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Borough of Poole

Borough of Poole invests in its future with Sunrise IT Service Management

Borough of Poole is the local government authority serving the needs of citizens in the Poole, Dorset, region of the UK. Comprising 16 wards and represented by 42 councillors, Borough of Poole is responsible for the running and implementation of public services across the town.

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This remit includes the functions of education, housing, health and social care, transportation and leisure, as well as providing direct support services such as benefits, jobs and careers advice, to its citizens.

With more than 3000 customers across 17 departments and located in 151 sites throughout the Borough of Poole, the ICT and Customer Support team provides internal first and second line IT support services to the Borough's 5000 employees.

Upgrading infrastructure to deliver a complete service management system

For Borough of Poole, it is critical that the ICT services provided to the staff across all sites meets the needs of the business in delivering key services to the citizens of the borough. A core component of the ICT service desk's function is having an IT Service Management (ITSM) solution that can evolve with the council and the services it delivers.

In 2012, the Borough of Poole's incumbent ITSM solution - predominately an incident management product with a separate toolset for change management - was due for renewal. Having reviewed the functionality and associated costs of the legacy system, it was decided that it was time for change with the council taking the opportunity to uplift its solution and capitalise on the latest technological advancements available.

Simon Rees, ICT Customer Support Manager at Borough of Poole, explains: "We'd had our previous solution installed for 12 years and in truth, it was a clumsy and under-developed legacy system that was no longer meeting our requirements. We knew there were advanced alternatives available in the marketplace and we wanted to start looking a little further ahead at the authority's long term strategy and adopting an enterprise service management approach."

The legacy renewal, and subsequent review of the ITSM capabilities, coincided with the council's wider ICT infrastructure upgrade.

"We wanted one holistic service management solution that is easy to maintain, customisable and easy to scale up with our requirements. We undertook the project to rejuvenate and improve the whole infrastructure. This included decommissioning some of the older servers and applications, and cleaning up the data, so that we could improve our efficiency and save both time and money when we moved to a new solution" said Kev White, Service Analyst at Borough of Poole.

Preparation is key

Critical to the success of the ITSM selection and deployment was the planning process that the team undertook to ensure they selected the solution that was the perfect fit for them. The ICT team spent four months defining the requirements and designing the Technical Design Proposal (TDP) before formally commencing the tender process.

Simon said: "Our incumbent tool was so intrinsic to the way that we were working at the time that we had to sit down and discuss how this change would translate and still provide a service that our customers would recognise and fit with the way that we operate. For us, it was a competition between cost, functionality, usability and cross-platform usage."

As a local government authority, Borough of Poole was required to undertake a full and transparent tender process. Following the submission of ten responses, the IT team reviewed the proposals under the clear criteria they had outlined, before meeting with three shortlisted suppliers. Each solution's functionality and usability was scored against pre-defined criteria, with Sunrise Software ITSM coming out on top.

"It has the right combination of cost, a user-friendly interface and functionality, alongside the web-based, cross platform accessibility, which enables the teams to login to the platform via mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. This combination sets Sunrise ITSM apart from the competitive offerings that we reviewed" added Simon.

Once Borough of Poole had selected Sunrise ITSM, they began the implementation and testing phase of the project, which was conducted over a 10-month period from the initial building of the test servers to going live in December 2013.

During this time, the ICT team took the opportunity to manually assess the assets, data and information and 'cleanse' it so that only relevant, accurate data was imported into the new system.

"We took longer than originally anticipated in the testing phase, but ultimately it has reaped the benefits for us in the long term as, once we were up and running, we've had no problems with the system. It is not often that you are presented with the opportunity to tidy up all the asset management information, extract old data, ensure that the data entries you want to import are consistent and formatted in the same way so that when you do press the 'Go' button on a project you can have full confidence in the system that you are launching and the data held within it."

Simon added: "We wanted to deliver a complete service to our customers, not just put in another call management system. This meant we wanted to roll-out a robust and fully functional service management solution from the outset and not launch services in a piecemeal fashion."

Helping themselves with Self-Service

Since the roll-out of Sunrise ITSM, Borough of Poole has seen a marked difference in the visibility and time-to-resolution of tickets and queries raised from the team. Alongside incident management, other services utilised include asset management, contacts and change management. However, the service that has made the biggest difference is the launch of the self-service portal.

To support its user base's diverse range of skills and requirements, Borough of Poole wanted a new self-service portal that was fully integrated with its new intranet content and enables customers to get more from the ICT services offered, by "helping them to help themselves." For Simon, Kev and the ICT team, they wanted a tool that users would want to use, whilst simultaneously freeing up the time and resources of the service desk team so they could focus on other tasks within the authority.

Kev explains: "Having a fully functional self-service portal has been one of our goals from the outset and now that we have the tools to make it a reality it has changed the way that the service desk operates and has led to an improvement in customer service.

"We had some clear success criteria laid out from the start. We wanted to reduce the number of inbound emails and telephone calls coming into the ICT service desk by getting people to use the self-service portal to raise and track tickets, increase the quality of the information gathered via the tickets from the outset to ensure time was not wasted gathering details before the ticket could be actioned and improve the automated routing of tickets through to the correct team."

Since the launch of the self-service portal, all the outlined objectives have been met and, in all cases, it has exceeded expectations. Initially, the team set the target of 25% of tickets being raised via the self-service portal within two years. As of December 2016, 44% of tickets are now being raised through the self-service portal, with the service desk seeing a reduction of 12% in telephone demand and 35% on email demand. With customers taking more ownership for the tickets they are raising, they are better informed on the progress of their queries and target resolution date, whilst the technical teams have reduced the time and effort in collating the required information so that they can effectively progress the ticket.

Future expansion

With the ICT service desk having realised demonstrable time saving benefits from Sunrise ITSM, it has freed up time for the team to take on board more second line activities and better set the expectations of their customers. As well as managing demand for ICT services, the solution is also being utilised within three other business areas. To support this expansion further, the ICT team shall be extending the functionality of the mail processor and self-service portal to enable these areas to improve efficiency and the service they provide to their customers as part of a wider drive towards enterprise service management.

Simon concludes: "We are very keen to move further into enterprise service management, for which we have seen a lot of interest, and are keen to bring on board other departments so that they too can run their own service centric operations more effectively.

"We wanted to improve the level of service that we were providing to our customers and with the Sunrise ITSM solution and launch of the self-service portal we have exceeded our customer expectations and improved the internal positioning of the ICT function and value within the business."

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About Us

Sunrise Software has over 20 years' experience building and implementing service management software that enables organisations to support both internal and external customers. The software is designed to meet industry best practice and is easily configurable to meet individual organisations' specific needs. The software is browser based, making it easy and intuitive to use.

Applications are suitable for departments including IT, providing technical and support services, Customer Service, speaking to external customers, and others such as Facilities Management and HR/Payroll that are providing services to staff and managing third party suppliers. The software is available as a Software as a Service (SaaS) / Cloud solution on the IBM Bluemix platform, or on-premise, and is used by hundreds of high profile organisations in public and commercial sectors.

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