



## e-Government and Business Transformation

### Summary

#### The role of 'e' in delivering efficiency and effectiveness

e-Government started out as a visionary statement to give us the "buzz word" we all needed to sell the message. With initial deadlines fast approaching, it would be fair to say that point has now been reached and that e-Government is now here with the majority of government services either close to or already e-enabled, so we now need to focus on the goal of public service improvement, enabled by the technology we now have.

Many local authorities now have Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems in place serving a limited number of transactions, this is good progress that needs to be celebrated, but it must be recognised that the programme has really only just started in earnest and the Gershon efficiency agenda will ensure that this continues.

E-Government is now coming to the end of the "Beginning Phase" and should now be viewed as the delivery of Government with Efficiency and Effectiveness not solely as e-Government.

***"e-Government, the great enabler for public service, has transformed the way we can deliver services and in doing so created many partnerships at many levels".***

Improvement through efficiency



Centre of  
Excellence

East Midlands

[emce.gov.uk](http://emce.gov.uk)

## Continuous programme of change

Many local authorities will now be looking at Government Connect as the next big thing, it is right that this should be taken seriously - we should remember that this is a continuous programme of change, especially in the context of sustainability and the continued use of e-Gov tools.

The “e” has been synonymous with such areas as the prevention of re-inventing the wheel, that of stimulating change management - to get the best decision for the task in-hand, the enabler that has allowed us to think outside of the box, to seek new ways that will allow efficiency and effectiveness, to engage with our citizens in meaningful and customer friendly ways that will allow them to get in touch at times to suit them. It has allowed public service the ways and means with which to become truly innovative and visionary.

The “e” has given local authorities the wherewithal and means to start the journey towards achieving efficiency and excellence but their plans need to keep looking beyond the current deadlines and should be turning comprehensively towards selecting the best of breed projects and sustainability. Local authorities need to start working towards a period of consolidation to select partnerships and projects that will allow them to achieve efficiency and effectiveness whilst at the same time continuing to be innovative.

## Collaborative working in action

Partnerships and collaboration have been one of the main areas of success in this programme. In looking at partnerships it is useful to consider the following:

- Partnerships demand a high degree of trust
- They are time-consuming and participants need to be fully committed
- Partners need to be open
- Smaller partnerships are best for single projects
- Be prepared to think out of the box and stretch boundaries
- Be prepared to go for a mix of partnership types.

Not all partnerships will succeed but be prepared to learn from mistakes made and implement the lessons into future projects. Even at the national level projects have failed yet provided important lessons, subsequent projects have often emerged as best of breed and taken over.

## Partnerships in the East Midlands

South Derbyshire District Council, Local Government East Midlands (LGEM) and the EMCE are involved with numerous partnerships. South Derbyshire District Council, is a small local authority but they have been extremely proactive in the support of partnerships and have taken on a considerable amount of partnership work.

In doing so the authority has proven that size is no barrier to participation - the payback in the form of joined-up support from the likes of the Derbyshire Partnership, EMCE, LGEM includes extra funding, support and resources to ensure an excellent return on investment of time and energy.

Partnerships need firm support from management including the Chief Executive, Leader, Members (especially the e-Champion), Directors and Heads of Service.

Partnerships and collaborations can be split into the following types:

- National/Regional partnerships - The role of Chair to the EMRLGA also requires commitment to the Regional Partnership comprising of representatives from all nine regions and ODPM, sharing and disseminating information from around the country
- Regional Partnerships such as the Welland Partnership, LGEM, London Connects, NWECC
- Shire Partnerships such as the Derbyshire Partnership or the Staffordshire Partnership and the Lincolnshire ICS Forum
- Local Partnerships such as the Derby Website and Content Management System partnership, the South Derbyshire District Council/BBC Bus, Lincolnshire's e-Mobile libraries and collaboration with Citizen's Advice Bureaux for housing benefits assessments.

At the shire level the Derbyshire Partnership Forum is a larger organisation of some 30 public bodies with ambitious plans for e-Government such as joined up two-tier provision, providing cross boundary access to services and common access systems obtaining benefits from economies of scale. This organisation has provided a fertile ground for creation of smaller partnerships, as well as providing delivery of some excellent projects such as A-Z portal, Derbyshire Maps and a combined CRM. Likewise, the Lincolnshire ICS Forum has provided similar results, in particular maximising the benefits of the Institute of Customer Service via creation of 'Forums' and joint training.

Collaboration and partnerships stand to play a major part in the sustainability of many council projects, indeed feedback from the Regional Centres for Excellence and upcoming Corporate Performance Assessments expect partnership involvement to play a large part in the drive towards efficiency gains and as such should remain as a main foundation for continuity.

### **e-Gov can change the way we interact with citizens**

e-Government is already changing the ways in which we interact with citizens and has provided a strong step change towards the 24/7 provision of services. These new tools have facilitated how we can deliver services.

There now exists the potential for officers to share delivery of service, offering flexibility and openness to suit the citizen - local authority commitment towards completing the programme by integrating these services is now well in-hand.

In order for this increased ability for interaction to be utilised, there still remains the issue of take-up on these services. Departmental take-up to integrate services with the mobile, front and back offices, as well as those encouraging the citizen to use the new channels available, remain one of the main hurdles for public and governmental services to overcome.

Derbyshire County Council's e-Recruitment system is a prime example of how citizen choice can benefit both the service provider and user. Derbyshire saved over £90,000 in staffing efficiencies and cut environmental waste by issuing less paper based application packs. Meanwhile applicants were able to apply for advertised positions on-line 24/7, to save application details and receive updates on future positions.

### **Communities and regional working**

Where the previous few years have been devoted to provision of the experience of e-Government, we now need to concentrate on the purpose of e-Government, that of improved service along with efficiency and effectiveness. Public service providers need to move away from process focussed delivery and start to question where this is taking us, what has it delivered, what are the measurable differences, what has worked and what has not?

Only by tackling these questions and utilising the resources now available to them through regional and partnership working can local authorities truly deliver the changes expected by citizens and Government, making the e-Government programme the obvious success it deserves to be.

#### **Contact**

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