatly increased efficiency.

Finally, the solution has resulted in significant operating and capital savings – as the project came £178,545 under budget, this has enabled the councils to re-allocate capital to other key projects and objectives.

## The Future

Sharing services with other councils is a growing trend, as councils see the benefits that such consolidation of expertise can bring in terms of both the efficient delivery of services and cashable savings. As a result of these benefits, South Ribble and Chorley are working to consolidate more areas of their services, such as budget preparation and asset accounting.

### About Civica

Civica ([www.civica.co.uk](http://www.civica.co.uk)) is a market leader in specialist systems and business process services that help organisations around the world to transform the way they work. Through experienced people who understand service delivery, the Group applies software, managed services and outsourcing to help customers streamline their activities. Civica supplies more than 2,000 organisations in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Canada and the USA, helping our customers to achieve a successful and more cost-efficient way of working.

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