

The Future of Council Service Arrives in the London Borough of Hackney with Open Text

Out with the paper, in with Council Document Management (CDM)

Industry

Public Sector – UK Local Government

Customer



Open Text Partner



Business Challenges

- Information spread across many locations and systems
- Difficulty finding the right information to service customers
- Lack of confidence in security, loss of documents and duplication
- Inability to meet current and future legislation and regulation
- Difficulty in automating processes

Business Solution

- Open Text ECM Suite

Business Benefits

- Accurate and reliable information supporting business processes
- Access to the right information, at the right time, by the right people
- Physical storage reduction
- Ability to adhere to current and future legislation and regulation
- Resources released to front line services

The London Borough of Hackney provide a variety of services, producing a significant volume of paper and increasingly, electronic information. The need for ready access to documents, the long term preservation and secure management of records, in a cost conscious climate, was central to Hackney's strategy to take control of their information.

The Driver for Change

Hackney wanted to tackle their disparate information silos, physical and electronic, across numerous locations, some with their own working practices, and put in place a single, effective strategy. With real estate consolidation looming, there would no longer be space for the council's physical paper. Issues around uncontrolled circulation of paper, document loss, duplication and lack of confidence in policy versions or completeness of case notes, were commonplace. Any solution had to address these issues and be capable of scaling to the needs of the entire Council—thousands of users and millions of documents, and meet compliance requirements.

Addressing these needs meant information would have to be migrated from existing physical and electronic forms. For Hackney, encouraging an open culture, among other changes in working practice, required new ways of working, with accurate information, available to the right people, when they needed it.

The Selection Process

The Council invited tenders for an Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) solution in 2006 and after extensive research and evaluation, selected the Open Text ECM Suite, to be implemented by a dedicated internal project team supported by Mouchel. Open Text and Mouchel had jointly worked on many UK public sector implementations, providing Hackney with the confidence they sought.

Council activities rely on sound, trusted and secure information. Comprehensive document management would be a critical factor in improving Council services along with long term management of records. But Hackney's vision didn't end at electronic document and records management (EDRM). Whilst EDRM would be important, their vision also encompassed remote access, service over the web and streamlining and automating business processes. They wanted an integrated solution that could deliver council wide.

In evaluating the Open Text ECM Suite, the Council recognised Open Text's knowledge and skill, gained over numerous implementations. Mouchel too had delivered many similar solutions, and applying the combined experience provided the confidence to proceed with a phased implementation.





London Borough of Hackney's Service Centre in London.

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Corporate Director of Legal and Democratic Services,
London Borough of Hackney.

Implementation and Roll Out

The Regeneration and Planning Departments, selected for phase one of the implementation, tested functionality in more depth than the evaluation process, and also ensured that culturally the suppliers were a good fit.

A pending office move, the perfect opportunity to implement the initial solution, necessitated a reduction in physical paper storage, making documents accessible electronically. Access had to be secure, auditable, and reliable, meeting the operational needs of the Council and regulatory requirements from government. All this, whilst reducing the costs associated with physical storage, would give the confidence to push ahead with a Council wide roll-out.

Whilst phase one was an overall success, lessons learnt helped define a roll-out methodology for other departments. The internal project team implemented the methodology working closely with technical and support colleagues and a dedicated records management team. With all documents now coming under the auspices of a single repository, a compliant, robust EDRM would also now prove to be a reality. The vision was to roll out Council wide, with a truly enterprise-wide EDRM capability, leading the way among UK local authorities.

Integration with the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) application, scanning, housing stock system and others, would eliminate repeating tasks, contributing to overall success. Providing a single view of case related documents, securely accessible anywhere, is made possible with the Open Text ECM Suite Application Programming Interface (API) and Software Development Kit (SDK), ensuring users could access what they needed, in context, when they needed it.

Benefits

The London Borough of Hackney Council Document Management (CDM) system, has removed heavy reliance on paper. CDM makes documents available instantly, without the need for archived storage retrieval. This provides more efficient enquiry handling, with 3,500 users accessing the information they need, in real-time, often able

to provide answers immediately. This reduces call-backs, follow ups and the time delays and customer dissatisfaction that results.

