

Westminster City Council takes to the Cloud with Idox



Deliverables at-a-glance

- » Greater cost control thanks to a subscription-based model that eliminates any need for upfront hardware or software investments
- » The fully managed cloud service from Idox will generate operational savings of £500,000 over the lifetime of the contract
- » Simplified support model involves minimising points of contact and the number of providers for issue resolution
- » Application availability – SLAs are now consistently being met 24/7
- » Streamlined IT operations now deliver reliable and secure connectivity for Westminster's mobile workers – enabling staff to work faster and more consistently and efficiently
- » Complete as-a-service solution reduces capital expenditure and allows resources to focus on strategic and continuous improvement projects

Challenge: Implementing an infrastructure-free vision

Westminster City Council is the local authority serving the heart of London.

The resident population currently stands at approximately 234,000 but it's estimated that about one million people set foot in Westminster at some point during the day.

The Council employs over 2,000 people that work flexibly over a large number of locations, almost all of which are within the City boundaries.

With ongoing funding reductions from central government creating financial challenges, Westminster City Council wanted to cut IT costs – without compromising how it runs and delivers public services.

The decision to migrate from an on-premise deployment to a cloud-based service model would begin with the Council's desktop applications and servers before extending to Westminster's built environment systems. Critical to ensuring its vision of becoming infrastructure-free by 2015, the Council needed to ensure the 'always on' availability of its critical business and citizen-facing services, alongside achieving a value-for-money IT service that is accessible to all relevant stakeholders.

To help deliver its infrastructure-free plan, Westminster turned to Idox to take on the hosting of its land and property-based IT infrastructure.

Solution: A fully hosted and managed service that delivers true internal and external benefits

Responsible for delivering an IT service that increases efficiency, manages transferred risk, improves quality of service and boosts flexibility, Idox took over the provisioning and management of a range of integrated software applications and related services for Westminster.

Under the agreement, Idox is responsible for maintaining and updating all systems relating to a range of business functions – including Planning, Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards – and ensuring these meet all legislative requirements.



“The move away from managing our own systems to a hosted service would simplify our existing, highly-complex support model, and put our systems in the hands of experts who understand how to run it. This gives us more time to focus on strategic core activities.”

David Pettitt
Westminster City Council



City of Westminster

“Idox is responsible for the systems that enable us, for example, to process 13,000 planning applications each year and manage 17,500 noise complaints. To say that we rely on these business-critical systems to ensure we operate citizen-responsive services and can enable our staff to perform in their daily work would be an understatement,” explains David Pettitt.

The hosted managed services are operated from Idox’s data centre where data is replicated every 15 minutes, backed-up and stored offsite. Adhering to ISO 27001 information security standards, the centre is resilient to emergency situations, such as power outages.

“Making the move to a hosted service from Idox now means we’re able to deliver applications and systems to our business functions at a lower cost and with less risk. With Idox, we automatically benefit from a reliable and flexible disaster recovery solution, with minimal infrastructure investment on our part, that ensures we will be up and running quickly in the event of a major incident,” notes David Pettitt.

To help Westminster manage its business functions, Idox also provides a number of reporting and administration tools – including dashboard style reporting – that help staff and management to oversee workloads and team performance.

Outcomes: Streamlining, simplifying and managing IT processes for financial gains

The move to a managed service agreement with Idox has already generated some impressive cost savings and efficiencies, as David Pettitt notes: “Our operational costs are down significantly and we’re on track to achieve savings in the region of £500,000 over the life of the contract, while enabling a more efficient IT service that is accessible to all stakeholders.”

Many of these savings have been achieved by the streamlining of what was previously a complex support environment that involved the Council’s IT team and multiple third-party providers.

“Planning and implementing upgrades, for example, represented a major planning headache involving multiple parties – all of which represented a time, cost and resource overhead”, he continues. “Today, Idox handles all upgrades and necessary patches, at a fixed known cost, at an agreed frequency, and to agreed service targets.”

What’s more, with Idox overseeing day-to-day management of applications and systems, availability and application performance are significantly higher than before. So, now the council is able to give its mobile workers access to highly-responsive systems and applications that enable them to perform and be productive wherever they may be – in the field, at a remote office or working from home – using a PDA or tablet device.

As part of the agreement, Idox regularly undertakes quarterly reviews of Westminster’s architecture and system configurations, ensuring all are correctly documented so that service delivery can be enabled utilising the council’s strict change control procedure.

“Working in partnership with Idox frees us up to focus on core activities and together we’ve embarked on a strategic collaboration that will generate longer-term value as we progress our technology roadmap. With Idox handling the backbone that drives a major part of our service delivery responsibilities, we’ve not only gained an agreed level of service for a fixed and predictable cost. We’ve also been able to focus our attention on initiating new and innovative service offerings for residents and citizens.”

