



## Coventry City Council make the move to Barclaycard Business to deliver flexibility and savings

Coventry City Council is a metropolitan authority located in the heart of England. The council consists of more than 15,000 staff spread across various service directorates. The directorates cover a wide range of areas including, education, social care, local transport and the environment.

Mike Revis, Lead Accountant at the City Council, talks about its decision to select Barclaycard Business as their supplier of the Government Procurement Card.

### Making the move to procurement cards

Mike and his team decided to start looking into the option of procurement cards four years ago following a value review on procurement carried out at the City Council. The results showed that by using a procurement card they could reduce costs compared to processing a traditional paper invoice.

### Starting the rollout

Mike and his team chose to run a pilot scheme first to see how the cards would be used, Mike says "We started a pilot scheme with just four cards through our banking partner. The pilot was successful so we decided to begin to roll out the card Council wide." By the end of the first phase of rollout Mike and his team issued more than 300 cards to staff across the Council.

### Selecting the right provider

In June 2005, following the successful rollout of cards to Council staff, the City Council took the decision to examine other providers in the market place that could offer a similar product. Mike says, "Barclaycard Business approached us and we liked what we saw. We recognised that the Barclaycard Business Government Procurement Card product fitted what we needed."

Once the decision had been made to make the move to Barclaycard Business, Mike and his team began the migration of cards from their existing supplier to Barclaycard Business. Mike says "Over a short period of time, 4-6 weeks, we replaced more than 300 cards with Barclaycard Business GPC cards".

Mike goes on to explain the rollout policy the Council follows. "We issue our cards on a basis of need. Anyone can have a GPC card as long as they have a genuine need for one." The Council does not limit the use of cards to just senior staff. Mike adds "it is often the most junior staff who are involved in the procurement and purchasing of goods at the Council so it is they who have the cards."

Since then the rollout has gone from strength to strength. The City Council now has 1,081 cards in issuance across all of its directorates.

As the number of cards has grown so has the amount of expenditure on the GPC cards. Mike says "when we began using procurement cards we were seeing approximately £40,000 expenditure on our cards each month. Since then, as the number of cards in issue has increased, the monthly expenditure has grown to more than £560,000."

Whilst the level of expenditure on the cards continues to rise the City Council is encouraging supplier acceptance of the card. Mike adds "Whilst we don't say that suppliers have to use the card we encourage all our suppliers to accept the GPC card. Indeed, in our tender documentation we state that we would prefer payment by purchasing cards."

### Tangible savings

The council has found that having GPC cards have delivered real savings and efficiencies across the whole of the City Council.

It is clear to Mike and his team that there are real savings to be had in using a purchasing card instead of a traditional paper invoice. Calculations made by the University estimate that the cost of making a purchase using a Procurement card is just 58 pence which compares favourably with the cost of over £20 to process a traditional paper invoices.

For Mike the real benefits are felt by Council's staff. Mike says "Using the purchasing card means that staff are now able to quickly and securely purchase goods and services which saves time and money." Mike gives an example "at the moment we are finding them particularly useful for the Council's reactive repair teams who are now able to purchase goods from trade suppliers and wholesalers whilst out on a job instead of spending time travelling back to the Council stores to pick up materials. This is a lot more convenient for the staff and the Council as a whole."

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