



Solving capacity challenges at a new council headquarters with RICOH Spaces



- Enables agile, productive hybrid working
- Supports emergency readiness and employee safety
- Seamless integration with key collaboration apps

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

Ashford Borough Council provides a wealth of community services to around 140,000 people in the south-east of the United Kingdom, employs 750 people, and manages a complex, yet lean budget.

For the council, new ways of remote and online working are challenging long-standing office planning models, and finding smarter ways to manage and optimise usage of workspaces is high on the priority list. For example, the council recently relocated to a new modern office as part of an efficiency drive. As well as offering a better work environment and lower operating costs, the new building is considerably smaller, prompting fresh challenges for space allocation and booking.

Robin Jones, Service Lead IT & Digital at Ashford Borough Council, comments: "Our existing app for managing and booking workspaces offered limited functionality, and did not integrate with other key collaboration tools. We wanted something that would encompass both desks and meeting rooms and connect seamlessly with Microsoft Teams and other apps. We had transitioned from a three-floor site with space for around 500 people to a new site with just over 200 desks, so managing occupancy was clearly essential for a successful move and to support effective, productive hybrid working."



SOLUTION

A fresh approach to workspace management

During a discussion on ways to enhance the new workplace, Ashford Borough Council discovered RICOH Spaces—a comprehensive workplace enhancement platform that would provide integrated desk and meeting room booking, visitor management, and data analytics capabilities.

Robin remarks: “RICOH Spaces ticked all the boxes, offering occupancy optimisation, room and desk booking, and integration with our key collaboration apps. The most important part, though, was that Ricoh would help our team to manage the changeover.”

One of the standout elements for Ashford Borough Council has been the integration between RICOH Spaces and Microsoft 365, enabling users to book rooms through the platform before the meeting automatically appears in their Outlook calendars. Plus, the Ricoh solution enables users to add a Microsoft Teams link to each meeting to allow external attendees to join the session remotely.

“The integration capabilities are a real strength of RICOH Spaces,” adds Robin. “If people are presenting in a meeting room, remote participants can simply hit the link in the calendar invite to join. That’s so useful when third parties such as architects or planners want to follow an event.”



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Furthermore, RICOH Spaces provides an overview of all room and desk bookings, with full usage reports available for Ashford Borough Council. The council also harnesses an integration between RICOH Spaces and room booking panels positioned outside each meeting room to show real-time availability and upcoming bookings, and to enable users to check in on their arrival.

Robin notes: “We have configured RICOH Spaces so that meeting rooms automatically become available again if people don’t check in within 15 minutes of the start of their booking. But when we have a longer request – if say, our election teams are counting postal ballots and need the space for several days, and may not arrive and check in at a specific time in the morning – we can switch that function off to prevent confusion. The solution gives us a lot of flexibility.”

BENEFITS

Integrated solutions enhance productivity

With RICOH Spaces, Ashford Borough Council is helping employees to find available rooms and desk space at the new site and to collaborate with colleagues, driving productivity.

Robin explains: “Our users are growing increasingly familiar with the platform. We have a mix of people that prefer to use RICOH Spaces via web browser and via the mobile app. Personally, I find the mobile app is extremely fast and the interface is very intuitive.”

As well as supporting employees, the Ricoh solution provides controlled check-in and check-out capabilities for visitors to the new site, helping to minimise wait times at reception.

“Our facilities management team find the visitor management tools in RICOH Spaces very useful from a health and safety standpoint,” continues Robin. “They can quickly see how many people are on the site at any given time and need to be accounted for in the event of a fire drill or any other type of emergency situation.”

In the future, Ashford Borough Council will use the data from RICOH Spaces to analyse occupancy and hybrid working trends, helping to ensure accountability. “Our elected councillors are keen to analyse and track how we operate as a public body,” notes Robin. “The data and reporting in RICOH Spaces will enable us to provide transparency around our working practices.”



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Robin concludes: “The support available from Ricoh has been excellent – both from the AI assistant for quick queries, and when we raise a ticket with the RICOH Spaces team, who are always very responsive and knowledgeable. The solution has become an integral part of our workplace management strategy, and we look forward to exploring the other capabilities, such as IoT sensors.”

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is a leading provider of integrated digital services and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation of workplaces, workspaces and optimise business performance. Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh’s global operation reaches customers in approximately 200 countries and regions, supported by cultivated knowledge, technologies, and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85-year history. In the financial year ended March 2025, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,527 billion yen (approx. 16.8 billion USD). It is Ricoh’s mission and vision to empower individuals to find Fulfillment through Work by understanding and transforming how people work so we can unleash their potential and creativity to realise a sustainable future. For further information, please visit: www.ricoh.com

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