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# Cherwell District Council Maximising efficiency through a Council-wide cloud-first strategy

## Background:

### Driving efficiency and maximising resilience

Cherwell District Council represents and provides services to more than 150,000 residents and businesses in Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, and the rural parishes of north Oxfordshire. With the cost-of-living crisis diminishing budgets and an ever-growing population increasing the demand for services, the need to drive efficiencies is greater than ever. It was this need, together with a requirement to be more resilient, that spearheaded the development of the Council's cloud-first strategy.

## Challenge:

### Full cloud migration with minimal disruption

Previously, Cherwell District Council managed its data from a number of data centres within its offices across the district. This required local infrastructure installation and regular maintenance, as well as technical expertise, which at times could be challenging for the Council to maintain effectively. In an attempt to drive cost savings and increase reliability, all the local data centres were consolidated into one data centre off-site. The aim was to reduce maintenance and infrastructure costs, and it served its purpose well at the time.

In the **age of digitisation**, these efficiencies can be driven further by migrating to full cloud IT infrastructure and web-based business solutions that will integrate seamlessly, to enable streamlined data sharing across different platforms and deliver a single source of truth across the organisation. In addition, the ability to integrate multiple datasets and location data would provide greater insight enabling the Council to deliver more effective services to its citizens.

The challenge was to migrate from a range of legacy systems to the cloud with minimal disruption to daily business.

**“Now we are fully in the cloud, and our IT infrastructure costs and maintenance overheads have been significantly reduced, we can make our budgets work harder to deliver improved services for our residents.”**

**Rakesh Kumar**  
Spatial Services Manager  
Cherwell District Council



### Solution:

#### Tailoring capabilities to maximise efficiency

One of the goals of the strategy was to drive efficiency by removing the costs associated with IT infrastructure, in addition to streamlining workflows and business processes. It also aimed to increase resilience, making disaster recovery plans easily accessible and deployable from the cloud. And with today's trend for increased remote working, the Council needed to ensure all systems could be accessed from anywhere, enabling real-time updates from the field and supporting a widely dispersed workforce.

This cloud-first strategy has resulted in the Council's IT infrastructure moving to the Azure Cloud, with its business systems using a range of SaaS providers to meet its needs, including **Idox's LLPG (Local Land and Property Gazetteer)** on the Aligned Assets platform. Hosted in the cloud, this SQL-based gazetteer has enabled the Council to utilise in-house skills and talent, making an immediate cost-saving by not having to invest in external expertise.

Using Idox's LLPG has enabled the Council to meet its digital delivery requirement, making it more accessible for residents and local businesses. All the online forms, such as those for reporting issues like fly-tipping or applying for business grants, automatically integrate with the LLPG, ensuring the address data is accurate and verified. Accurate and up-to-date address data means issues and applications can be dealt with faster.

To maximise the capabilities of the LLPG gazetteer, Idox created several bespoke LLPG database views, enabling integration with other systems, such as the address lookup used by the Council's planning, building control and land charges system. In addition, spatial views were created for the Council's Esri desktop and web mapping, enabling users to click on any LLPG point on the map to get the full address details, including the classifications (e.g. Residential, Commercial or Land) and its status in the property lifecycle (e.g. Approved, Provisional or Historical). The team produced a live link from the LLPG to all the Council's key back-office systems, providing all address updates in real-time.

Additionally, Cherwell's legacy LLPG system held extensive historical information on all the business names associated with a specific address. Idox was able to transfer this valuable data to the LLPG, enabling the continuity of enriched insight.

To further tailor the LLPG to the Council's needs, Idox worked with Cherwell to migrate the LLPG addresses in mixed case rather than all being in the standard upper case. This kept the data consistent with the historical data from the legacy system, making it easier for users to work with.

Idox's cloud LLPG also makes use of the live Ordnance Survey API for its underlying base mapping, so the Council no longer has to worry about applying OS MasterMap updates, resulting in a fully cloud-managed system.

### Outcome:

#### Using Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) to verify single-truth data

The migration to Idox's cloud-based LLPG has played an important role in helping the Council on its journey to realising its cloud-first strategy, delivering efficiency and simplicity. The approach has driven cost and time efficiencies by removing the need for IT infrastructure and maintenance, in addition to making energy savings by not having to run networks, servers or other assets.

Rakesh Kumar, Spatial Services Manager, Cherwell District Council comments, "The migration to Idox's cloud-based LLPG has been managed well by the Idox team. The technology makes it easier to review and interrogate data, the tables are simpler to use, and we can access the information much more efficiently across the whole organisation."

In addition to increased efficiency and resilience, with the Council's address data adhering to British Standard 7666, it can use the UPRNs to verify a single truth with all data that relates to a location. To further Cherwell District Council's digital transformation, it can now link multiple datasets to provide greater insights into locations and communities, helping it deliver essential services more effectively.

Kumar concludes, "Now we are fully in the cloud, and our historic IT infrastructure and maintenance costs are reduced, we can make our budgets work harder to deliver improved services for our residents."

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