



# Ealing Council makes citizen data its ally in the fight against fraud and error



Located in the heart of West London, Ealing Council serves businesses and residents of London's third largest borough. The council has placed the needs of its 350,000 residents at the heart of what it does with a sharp focus on delivering world class customer service through efficient and effective use of resources.

Ealing Council has recently partnered with Civica to create a single and complete view of the citizen to deliver a sustainable and repeatable solution for the effective identification of fraud and error.

## The situation

With cuts to central government funding driving a fundamental requirement to utilise resources more effectively, Ealing Council are focusing in on the quality and availability of their citizen data as a route to creating efficiencies and optimising income.

The starting point on this journey for Ealing Council was to develop a deeper understanding of the relationships that exist between residents and properties to better diagnose cases of fraudulent activity. The program had a significant focus on council tax exemptions in the shape of single person discount (SPD) fraud which is estimated to cost UK councils £92.5 million a year.

This type of savings projection is often the foundation for the business case to invest in technologies such as Master Data Management to create a single view of the citizen.

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Kevin Griffin, Chief Architect, Ealing Council

## Outcomes

- ▶ 3 year partnership with return on investment after 18 months
- ▶ Expected savings of £250,000 from elections canvassing over an 18 month period
- ▶ Seamless flow of accurate and complete information across the council
- ▶ Created a single view of over 350,000 residents of the borough
- ▶ Supported the sharing of data and services across neighbouring councils to further combat fraud
- ▶ Plan to integrate a further 8 data sources into MultiVue to target fraudulent activity in Freedom Pass and Blue Badge applications.

Helping combat fraud and error



360-degree view of the citizen



Improved decision making



But due to Ealing Council's progressive stance towards tackling fraud and error it was able to call upon much more detailed evidence in the form of the successful outcomes achieved from their SNAP program (Synchronizing Names Addresses and People).

In SNAP the council created a bespoke solution capable of bringing together 25 disparate data sources to provide a reference point for the identification SPD fraud, whilst also maintaining their legal obligation to ensure the accuracy of the electoral register.

In its first year the program created savings in excess of £1.3m through the identification of fraudulent SPD claims alone, clearly demonstrating that investment in data drives tangible business outcomes.

## The challenge

Despite the success of the SNAP program the council recognised the requirement for a more sustainable solution capable of eventually scaling to broader use-cases to deliver even more data-driven outcomes.

"To future-proof the success of our income optimisation program and reduce the burden of supporting a custom build application we needed to find a more corporate off the shelf solution" Kevin Griffin the Chief Architect at Ealing Council explained.

As a result the decision was taken in January 2015 to decommission SNAP, and upon a successful application to the DCLG for funding, Ealing's ICT department were tasked with scoping an alternative solution.

Having the highest annual recorded churn of population at 25-30% per annum, Ealing Council had the challenge of not only matching and merging data across a broad variety of sources but also needed to ensure that this newly created single view of the citizen could be shared with other applications across the council.

As a result Ealing Council invested in Civica's MultiVue MDM solution coupled with MultiVue Share to ensure the seamless flow of accurate and complete information across the council.

Phase one of the project involves the replacement of the functionality previously provided by the SNAP application initially calling upon 4 key data sources: Parking, the Electoral Roll, Housing, Tenancy and Council Tax.

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Kevin Griffin, Chief Architect, Ealing Council

It is expected that this initial phase of the project will continue to deliver savings around single person discount fraud whilst also creating a £250,000 efficiency saving from elections canvassing over 18 months. When considering return on investment, the elections canvassing use-case alone would ensure pay back on Ealing Council's 3 year partnership with Civica over the period of a year and a half.

Interestingly, Ealing Council plan to create further efficiencies by extending the use of their fraud and error solution as a service to the neighboring Hounslow Council.

## Finding the right partner

Despite having a clear view of the targeted returns on offer Ealing Council understood the need to find the right MDM partner to help them drive their vision to fruition. After a period of extensive research and consultation with neighboring London boroughs, Civica stood out as an MDM vendor that truly understands local government.

It is perhaps this extensive background in local authority use-cases that has helped Ealing Council to further refine their data improvement initiative as Kevin comments "The people engagements we have had with Civica to date have been of a high quality. They have helped us understand what we need to get from the business to drive the right results."

"By investing in Civica MDM we will make a single citizen view part of our business as usual, allowing our IT function to canvass the business to come up with more and more use-cases to create further efficiencies for the council."

Kevin Griffin, Chief Architect, Ealing Council

## The future

Ealing Council is a stand out example of how to scope a MDM initiative in local government taking a phased approach to data improvement and delivering measurable results at every stage. Kevin states "The tangible savings available from tackling fraud and error, particularly SPD fraud, made it a sensible place to start with our MDM initiative."

After the successful completion of phase one of the project Ealing Council will integrate a further 8 data sources into MultiVue to target additional types of fraudulent activity including Freedom Pass and Blue Badge Fraud.

The council will then scale the solution out to leverage the benefits of a single customer view to resolve more enquiries at first contact and support their troubled families' initiative. "By investing in Civica MDM we will make a single citizen view part of our business as usual, allowing our IT function to canvass the business to come up with more and more use-cases to create further efficiencies for the council," Kevin concludes.