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technology

CASE STUDY

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Designing the Future of Government



Designing The Future of Government - Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Storm Technology.

Stretching across the coast to the Dublin mountains, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council represents over 218,000 citizens and is home to UCD, IDAT and leading multi-nationals such as Google, Vodafone and Microsoft. Responsible for the delivery of over 600 services including housing, roads, urban planning and development, DLRCC remains focused on enhancing the lives of the community it serves.

As part of this ongoing commitment to the community, DLRCC embarked on an ambitious digital transformation, kicking off in 2016 with the migration to Office 365. Following the success of this roll out DLRCC sought to improve IT access for remote working, enhance data management and ensure seamless collaboration across departments. A large-scale transformation initiative that would impact every aspect of the organisation, DLRCC knew they needed a good business technology partner to support them. Following a tender process that focused on experience and breadth of expertise, Storm Technology was selected as the partner of choice.

Streamlined Document Management

The backbone of organisational process, the optimisation of document management processes is a key element of any cross functional digital transformation project, delivering

efficiency gains and simplifying the management and retrieval of documents for enhanced collaboration. To pinpoint areas for improvement and modernisation, DLRCC first met with Storm's Business Analysts, to identify pain points in the current document management system and practices. This in-depth review highlighted that documents were being held in duplicate, sometimes even triplicate, with limited implementation of retention policies. Furthermore, despite efforts by several staff members to improve things within their respective business areas, the application of the of the corporate vision lacked consistency.

Through a series of workshops, Storm's BA team helped establish what a 'good' system would look like to DLRCC and what it would enable them to do. DLRCC required a user-friendly and

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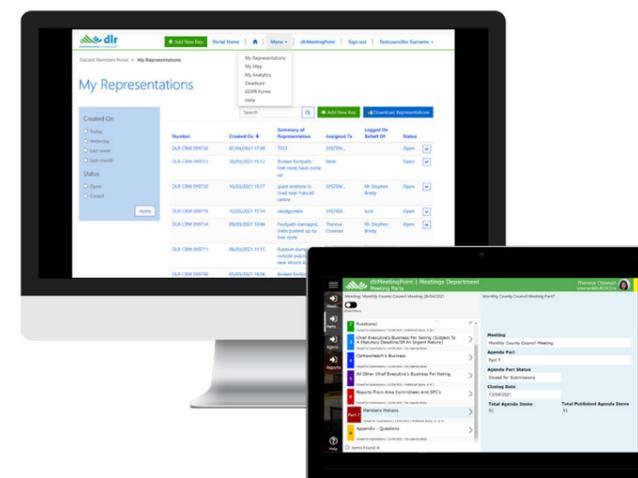
Theresa Cloonan
IS Program Manager
DLRCC

intuitive system that would modernise document management to simplify the working lives of their team and enhance the citizen experience.

The final solution, dlrDocs, a custom designed EDRMS based on SharePoint Online. An intuitive system, dlrDocs packs a lot of features into its simple design such as powerful search functionality, a side navigation tool called Quickjump that gives a high-level tree style overview and a simple information architecture – e-cabinets, e-folders and documents. This system also recognises that many users do the same work daily, so shortcuts are beneficial. . As they use the system it auto-populates each user's home screen with recently used documents, e-folders and e-cabinets.

DLRCC ensured they put end-users at heart of the change by making sure that IT was driven in each department by a business project team who worked closely with Storm's Business Analysts to decide on the best organisation of e-cabinets and e-folders for each department.

Speaking on this initiative, Theresa Cloonan, IS Program Manager at DLRCC stated, "dlrDocs represented a significant and positive shift in the document management practices at the council. Information is now logically stored and organised which makes it easier to file documents in the right place. Powerful search saves time searching for documents while automatic version control reduces duplication and loss of information. Moving to online document management has been a game changer,



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increasing cross-functional collaboration across the organisation."

Innovation Through Low-Code Design

In parallel with the dlrDocs roll-out, DLRCC sought to harness the power of low-code solution design to foster a culture of continual improvement and innovation. DLRCC worked with Storm to better understand the different elements of Microsoft Power Platform and how they could help re-enforce and enhance existing business processes, streamline approvals, and digitise paper processes.

Offering a quick and easy way for organisations to build apps, the Power Apps component was selected to transform paper-based forms and workflows.

Working in collaboration with DLRCC, Storm built a range of Power Apps to deal with complex workflows and multiple approvals.

