



8x8 X Series enables transformation in service delivery for flagship local authority

Key stats

- 8x8 has played a role in generating **£6.5m in technology savings** for the council, through moving to cloud based systems.
- 8x8 has been a key component in supporting AVDC's channel shift strategy, which has seen a **reduction in in-bound phone calls by 25%**.
- Since the 8x8 implementation the council has **reduced the number of handsets by 50%** with more users now deploying the 8x8 app on their mobile.
- The deployment of **X Series** was very smooth. Overall implementation was finished with **minimal disruption and system downtime**.
- AVDC has maintained its **high quality customer service** whilst **reducing headcount by 10%**, and supporting an increasing population.
- By being able to provide better customer experience, **customer satisfaction scores** for AVDC are high – reaching **90%**.

About Aylesbury Vale District Council

Aylesbury Vale District Council provides public services to over 180,000 residents in the towns and rolling countryside of north Buckinghamshire. But this local authority could be described as anything but 'sleepy'. Rather, it's been at the leading edge of a transformation in the way services are delivered by local authorities in the UK.



Industry
Government



Headquarters
Aylesbury, UK

Aylesbury Vale DC

www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk



8x8 Products:
8x8 X Series



Primary Reason Chose 8x8:

- Shared vision
- Strong partnership
- Cost savings
- Service innovator

Executive summary

If any council could be said to punch above its weight, it's Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC). The local authority has pioneered cloud technology in fresh and imaginative ways to transform how public services are delivered at greater quality while costing less. Since 2011 AVDC has made over £20m in savings and income across the council. 8x8 has played an important role as a partner to AVDC on its digital transformation journey, with its IP telephony underpinning savings and delivering operational efficiencies.

Faced with 74% reductions in Government grants over 10 years, the council decided to rethink its operations and embrace tech disruption, looking for innovative ways to create value propositions to engage citizens. For example, it became the first council to move all IT systems to Amazon's Web Services, saving on infrastructure, software and staffing.

The challenge:

Unstable, complex and costly telephony

Aylesbury Vale's 10-year strategy was to move all applications off premise and into the cloud — making the council 'infrastructure free'. Telephony was high on the list.

Previously, around 75 staff handled calls about council tax, benefits, waste and other topics. But the legacy telephony system was unstable, complex and costly to upgrade and maintain. It had other drawbacks too: It relied on physical handsets that kept users desk bound; it lacked reports and meaningful metrics such as calls taken and agent performance; and conference calls were via an 0844 number that was expensive for people dialling in.

"For us, the customer experience is everything — and the old telephony technology couldn't deliver," explains Andrew Grant, the council's Chief Executive. "Our vision was to adopt a business approach within local government that liberated services and made them agile and higher quality by using the cloud and artificial intelligence".

The council discussed the challenges with 8x8 and quickly found common ground. "We wanted someone who could understand our goals, identify a strong return on investment and assist with cultural changes, deployment, training and ongoing maintenance," says Andrew Grant. "The team at 8x8 were confident that the transition was possible within our budget. They liked our vision and we appreciated their can-do attitude and ambition."

The solution:

Implementation completed without a hitch

8x8 met the council's needs with its flagship product, **X Series**. This ground-breaking platform provides two essential components for Aylesbury Vale.

Contact Centre, utilised by customer relationship teams, can now handle inbound enquiries more effectively. Meanwhile, Virtual Office provides phone numbers that can be used by every staff member at council offices and by remote workers. The council can also run auto attendants, call queues, ring groups, call pick up groups and conference calling through the system.

8x8 successfully moved a 400 user phone system (including eight contact centres) to a cloud voice system over a weekend without loss of communication.



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“With 8x8, we've got a strong partnership and a shared vision. They are willing to work at our fast pace, stay with us on the journey and take a risk that's paying off.”

Andrew Grant

Chief Executive, Aylesbury Vale District Council

The solution was then upgraded in 2018 during election time, also with minimal downtime.