Space previously occupied by large volumes of documents has been reduced or eliminated. Users now have confidence that files are complete and up to date. Duplication has been reduced and even eliminated. The costs associated with the storage of paper, its retrieval, transportation, and duplication have been significantly reduced.

“By removing documents to offsite storage and making them accessible via CDM, expensive office space in Hackney can be used for people, not filing cabinets,” says the Council Information and Knowledge Manager, London Borough of Hackney.

The move from paper to electronic has been a key enabler for process automation, making straight through processes, requiring the input of skilled knowledge workers, vastly more efficient. Process delays that occurred prior to implementation, such as waiting for paper to be retrieved, are a thing of the past.

Information access is secure, version control assured, and transactions audited. CDM provides instant, simultaneous access to files, supporting effective collaboration. A single, functional file plan, providing consistency to users, means information is easily locatable and the foundations to meet current and potential future legislation and regulation, such as Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Government records management requirements, are now achievable.

When council staff need to collaborate, they no longer send physical document copies or electronic attachments in emails, they simply provide their colleagues with a link to the document in CDM. This ensures there is only one version of the truth—the document in CDM with its full audit history.

Specific benefits delivered by CDM to date include:

- Building Control site inspections improved by 11%
- Freedom of Information responses improved to 95% within deadline from 75%
- Estimated £7 million saving by avoiding the need for an additional floor at the Hackney Service Centre



- Ongoing annual savings calculated at around £200,000
- Hackney Council reputation has been enhanced, with other councils looking to Hackney as the model to follow
- Digital storage reductions overall as obsolete digital files are removed from shared drives
- Staff redeployment equating to cash savings, e.g. Building Control have reduced from 27 to 21 the number of full-time employees through improved productivity and employee efficiency
- Reduction in time to locate documents. For example, before CDM in Building Control, up to 20 employees each spent 6% of their time searching for files which has been reduced to 1%. At an average of £35,000/year, 6%=£2,100 reducing to just £350 per employee. For 20 employees that's a saving of £35,000. There are now 3,500 users of the system in total.
- Digital Mailroom implementation is already saving an average of 2 minutes for every item of post received.

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The Future

Expansion of the solution is already underway. Extension of the document capture capacity, allowing all documents to be scanned in a Digital Mailroom, will ensure all departments benefit from the capture, categorisation, and prompt, secure delivery of documents for their business processes.

The solution will be further enhanced through the wider deployment of Open Text Business Process Management (BPM). This will enable process automation, accurate and timely delivery of information to relevant case workers, the faster processing of claims and applications, and will reduce the reliance on manual, paper intensive processes.

CDM is also enabling the decommissioning of legacy systems, reducing the annual support costs direct with suppliers and indirectly within the Council. For example, in the area of planning applications, currently managed using a discrete application, this will be brought into CDM, with all applications automatically being made available over the web.

As new requirements emerge, these will be evaluated and wherever possible implemented within the CDM solution providing even greater return on investment (ROI) from the investments made to date.

- Workflow Business Process Management (BPM)
 - + 01 - Research, intelligence, background
 - + 02 - Business cases
 - + 03 - Plans
 - + 04 - Reporting
 - + 05 - Meetings
 - + 06 - Finance, budget & resources
 - + 07 - Benefits management
 - + 08 - Change management
 - + 09 - Risks & issues
 - + 10 - Phase/stage/deliverable x (repeat as necessary)

"The Council has introduced corporate electronic records and document management on time and on budget. Some benefits have already been demonstrated, but many more can be delivered by taking advantage of the functions offered by CDM." – Head of eBusiness, London Borough of Hackney.



Mouchel is a consulting and business services group that provides many of the design, managerial and engineering services that support modern society. We work with government agencies, local authorities, government-regulated industries and the private-sector to provide safe, reliable roads and railways, well-managed education and civic infrastructure, clean water, and cost-effective energy. We develop solutions to dispose of society's waste and to regenerate the most deprived urban communities; and we help developers and corporate clients to combine their objectives with those of the society around them.

Mouchel's name is synonymous with great relationships – with clients, suppliers and staff. We're building a business that's in tune with the society it serves, finding new ways to deliver public services and infrastructure efficiently and profitably through partnerships between the public- and private-sectors.

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