

# AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

How Aylesbury Vale District Council embraced ATS & Recruitment CRM as part of their cultural transformation journey

Since central government announced it was removing the Revenue Support Grant, the traditional funding method for local authorities, Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) has been searching for a new business model which is fit for purpose now and in the future. The council quickly realised that with funding from central government running dry and demand for services only increasing, continuous cost cutting was a race to the bottom. The solution for AVDC was to become a commercially-minded organisation in the social enterprise mould, far removed from a traditional council, and generate its own income to help provide services which the district wants and needs.

As part of this initiative, the council identified the need to introduce a new recruitment system to manage internal selection. This could then be used to make improvements to recruitment, update and improve recruitment processes, increasing awareness of AVDC and encouraging more people to apply. This in turn could reduce the cost of hiring staff, whilst at the same time providing a more efficient and effective service.

AVDC is an ambitious council with a strong culture, based on clearly defined values and underpinned by a new commercial behavioural framework. As it embarked on a restructure, the council needed to recruit enthusiastic,

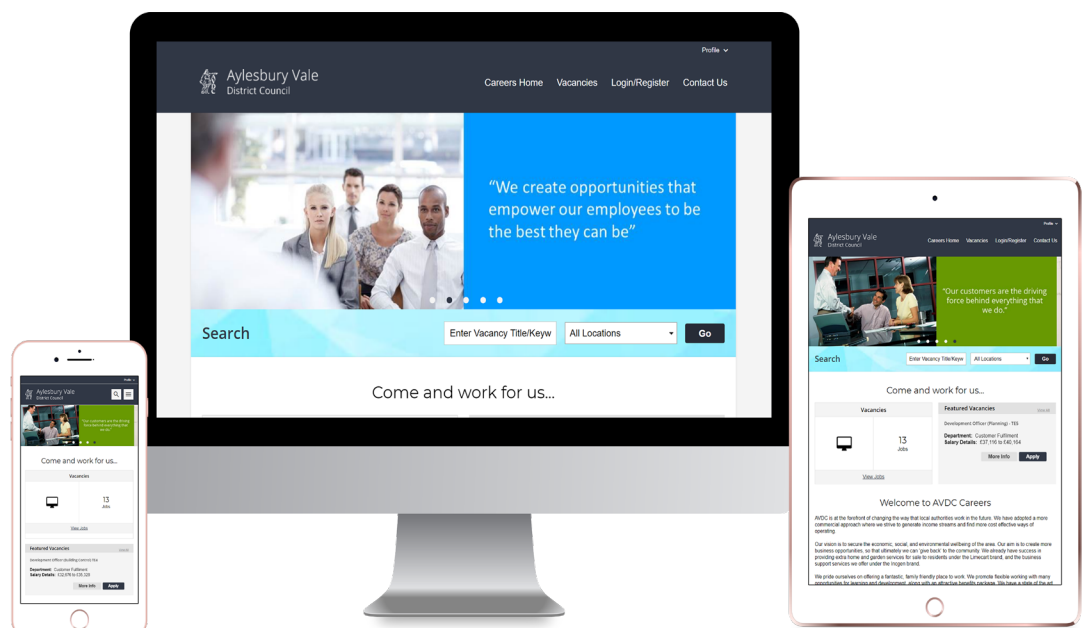
motivated and commercially-minded people. The behaviour framework identified how staff would need to work, in order to deliver commercially-viable products and profitable services valued by customers.



The organisation needed to find candidates with the right behaviours and manage them through the complete recruitment journey.

## The Restructure Programme

AVDC is at the forefront of changing the way that local authorities work. Its new approach is working, saving around £14 million in the last six years, both through efficiencies as well as finding new income streams.



The restructure programme involved close to 500 employees, covering a range of salary grades and roles and was driven by the new commercial behavioural framework. This ensured that all employees recruited supported AVDC's commercially-focused approach and vision of becoming a social enterprise.

"All of those involved were invited to apply for the jobs that were available under the restructure and were actively encouraged to apply for any roles that they really wanted to do – behaviours were the number one priority," explained Ella Palmer, Senior HR Business Partner.

It was imperative for AVDC to complete the internal selection process anonymously through 'name-blind applications' to demonstrate complete transparency and fairness of the process. Name blind applications removed the candidate name and personal data from the hiring manager's view, to negate the potential for any unconscious bias in the candidate evaluation process.

AVDC based its recruitment and selection process on a combination of skills, knowledge and ability to demonstrate the new commercial behaviours. The assessments are carried out in two parts; a competency-based interview and a case study designed to assess the required behaviours. No specialist knowledge of AVDC is required, as the framework is the same for internal and external applicants.

Throughout the assessments the programme team worked extensively with HR and Communications to support staff and seek feedback to improve the process. Lessons learnt from the first assessments were then applied to the next and the process has been fine tuned. It is now in use in all ongoing recruitment.

## The Solution

Before implementing Eploy, AVDC managed recruitment in a more labour intensive way, which placed an administrative burden on the recruitment team.

They evaluated a number of ATS & Recruitment CRM vendors and systems and scored each against their core requirements.

## Core Requirements

Specifically, AVDC was looking to automate their

recruitment process with a flexible solution that could decrease the number of hours spent by the recruitment team on manual recruiting activities.

"Eploy ticked the boxes. It enabled us to deliver on our commitment to name-blind shortlisting and recruiting anonymously based on behaviours underpinning the transformation project. We wanted to ensure that nothing in the recruitment process put up barriers that would prevent the best talent from joining us."