“We’ve developed the solution and added more features over time,” explains Andrew Grant. “All our agents and staff use it now — and we have the 8x8 app on our mobile phones. We now have customer journey mapping enabled, so it’s possible to open customer cases on the screen before answering the call, which helps us to improve the customer experience dramatically.”

The benefits:

Outstanding savings and service innovation

Aylesbury Vale is now the only local authority in the UK with such an extensive cloud framework in place. With the **8x8 X Series**, the council has gained a wide range of advantages:

Business transformation: The flexible and granular nature of the 8x8 solution has underpinned the council’s move to replace departments and their associated silos and hierarchy ‘steps’ within the organisation. Instead, there’s now a single fulfilment group of multi-tasking employees, built around the needs of customers.

Significant savings: The **X Series** has contributed to a 10% reduction in headcount over the past two years and played a significant role in saving £6.5m to the council through the move to cloud based systems.

Since the 8x8 implementation, the council has reduced the number of handsets by 50% with more users now deploying the App on their work or own mobile.

The plan is to phase out desk phones altogether, a move initially proposed by 8x8 has gained wider acceptance.

Operational efficiency: The ability to add and reduce numbers to reflect staff changes, easily test new configurations and to direct more than one number to a line all contribute to efficiency gains for the council, leading to reduced hardware and desk requirements. Staff can easily set up their own conference calls, reducing costs and pressure on support functions.

Service innovation: The council now uses its agents more tactically — prioritising staff for first-time callers and for more complex transactions where greater empathy is extra important. For other interactions,



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people are encouraged to find information in a more cost-efficient way and this has led to 25 % reduction in in-bound phone calls. These include on the website, via their MyAccount dashboard, or through the webchat. Here, sessions typically cost as little as 10p to complete and five conversations can take place simultaneously.

Improved customer experience: First contact resolution is very high and customer satisfaction scores are typically in the 80-90% range. Call abandoned rates have reduced and callers are informed about where they are in the queue, a function not previously available. Call routing is simpler helping citizens speak to the best individual to help solve their problem.

Actionable data in real time: In cases of extreme weather or other emergencies, it's now easy for the council to react swiftly. A wallboard displays waiting times and call handling times — so managers can assign staff to meet demand easily. Meanwhile, monitoring and statistical reports are helping managers to fine tune the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) continually. The council is also looking at ways to match callers with the most suitable agents, based on each resident's estimated level of knowledge. Managers can also track individual conversations and use them for staff training.

Looking ahead: Showcasing what's possible

Aylesbury Vale has been able to showcase what's now achievable for local government within the age of cloud technology and AI. Over 40 other local authorities have beaten a path to its door — to see how it's done. The council has also won awards such as the Public Sector Digital Transformation award and its success has been frequently hailed in the media.

For additional information,
visit www.8x8.com

In its quest to take the customer experience to the next level and achieve £5 million of further savings by 2020/21, Aylesbury Vale is pioneering new self-service tools. It's now become the first council to use a version of Amazon's 'Alexa' voice assistant to answer questions from residents via their MyAccount dashboard, whether that's about who their councillor is, or when their next bin collection is due.

With **8x8 X Series**, Aylesbury Vale has a platform that will support its goals across multiple communications channels — and a technology partner willing to push the boundaries. "8x8 is ambitious. They invest a lot each year in research and innovation which benefits us," says Andrew Grant. "The tech doesn't stand still and we're always talking to 8x8 about what we'd like next. Over time, we're looking to develop how we use webchat, upgrade from PC-based working, and find new ways to innovate at scale".

The cloud is the way forward for councils — it's distributed, secure and in tune with the desires and needs of residents. Doing nothing means going bust for local authorities, innovation is a must.

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About 8x8

8x8, Inc. (NYSE:EGHT) cloud solutions help businesses transform their customer and employee experience. With one system of engagement for voice, video, collaboration and contact centre and one system of intelligence on one technology platform, businesses can now communicate faster and smarter to exceed the speed of customer expectations. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com, or follow 8x8 on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

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