



**BRIGHTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL, EAST SUSSEX
COUNTY COUNCIL, SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND
WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

ORBIS PUBLIC LAW JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 12 OCTOBER 2018

**LEAD OFFICERS: PHILIP BAKER (ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ESCC),
RACHEL CROSSLEY (DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING, SCC),
ABRAHAM GHEBRE-GHIORGHIS (EXECUTIVE LEAD OFFICER FOR STRATEGY, GOVERNANCE AND LAW, BHCC),
AND
TONY KERSHAW (DIRECTOR OF LAW AND ASSURANCE, WSCC).**

SUBJECT: IT ENABLING PROJECTS

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the Orbis Public Law Joint Committee on a number of IT projects which enable the operation of the single service.

INTRODUCTION

OPL's Practice Management Team is implementing a number of projects which will provide the processes and systems to generate savings and enable OPL to operate as a single service.

This paper outlines the progress and benefits of:

- The digital court project,
- A single instance of the case management system,
- Case management developments and
- Video conferencing.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Orbis Public Law Joint Committee notes the benefits already realised and the future benefits these key projects will bring for all OPL partners.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To demonstrate the infrastructure that is required to support OPL, to update Members on the progress and benefits already realised.

DETAILS:

Digital court

1. Digital court is the term used to describe the change of provision of bundles by Orbis Public Law (OPL) partners to the family court in hard copy lever arch files to electronic bundles (E-bundles). In order to enable this transition OPL partners have procured a cloud based software solution called CaseLines and equipped the family courts in Surrey and Sussex with IT equipment.
1. As the system is embedded at Surrey County Council (SCC), this paper focuses on SCC as a case study and demonstrates the benefits realised, both tangible and non-tangible. It is anticipated that these benefits will be replicated for the other OPL partners once fully implemented and embedded.
2. Following a successful pilot by two judges in the Guildford family court during February and March 2018 the Digital Court was rolled out to all Surrey judges except the magistrates. Since the end of May 2018 as a matter of course no paper bundles are printed except for tier 1 magistrate cases.
3. The project progressed in pilot to two judges in the Brighton family court and following that success the roll out progressed. Implementation is expected to be complete by end October 2018. Tier 1 Magistrate implementation for Surrey and Sussex will follow.

Benefits

4. E-bundles provide both efficiency and cashable cost savings to the local authority and key stakeholders, these being the judiciary, the court service, solicitors and counsel. This paper can only detail direct cost savings for SCC, however it will seek to share anecdotal benefits realised by stakeholders too.

Cashable cost savings

5. SCC paid back the initial investment within the first 6 months of implementation. Using the data from this period, conservatively the annual savings for SCC will be £29k p.a. The detail is as follows:

Table 1 – Predicated savings 18/19 and 19/20

| Saving | 18/19 | 19/20 |
|--|--------|--------|
| Administration - Staff | £18K | £36K |
| Stationery, paper and print cost @£21 per hearing. | £13.1K | £26.2K |
| Reduction of scheduled couriers for bundle collection and DX/Post. | £3.2K | £6.5K |
| Secure paper | £0.4k | £1.0K |

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|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| destruction | | |
| TOTAL | £34.7K | £69.7K |

Table 2 – Total Cost v Savings 18/19 and 19/20

| | 18/19 – Remainder predicted | 19/20 Full year |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Identified Saving (table 1) | £34.7K | £69.7K |
| Less total Cost (CaseLines and internet) | £20.3K | £40.6K |
| Total Saving | £14.4K | £29.1K |

Efficiencies

6. Judges reported significant efficiencies in hearing preparation. They noted the ability to be able to work at home without the need to transport numerous lever arch files as well as being able to make notes electronically and move swiftly between pages during reading of the bundle. This has also been a reflection of solicitors and advocates.
7. Court time saving functions include:
 - The judge and parties are all accessing the bundle in the same digital cloud location. This saves time as everyone is accessing the same information and therefore pagination matches.
 - It provides the ability to access the full master bundle and previous documentation presented in court if required.
 - During hearings with witnesses in attendance the software is used to automatically direct parties and witnesses to a particular page. This has meant less time is spent moving between the pages of the physical bundle.

