

CASE STUDY

Buckinghamshire Council
Policy Management as a Service
Implementation

Overview

Buckinghamshire Council (BC) was created in April 2020 as a single unitary authority combining five existing council areas - Buckinghamshire County, South Bucks, Chiltern, Wycombe, and Aylesbury Vale.

BC has its headquarters in Aylesbury with a staff of over 4800 people delivering diverse services to the population of the County. The organisation has an ICT strategy that embraces the use of cloud and managed services, together with agile working practices to deliver significant savings.



BACKGROUND

Prior to the merger, two of the former councils had individually completed projects with Protocol Policy Systems (PPS) to work on and standardise their existing suite of IT policies to reflect changes that were going on within those organisations. A key driver for the two councils to engage PPS at that time was a recognition that to do the work in house would take up a lot of time, plus impact existing projects and workloads.

As the merger plan was being rolled out the stakeholders agreed that using Policy Management as a Service (PMaaS) would help the ICT Team quickly develop and deliver policies that were fit for purpose for the new entity.

CHALLENGES

Trying to adopt and modify a selection of existing policy material from the 5 former councils would require a lot of time from a review and redrafting perspective, so the stakeholders were in agreement that a new suite of policies should be developed for BC.

“The policies form part of our Document Library which we look to maintain to the requirements of ISO standards. The commitment in terms of reviewing them and ensuring that latest versions are published is onerous, as is ensuring that they reflect latest changes to legislation and good practice” -comments Sarah Barnes, ICT Group Manager

From previous experience across the 5 councils it was recognised that in some cases policy maintenance work was reactive, and it was not uncommon for a staff member to raise a query about a policy which highlighted that the content was out of date, or not in line with technological advances. The ICT team at BC would not have an internal team of policy writers, however it was key that the IT policy content for council could be revised ongoing to remain relevant. The same would apply with regards to cross referencing the policies to relevant international standards.

SOLUTION

The project entailed the following key steps. After completing an initial questionnaire BC were given access to a first draft version of the policy content held within PMaaS Premium. A Policy workshop was then booked and a Protocol Consultant facilitated this exercise over 3 days with input from key stakeholders. The outcome of this exercise saw an interim final draft version of PMaaS created for BC's review, final edits and submission for sign off. The project was concluded in under 8 weeks (elapsed time).

The Policy Management as a Service offering provides a good foundation of policies that are referenced to standards applicable to the merged council. Under the subscription model the content in the Premium version is kept up to date by PPS' policy experts, ensuring ongoing audit and best practice alignment.

The Premium version includes:

- 25 key policies – for user, manager and technical roles
- Stakeholder mode for input and collaboration
- On screen policy acceptance for all users
- User compliance reporting and activity logging
- Third party contractor access option
- Prospective employee access option
- Ability to send policy review reminders
- Export policies to Word for offline reference
- Audit requirement details and compliance index
- Process and Procedures section
- Forms, Logs and Guidelines content

BENEFITS

“Using the SAML authentication protocol we have embedded the PMaaS into our own learning management portal, linked to mandatory training to help us deliver the policy to all employees. With the advancement in the use of data by employees across the organisation, using PMaaS, we can be assured that our policies remain up to date and inline with international best practices.” – says Richard Smith, IT Cyber Security Manager

LEADERSHIP

Buckinghamshire Council now has a fully branded and customised suite of policies that is cross referenced to standards. All staff members, managers and the ICT Team will have an easily accessible and intuitive reference point.

BC now have embedded up to date policies ensuring that mandatory/ minimum standards requirements are met. As the organisation develops and evolves its technology strategy to cater for mobility and cloud services the focus will shift towards enhancing the relevant policies/standards provided by Protocol Policy Systems. This will ensure that the release of these services does not compromise the security of information and business assets.

Richard comments “Without the necessary resource and commitment to keeping policies updated they can quickly become out of date and irrelevant. With the ever-advancing security frameworks, utilising PMaaS will ensure our policies will keep pace as we seek accreditation.”

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