Cloud integration liberates 200,000 GBP to support service delivery

Southampton City Council

By standardizing on a complete, connected Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform in the cloud, this leading South of England unitary authority is saving £200,000. The vast majority is being channelled into improved service delivery, including front-line public services.

Integrated finance and HR in the cloud, best-practice process automation, intuitive self-service, and much more are helping Southampton City Council deliver modern, joined-up digital services to around 300,000 citizens and businesses at a greater value than even before.

Key benefits include:

- Complete procurement visibility and control, saving approximately £200,000 in total
- Unified HR and payroll, saving 500 hours in time and £80,000 annually
- Cloud strategy, saving £40,000 annually in technology cost avoidance
- Modern income management will save £70,000 by eliminating legacy software

Innovating modern digital services

Southampton City Council is evolving, utilizing fast, innovative new ways to better serve the people and businesses of this city on the south coast of England. A key component of this transformation is the adoption of modern digital services, geared to streamlining service delivery, enhancing the citizen experience, and maximizing efficiency.

With digitization comes data. Lots of it. The council operates more than 400 services. Citizens regularly cross between them, from housing, to leisure, to social, to other services. Until recently, much of the data underpinning these services was locked in separate, fragmented silos, undermining the opportunity to deliver joined-up, value-based service. "To gauge the complexities this caused, when producing reports for the council, previously, we would have had to verify the data in a number of different systems prior to their release, making the process time consuming. This is no longer the case." says Helen Baker, ERP Support and Development Manager.

Industry
Local Government

Location
Southampton, UK

Size
Population approx. 254,000

Product
Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Challenges

Much of the council's data – spanning more than 400 services – was locked in separate, fragmented silos, undermining the opportunity to deliver joined-up value-based services for residents

Key metrics

£200,000	£250,000
Total savings redirected to services delivery	Total procurement savings

"Unit4 is making the council smarter and more agile. By automating and streamlining processes in the cloud, as well as introducing self-service, Southampton City Council can direct more resources to front-line services."

Helen Baker
ERP Support and Development Manager, Southampton City Council

The council has now embarked on a comprehensive back office modernization strategy, with Unit4 at its core. The local authority is deploying a complete, connected suite of cloud-based Unit4 ERP solutions, spanning finance, procurement, HR, payroll, and more. "Unit4 is making the council smarter and more agile," says Helen. "By automating and streamlining processes in the cloud, as well as introducing self-service, Southampton City Council can direct more resources to front-line services."

The Unit4 strategy puts people – Southampton's citizens and council employees – at the center of every service. From an employee perspective, Unit4 is intuitive to use, automating routine finance and HR tasks, while providing the timely, graphic insights to make faster, more informed decisions. Citizens, meanwhile, benefit from digital self-service such as council tax payments, faster joined-up support to enquiries, and improved value for money.

The benefits of the Unit4 platform speak for themselves:

Cloud strategy: By moving from an on-premises deployment to an agile and adaptive cloud model, the council has negated the need for a dedicated physical technology infrastructure. This and other managed processes, such as disaster recovery and system maintenance, are reducing IT capital and operational costs by approximately £40,000 annually.

The cloud-based system also scales in line with the council's needs and has enabled seamless remote working during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Procurement: Together with a new contract management process, Unit4 gives the council complete control over procurement spend and patterns of purchase, saving £250,000. Suppliers, contracts, individual payments and other procurement data can all be viewed, shared, and analyzed in an intuitive, productive environment.

Reduced postage/mailings and greater digital communication are saving £16,000 as well. The vast majority of pay slips, for example, are now presented digitally.

Finance management: The council has a single, golden record of finance, shared by all stakeholders. Teams have real-time visibility and control over every stage of the record-to-report cycle, wherever they are based. And the finance team is able to automate budget planning and analysis while consolidating council-wide data within one unified system.

For example, Helen and her team are working with the landscaping team to implement a project module which will enable them to view the project budget, the status of contractor payments, and how much has been spent — including the cost of time and materials.

HR and payroll: A single, unified Unit4 HR and payroll system, in place of the separate legacy systems which required individual maintenance and manual

intervention, is saving the council £80,000 annually. Best-practice process automation is also saving the council's HR function up to 500 hours of administration time per annum, including:

- It used to take one hour to process a personnel file request. Now it takes 10 minutes. Over one year, this saves the equivalent of 96 hours in HR time.

- New hire onboarding is now 15 minutes faster per candidate. Over one year, assuming 30 new starters a month, this saves 90 hours annually.

- Paper payroll claims/enquiries took three days to process. Unit4 payroll automation saves the HR function 266 hours annually.

Unit4 is also contributing to more efficient sickness management, alongside the adoption of other modern processes. As a result, Unit4 is contributing to absence savings of approximately £20,000 per month.

Income management: Will save £70,000 by eliminating legacy income management software licenses.

In time, the council will implement Unit4 Financial Planning & Analysis to become even smarter in the way finance is managed. "We will use Unit4 Financial Planning & Analysis as a strategic tool to view the options on medium- and long-term contracts. It all adds up to maximizing the value citizens and business receive from Southampton City Council," says Helen.

UNIT4
In business for people