For 6 months this has achieved a time saving of nearly 300 hours. Court admin staff have reported a weekly saving of 0.5 FTE.

Other non-tangible benefits

8. There are significant benefits to the LA that cannot easily be quantified and these have been detailed as non-tangible benefits. However the impact that they have on SCC staff as well as stakeholders should not be underestimated:
 - Security of information as the information is not sent by email or post.
 - The positive impact on OPL's reputation and stakeholder relationships in delivering an innovative solution to support better outcomes for children.
 - Environment factors such as the reduced paper and physical consumables and the reduced reliance on couriers.

A single instance of the case management system

9. A key driver to enable the development of teams and efficiencies of practice as part of the single integrated service is the database rationalisation (DR) project. The project aim is to create a single instance of the case management system, Civica Prescient Plus, whereby data may be shared between OPL partners.
10. The OPL Executive Board approved the project in April 2018 and good progress has been achieved. In order for the databases to be aligned Civica confirmed a multi-tenanted licence (a single instance of a software application serving multiple customers) would be required and as a result required each partner to relinquish existing contracts to transfer to a single contract held by the lead database authority, SCC. This agreement marked a watershed moment for the partnership in terms of commitment to full integration and commitment of financial resources. Over 5 years the revised contract will cost the partnership £334,500 (which includes £52K project costs) and deliver a **£68,572 saving** against remaining on current contracts.
11. Benefits of the single contract:
- Enables OPL to operate as a single service.
 - The **£68,572 saving** is based on contracts alone and does not include the operational savings possible for Legal, IT and Procurement had partners separately procured.
 - Despite a **£68,572 saving** new modules will be added to the system as part of the revised contract, these are;
 1. GDPR module - this will ensure that data can be anonymised in the live, test and train systems as well as ensuring that there are no orphan contacts within the system.
 2. By joining the systems all partners will be able to access the Precedent H Litigation costs module (currently only held by SCC).
 3. The client portal module – The portal provides web based access for internal and external clients to submit work requests (instructions), track case progress and share documents between the lawyer and client.
12. Much of the project progress to date has been IT technical, for example scoping the differences and scale of the data transition, in order that accurate timescales for implementation can be established. OPL plans to have the single system in place for April 2019.

Case management developments – flow files

13. OPL aspires to continually provide an efficient and cost effective service. One way to achieve this is through using the case management system to uniform processes where possible.
14. Flow Files are a function of the case management system that allows for standardisation of process, timescales and template documents. Once set up in the system the case worker is alerted to the required actions on a matter and timescales. They best lend themselves to areas of work with regulated steps, set timescales and deadlines.
15. A successful pilot was run at BHCC to design and implement Flow Files for the 'Right to Buy' work area. The output of the introduction of the Flow File was 30% time efficiency in the process.
16. The next area identified to develop Flow Files was the litigation area of debt recovery. This is due to the process nature of the work and that if an established Flow File is in place then more junior colleagues will be able to complete the work, and supports the desire for work to be achieved at the most cost effective level, within risk profiles. The project is expected to go live in October.
17. A working group has developed in the litigation debt recovery area with an established relationship that and can now easily workshare. Colleagues from debt recovery have been keen to both share and hear best practice. Colleagues new to the area of work have been able to share best practice and learnings from other areas of work that have enriched the project.

Video conferencing

18. Video conferencing through skype for business has been available for ESCC and SCC for some time and an area OPL has embraced. BHCC will have this facility by March 2019 with the move to Office 365. WSCC already use Lync (pre-skype) and networks have been opened to allow the partners to communicate the same as skype for business. Additionally, each partner has a conference camera that can link 4 meeting rooms together and removes any location barriers.
19. Whilst recognising there will still be a need to physically meet on occasion to develop relationships, OPL will continue to use and promote these technologies as normal course of business.

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| CONCLUSION: |
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20. OPL has made substantial progress to implement the infrastructure and operational processes to support the single service.
21. As well as being the key platform for OPL, the learnings from the database rationalisation project will provide substantial

benefits to the Orbis IT&D teams and may support best practice for future projects of this nature.

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Appendices: None

Sources/background papers: None
