

## Customer Success Story

### Collaborative SAP to Azure Migration with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

#### The Challenge

When Barnsley Council first opened a bid in order to migrate their SAP landscape to the cloud, the tenders received did not offer an economically viable outcome. However, a non-negotiable deadline (the sale of its current premises and an outdated on-premise functionality) meant that a solution was required sooner rather than later.

**The Council initially issued a brief for a one-provider solution to migrate and run its SAP environment in the cloud. The tender requested that the critical run aspect of the scope covered the multi-year provision of the cloud infrastructure on which to run SAP, plus associated technical managed services to manage and maintain the SAP landscape.**

Credible respondents offered one part of the service – either cloud infrastructure or the technical managed service – but had to partner with an associate company to complete their response which would exceed the Council's budget considerably. Based on the tenders received initially, the Council chose not to appoint a provider.

As a respondent, Absoft had early on picked up the likely issues that the Council would face with tender responses and had developed some solutions. Once the Council ended the procurement process, Absoft got in touch and building on a rapport established during the tender process shared the solution suggestions.

#### What the client said:



**BARNLSLEY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

*"I just wanted to take the time to say a HUGE thank you from the Barnsley SAP Team – you well and truly deserve it."*

*"We are in awe of the Absoft team – having an appreciation of the task that you've achieved, it's still hard to believe how easy you made the transition look."*

*"You have done an exceptional job in keeping us all on the straight and narrow; we work with so many IT suppliers and I must say that working with Absoft has been an absolute pleasure."*

Head of ICT, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

## The Solution Co-Development

The key components of the original brief lay at the heart of the problem and therefore at the heart of a solution that Absoft proposed.

**Any solution had to address three facets: the provider landscape, the migration to the cloud project and subsequent running of the cloud-based SAP systems. Affordability was also critical.**

### Provider Landscape

Throughout the bidding process, Absoft had become increasingly aware of the capabilities of the Council's in-house technical team. After further discussions, the option crystallised for the in-house technical team to assume responsibility for running the SAP landscape.

Absoft confirmed the feasibility of this and suggested that depending on the selected infrastructure provider, Absoft – or another specialist partner - could provide support where additional help may be required. This joint decision to utilise the internal team significantly reduced the project scope and required budget.

The team at Absoft pointed out that there were a number of potential advantages to Azure as cloud infrastructure provider, including but not limited to:

- Microsoft Azure offers public sector discounts for direct customers;
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council were already using Azure for other parts of their landscape;
- Part of the project to migrate SAP into Azure would involve the implementation of Microsoft Azure ExpressRoute. ExpressRoute extends organisations' on-premises networks into the Microsoft cloud establishing connections to Microsoft cloud services such as Microsoft 365. Absoft pointed out that this would be a significant accelerator and cost reduction driver in-terms of Barnsley Council's declared future ambitions;
- Absoft also highlighted areas where Barnsley Council could optimise their licence estate with the assistance of Microsoft, including taking advantage of Azure Hybrid Benefit to significantly reduce the costs of running workloads in the cloud;

**Having investigated the advantages, with the help of Absoft and their Microsoft Azure account manager, the Council concluded that Azure was the preferred cloud infrastructure for SAP.**

The decision for the in-house technical team to assume responsibility for running the SAP landscape significantly reduced the project scope and required budget.

Absoft confirmed the feasibility of this and suggested that the selected infrastructure partner could provide support where additional help may be required.



Barnsley Council could now re-focus on the procurement of a partner to assist with the evermore impending migration project and its non-negotiable deadline, creating a revised bid with Azure as the preferred cloud infrastructure.

## The Successful Bid

Absoft's success in this bid was attributed to the following key differentiators:

- Functional consulting capabilities allowed Absoft's team to augment the Council's scarce business resources;
- Successful track record in migrating 17 SAP landscapes into the cloud – including cloud migrations from local authority “on-premise” to the Azure cloud;
- Absoft's public sector credentials as a provider of SAP services and support into multiple local authorities;
- The combined Azure and SAP expertise and capabilities of Absoft - no third party required;
- As a Microsoft Gold Partner, Absoft works together with Microsoft to meet the client's best interests and provide the best solution, not just overhead;
- A collaborative approach, as demonstrated during the solution co-development, and Absoft's proposal to ensure knowledge transfer for cloud support and filling documentation gaps around the SAP solution and interfaces;
- Absoft's Azure infrastructure design fitted the Council's functional needs as Absoft did not propose a lift-and-shift to move a suboptimal solution to Azure. The final design included removal of unrequired UI components and an enhanced technical architecture for the remaining components
- To protect the deadline, Absoft split the proposed project into two phases, de-risking the first critical phase;
- Last but not least, the bid was affordable and well within the nominated budget;

## The Migration Project

Taking the retendering into account, conversations between the Council and Absoft took place over the course of a year before work commenced in March 2021. Shortly after this date, the initial project timeline was significantly reduced to a period of just 12 weeks.



Absoft's expert understanding of the technology options available allowed for the provision of a cost-effective approach to the migration, taking into consideration maintenance dates, software versions and future proofing the landscape.

Very importantly, for a Council under huge budgetary pressure, Absoft saved the client in the region of £125,000 in ongoing operational support fees through the enablement of the internal team.

A technically-challenging project, operating systems were different between the Production, Test and Development instances, with a total 128 interfaces to test. Risks represented by out-of-date business data and confusion generated from orphaned solutions was significant.

Furthermore, the deadline of twelve weeks was hugely aggressive – but immutable. Many late nights, early mornings and hours over multiple weekends were required to get the job done.

**To ensure smooth running of your SAP on Azure it is crucial to work with a partner who combines SAP expertise with a sound knowledge and strong referenceability within Microsoft Azure projects.**

## The Result

The migration work was achieved within an unprecedented timeframe. Absoft's combined SAP and Azure skillset and industry niche in the UK public sector were instrumental in ensuring that this project was completed successfully, on-time and within budget.

Absoft's expert understanding of the technology options available allowed for the provision of a cost-effective approach to the migration, taking into consideration maintenance dates, software versions and future proofing the landscape.

Very importantly, for a Council under huge budgetary pressure, Absoft saved the client in the region of £125,000 in ongoing operational support fees through the enablement of the internal team.

**Get in touch with our expert SAP and Azure team to begin your journey to the cloud today!**

**[info@absoft.co.uk](mailto:info@absoft.co.uk)**

# ABSOFIT

**Your  
One-Stop-Shop  
for SAP and  
Microsoft  
Solutions**



**SAP and Microsoft  
Gold Partner**



**30 years of SAP  
experience; 10 years  
of SAP in the cloud**



**Bespoke,  
collaborative solutions;  
Enablement and  
training**



**Hundreds of SAP  
system migrations;  
17 SAP migrations  
to the cloud**



**Highly skilled and  
fully certified in both  
SAP and Azure team**



**UK Public Sector  
focus and excellent  
track record**