

Barnsley Council use Microsoft SharePoint to support business transformation and compliance

Barnsley Council has migrated its vast document and records repository from complex legacy systems to SharePoint with the help of Microsoft Gold Partner, Deltascheme.

Barnsley Council is the unitary authority responsible for providing local government services to approximately 230,000 people who live in the town of Barnsley, South Yorkshire and the surrounding area.



BARNSELY
Metropolitan Borough Council

The challenge

The Council, together with its Housing organisation, Berneslai Homes, was already using an electronic document and records management system to manage the storage of corporate information and to scan and distribute post. However, while the system had been working well, it had been heavily customised to fit the Council's way of working and this was making upgrades complicated, time-consuming and costly. The team at Barnsley recognised that they needed to adopt a replacement platform that would provide a lower risk, more robust and scalable solution that was able to deliver a wide range of business requirements.

The solution

Barnsley Council not only needed to look for a replacement solution but also for assistance in transferring over 3,000 users and around 4 million documents from their existing EDRM system. In addition, the replacement system would need to integrate with the adult social care system, a planning application submission and search system, and a corporate scanning system.

Having considered several possibilities, Barnsley Council concluded that Microsoft SharePoint provided the best fit to their business requirements, especially as the Council had already invested heavily in Microsoft technologies.

Aware that their project timescales were tight, due to the imminent expiry of the support contract on their existing system, and due to a lack of in-house expertise in SharePoint, Barnsley Council decided to engage with a 3rd party organisation to provide a range of specialist services. After an evaluation process Deltascheme was selected, based on their record of accomplishment, expertise, customer references and value for money.

As their first steps, Deltascheme ran a series of workshops that helped persuade stakeholders of the value of SharePoint, designed a technical architecture for the SharePoint infrastructure and showed the Council how to build a robust corporate information architecture in SharePoint.

Deltascheme consultants provided specialist onsite support at crucial times throughout the project, helping initially to install the development, test and live environments for SharePoint. Over the course of the project Deltascheme also helped provide and, where necessary, create a range of 'plug-in' tools for SharePoint, to rebuild the information asset register, develop scripts for reporting, support the migration of the content from the existing system into SharePoint and integrate SharePoint with other applications to deliver similar but better functionality than was available before.

Benefits

The extremely tight deadline was a massive challenge yet this deadline was met with weeks to spare, and the switch over was achieved with zero downtime.

With little initial knowledge of SharePoint within the Council, the regular presence of Deltascheme staff onsite to answer day-to-day questions was hugely beneficial. The Council also appreciated the trusted partnerships that Deltascheme had formed with other providers, such as Combined Knowledge who delivered a range of training courses to the in-house IT team.

Today, the transfer of knowledge that has flowed from Deltascheme has enabled the Barnsley IT team to enjoy working in a more agile way. Freed from spending the majority of time on support and maintenance, the team can now develop projects in-house and deliver benefits

more quickly. If more SharePoint capability or capacity is required, the Council knows that they can call on Deltascheme to support them going forward.

With the hugely successful transition to the new platform under its belt, the Council is now focused on making the most of their investment in SharePoint. The number of users is currently 1,600 and rising rapidly. That total is likely to hit around 3,000 as the team moves the Council's Intranet and Extranet into SharePoint and allows access for partners such as Sheffield City Region and suppliers of services such as gas and plumbing contractors, etc.

It is still early days to fully define the financial savings of the transition but the Council is confident that it will achieve significant cost reductions in using Microsoft SharePoint to deliver the new Electronic Document & Records Management System. One example of a solution rapidly delivered using SharePoint and a 'plug-in' forms & workflow product called Nintex, has been the provision of a case management system for processing Freedom of Information Requests and responding to Complaints.

As well as offering easier development for a wider audience, SharePoint is helping the Council in its five-year strategy to rationalise IT systems across the authority.

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Deltascheme's knowledge of SharePoint and related products is second to none. The solutions they have delivered and the work they have undertaken has been fit for purpose and of an exceptional quality. We have built up an excellent working relationship with their team and look forward to continuing to work together with them in the future”

Riley Marsden

Systems Manager, Information Services, Barnsley Council

About Deltascheme

Deltascheme is a leading provider of business and technical consultancy for Electronic Content Management and Business Process Management solutions based on Microsoft technologies.

Established in 1986, Deltascheme have consistently delivered best-of-breed technologies and proven solutions in answer to the growing business needs of their customers. To find out more about Deltascheme go online to:

www.deltascheme.com.