IT Strategy Review Management Summary

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

Document Control

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Revision History

Issue date	Author	Version	Revision description
04/05/2022	Graham Tetley	0.1	Initial Release
31/05/2022	Graham Tetley	0.2	Updates following customer review ahead of second review
06/06/2022	Graham Tetley	1.0	Updates following customer feedback and final release
08/06/2022	Graham Tetley	1.1	Updates following further customer feedback

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1. Management Summary

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, (EEBC) like many organisations have become more reliant upon technology to drive business and service improvement across the organisation. Following several factors both globally and locally that are out of the control of the council, it is felt that a full review of the IT strategy is required to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets the needs of all stake holders across the council.

EEBC engaged the team at Maple to produce this report which incorporates a review of the current IT strategy and provide recommendations and consideration for strategic changes. The Maple Team were selected due to our extensive experience and understanding across all layers of the IT landscape, including infrastructure as well as end user compute and applications. Our CTO, who was the lead consultant on this report, has worked within the public sector himself. He therefore understands first-hand the processes, governance, budgets, and challenges specific to public sector organisations including local government and health care.

Maple compiled this report utilising a proven methodology of engaging with key stakeholders and understanding the current strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, and potential risks for the organisation. This allowed Maple to understand the current position and what the future goals for IT are. Maple also looked to understand the current IT strategy and identify recommendations for improvement across all areas of the strategy, aligning to the information requested and gathered during the workshops with key line of business stakeholders, elected Members, and the Staff Consultative group. Some stakeholders across all groups were not able to provide feedback.

The current EEBC IT Strategy aligns with both industry trends and sector trends. There are several key focus areas that need to be considered moving forward, and to fully achieve the strategic goals of the council. The council has some clear and defined goals when it comes to the future of the council's digital assets.

- The infrastructure should be highly available, highly secure, and highly performant, providing the flexibility and agility for the council to deliver services from wherever and whenever, as quickly as possible.
- The application landscape should be simplified, centralised and easy to use, with particular focus on resident facing applications including the website and obtaining access to their data.

The focus has, in recent years been on "keeping the lights on". This is due to the organic nature in which the council's IT infrastructure has grown and developed over many years, and as the council becomes more reliant upon technology, which will further increase in the coming months and years. Maintaining the availability of the platform, providing support to end users, whilst ensuring that the environment is patched and maintained. Due to the small amount of budget, resources and skills that is in place across the council, this has meant that minimal time has been afforded to innovation and improvement. Culminating in the council having a significant number of applications, technologies, and tools, that are engrained within the core services and procedures used to deliver high quality service to members and residents. This results in a complex environment, and in many areas, lack of efficiency, duplication of activity and no single source of truth for council data.

The key technological priorities of the IT strategy and the recommendations to achieve the wider goals of the council should be:

- Application rationalisation and standardisation
- Data consolidation
- A single point of truth for data
- Continuous Cyber Security improvement
- Improved end user and resident experience for public facing IT services (such as the council websites)
- IT infrastructure consolidation
- Increased system agility and choice

A major area of focus moving forward, which should become the foundation of an updated strategy, is on engagement from IT, the key council end users and stakeholders. As the council becomes more reliant on technology to deliver services to the residents, it is important that stakeholders across the business are engaged with the IT team and digital strategy, where appropriate aligning key line of business services to the IT strategy and vice versa. Engagement, and buy in across the council will be vital in delivering a successful IT Strategy, that is fit for purpose and meets the needs of all.

The council stakeholders who took part during the review identified that the digital skills across the council (including members and residents) was of a low standard and as a result should be addressed as soon as possible. With digital skills being low, this can have an adverse effect on the trust in the current IT and digital platforms, while also stifling innovation due to a potential resistance to change. Something that Maple see regularly across various sectors.

The council should look to invest in IT training skill, and knowledge sharing to improve skills and capabilities. This should begin at induction and be regularly refreshed for employees and members. While online training should be made available to residents in the long term.

The council and stakeholders across the organisation should also engage with the IT team to drive requirements. Identification of "power users" or "super users" from across the business units, members and residents can help drive innovation, and efficiencies. Without such engagement the value of technology will be difficult to leverage, and success will be challenging to measure.

Regular Digital and IT user training and engagement, coupled with stakeholder engagement and requirement setting will improve trust, visibility and awareness, and enable innovation, cost saving and efficiencies through the power of technology.

Maple can see from the feedback provided and a complete review of the strategy, that the council IT team have become siloed, meaning that it is seen as an expensive cost centre to the business rather than an enabler. This is due to lack of engagement and the management overhead of a complex IT infrastructure and application portfolio that has been built over many years.

While the current strategy is aligned to both industry and sector trends, the focus should be shifted to engagement driven from the senior leadership team, other key stakeholders and across the council. This will allow the non-IT related decisions and dependencies to be

understood and confirmed, requirements to be defined and agreed, a realistic cost-effective budget to be aligned, appropriate resourcing to be put in place and realistic timelines to be set. Some of which may include shared services or outsourcing, like the strategic decision that has been taken by the council to partner with an experienced cyber security partner.

As part of this engagement, Maple will provide a presentation to discuss the roadmap in more detail. This presentation will also be shared with the relevant project stakeholders and Maple will be on hand to answer questions that arise, as well amend recommendations in collaboration with feedback on this report.