While Storm built and designed the more advanced apps, the user-friendly low-code nature of Power Apps, enabled DLRCC to keep the ongoing maintenance and management of these systems inhouse, with Storm working with the team to ensure the necessary skills and expertise to manage these apps existed in house. Power Apps built include a Scheme of Assistance app, Legal Services Requests app, Smartphone and Tablet requests app, Probation Management app, Chargeability form, Staff Deductions form and a Room Bookings app.

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inspired to think differently about how they manage paper-based workflows. Furthermore, the roll-out of Power Apps came at a critical time as the Covid-19 lockdown made it more challenging than ever before to rely on paper-based forms and processes” explained Cloonan.

Central Councillor Access Point

Having transformed internal processes, DLRCC then sought to improve experiences for their citizens, in particular around how Councillors represent their communities. Extranets while available, had proved limited in their success, with low user uptake resulting in much of the communication of meeting documents and reports shared via email. Making use of DLRCC’s existing licencing, Storm once again took advantage of the many uses of Power Platform to build a Power Apps Portal.

This portal, dlrCouncillor, acts as a one stop shop for Councillors providing them with a single source for all essential council services. They can log in using their Office 365 logins and security controls to access a tailored portal, one that provides personalised content to each individual Councillor. Essential applications in the portal include dlrReps and dlrMeetingPoint, with the centralisation of Councillor resources saving time typically spent searching for and logging into each application individually.

Optimised Digital Case Representation

One such application within the portal is dlrReps, a custom build Power Apps Portal that enables Councillors to log requests onto the Dynamics 365 system while providing a centralised overview of all representations (or tickets) under their care.

Prior to dlrReps, Councillors would communicate representations to numerous people across the organisation by phone or email, a time consuming and frustrating process. Representations were often difficult to locate resulting in a slower time to progress representations. With dlrReps, Councillors can easily log representations as well as track progress, filter them by opened and closed, check who they have been assigned to and view the status of each individual representation. The result, increased visibility and transparency across the organisation.

Revised Council Meeting System

In addition to modernising the representation

management process, DLRCC sought to overcome the limitations of their legacy meeting management solution, such as the inability for multiple members to collaborate on files at once and limited off-site access.

A connected system comprised of a number of Power Apps, dlrMeetingPoint overcomes these challenges, providing each stakeholder it serves with the functionality they require. Designed for modern day working environments, dlrMeetingPoint can easily be accessed on laptops, tablets and mobiles.

“dlrMeetingPoint has hugely reduced the workload associated with managing meeting agendas, providing senior management teams with instant access to agendas as they are being built. The easy-to-use nature of the Apps has boosted overall satisfaction levels across departments and goes a long way in streamlining the meeting processes here within DLRCC,” explained Cloonan

Digital Transformation Impact

“Looking back over the past few years, we have come a long way in our digital transformation journey. Storm’s business and technology expertise has helped us realise efficiency gains organisation wide. If we had not embarked on this journey when we did, we would never have been in the position to navigate the challenges presented by Covid-19. We were fortunate that we had the technology in place so our systems could continue with only minor interruptions, in March 2020 on the first day of working from home over 60% of our team had remote access either through work or personal devices.” continued Cloonan.

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By leveraging the whole Office 365 stack, DLRCC were able to maximise the value of the licences while giving secure and controlled access to staff. In terms of managing the transformation from an organisational level and not just a technical level, DLRCC enlisted the services of Storm’s change management professionals from the outset ensuring they were constantly focused on the needs of the business users and supporting them through the change. This resulted in good engagement and adoption of the new digital way of working. DLRCC have also improved their business resilience overall by aligning the organisational culture and IT strategies and becoming future focused.

Speaking on the partnership with Storm, Mark Bagnell, IT Project Manager stated, *‘Throughout this project Storm have brought innovative digital solutions to the Council. We have relied on their expertise of the Microsoft Platform so DLRCC can get the most out of these tools. They have been a fantastic company to work with, responsive and proactive in their approaches to providing input to designing solutions*

and are constantly demonstrating their knowledge of the latest technology trends across the market’.

Looking to the future, DLRCC have formed a ‘build to share’ group for the applications designed in collaboration with Storm Technology. A strategy that recognises that there are systems and processes common to all local authority organisations, so the overall idea is to build and design applications that can then be used by all.

If you would like to learn more about how partnering with Storm could help transform your business, [contact us today!](#)



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