"We wanted to build brand awareness and offer candidates an improved experience when applying from any device," explained Karen Jones, Commercial Culture Lead.

Fundamental to the decision in selecting Eploy as the preferred technology partner was that Eploy was fully compliant with AVDC's IT requirements. Eploy offered a cloud-based platform with a secure, single sign-on, was able to link to other external sources and, as an additional benefit, Eploy was on G-Cloud, the government framework for cloud services.

## How long did the implementation take?

From the selection of Eploy to going live took just eight weeks. It was an ambitious roll-out, and AVDC has subsequently refined the Eploy system to meet their evolving needs.

*"The Eploy recruitment platform has delivered process improvements and financial benefits as well as providing an improved candidate experience."*

Ella Palmer, Senior HR Business Partner, AVDC

## What were the results of the project?

Karen Jones, Commercial Culture Lead, shares AVDC achievements:

*“As an ambitious council with a clear vision and values, underpinned by our new commercial behaviour framework, we were looking for enthusiastic, motivated and commercially-minded people to be part of our team.*

*Ultimately for our recruitment to be successful attitude had to trump aptitude. What we needed were staff with the right mind set and it was then over to us to give them the right support to succeed. Skill gaps can be brought up to scratch with training if the individual is enthusiastic and open to change.*

*We encouraged people to apply for multiple roles as part of the restructure project, giving them the chance to expand their horizons and do what they really wanted to do, instead of leaving them tied to their previous role. The focus was on creating a positive candidate experience, using AVDC’s values and behaviours to skills-match and maximise people’s potential. All current AVDC staff have gone through our transformation and come out the other side more involved, informed, commercial and invested in seeing our new-look council succeed.*

*The new system and culture appealed to a wider audience and got new talent to apply for roles, building the available talent pool and skills within the business. Feedback from the team was that Eploy was quick to learn and easy to use.*

*The anonymity of applications was really important for us and in protecting personal data – it built trust in the process and our brand.*

*Deploying Eploy’s web-based platform reduced the risk of grievances, which are often associated with restructuring programmes, through the transparency of the process. No member appeals were made throughout the programme.*

*Having the ability to manage the 400+ volume*

*of applications, assessments and interview scheduling online simplified the recruitment process and also reduced the number of ‘no shows’, saving time for everyone in what was an ambitious, time-restrained project. We achieved a great deal in a short space of time.*



*We’d done a lot of preparation upfront looking at our recruitment process and further optimised the process by implementing Eploy - reducing the time to hire by 50% (from 12 weeks to 6 weeks). We are also continuing to look at ways to improve through process mapping exercises.*

*Had we have not implemented Eploy we’d have needed considerably more resources to be able to manage the process manually – especially so if we were to achieve what we set out to do in the timeframe.”*

## And plans for the future? The future looks bright for AVDC.

To further build the AVDC brand the council plans to nurture and engage talent relationships through the use of social networking tools. AVDC is also planning to introduce SMS marketing for recruitment campaigns.

Ella Palmer, Senior HR Business Partner, commented on the future plans. *“We recruit for a diverse range of vacancies including new positions, replacement hires, graduates, apprentices, fixed-*

*term and permanent roles across all grades. There is still lots we want to do to attract and retain the best talent. We are looking to introduce the Eploy offers and onboarding portal to improve the collection of candidate information and manage the entire offer acceptance process online. This will help to speed up our offer process and automate document collection. We also want to introduce more flexible working and enhance the reward and recognition programme."*

## Summary

*"As part of AVDC transforming to a commercially-minded organisation, we implemented Eploy's cloud-based recruitment platform to ensure we were able to manage our internal selection process and external recruitment campaign. Specific benefits were the job and applicant tracking processes and line manager portal. The Eploy recruitment platform has delivered process improvements and financial benefits as well as providing an improved candidate experience." Ella Palmer, Senior HR Business Partner*

Chris Bogh, Chief Technology Officer at Eploy, commented *"Aylesbury Vale District Council wanted to find new ways of working and we are delighted that Eploy was able to support their transformation project and make finding the perfect candidates much easier. We worked closely with AVDC to share our recruitment expertise for them to achieve significant commercial advantages."*

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## About Eploy

Eploy is the complete cloud-based recruitment platform for modern in-house recruitment teams. Eploy combines Applicant Tracking, Recruitment CRM, Talent Pools and Analytics into a unified web-based platform integrated seamlessly with your website to provide an excellent candidate experience.

Finding and recruiting candidates who are the perfect fit for your roles is always challenging. Fortunately Eploy's world-class recruitment software makes it much, much easier.

We've been helping leading companies move to the cloud and recruit faster and smarter since 1998.

Eploy is precision-engineered to work on every platform and add value to every stage of the recruitment journey. Eploy automates and simplifies recruitment processes to help you attract, engage, recruit and onboard candidates quickly. As Eploy is also your full talent engagement platform you can manage your relationships with candidates, departments and hiring managers better. With a high degree of measurability, you can track and analyse your recruitment performance, quality, costs and timescales accurately.

Our cloud-based recruitment platform is reinforced with market-leading mentoring and cross-sector expertise so you get the training and support you need to achieve a powerful commercial advantage.



Faster, Smarter **Recruitment Software**

Tel: Edwin Avenue, Kidderminster, DY11 7RA  
(UK) 0800 073 42 43 (Int) +44 1562 637 199  
Email: [info@eploy.co.uk](mailto:info@eploy.co.uk)  
Visit: [eploy.co.uk](http://eploy.co.uk)

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