

Creating a single, trusted source of the truth in local government



Renfrewshire Council



In a sign of its commitment to Unit4, Renfrewshire Council extended its relationship with a new eight-year contract which will help the local authority continue its digital transformation and support more efficient, joined-up services delivery.

This connected, Azure Cloud-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform will automate more processes, drive self-service for up to 9,500 users, and hopes to increase employee engagement and improve processes. Going forward, it is hoped that the ERP will:

- Create one connected, trusted source of the truth across finance, HR, payroll, and purchasing
- Liberates staff from manual transactional processes to focus more on organizational needs and efficient public services
- Improves absence reporting within the organization and also to the Scottish Government to a point that it should almost be immediate
- Eliminates manual payroll processes, reducing duplication and increasing staff satisfaction
- Enables autonomous self-service for items such as budget authorizations

Separate, siloed data sources hinder efficiency

Renfrewshire is one of the 32 council areas of Scotland. It is located in west central Scotland, on the southern bank of the River Clyde, and is part of the historic county of Renfrewshire. The Renfrewshire Council administers services to its population of approximately 178,000.

The challenge facing the council was a reliance on siloed processes and back office systems. Core operational services such as finance services, human resources (HR), payroll, and purchasing were managed mainly using separate, disconnected processes and technologies. This made it difficult to create a joined-up picture of service delivery. Processes frequently overlapped, and there was a strong reliance on paper output – driving up cost and reducing productivity.

Following the implementation of the Unit4 ERP, Stuart Greaves, who was already employed by the council and supported the implementation program, was successful in gaining the position of ERP Senior Responsible Owner.

Industry

Local Government

Location

Paisley, UK

Size

Population approx. 178,000

Product

Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Challenges

Reliance on separate, siloed back office data sources, including finance management, HR, payroll, and purchasing, delayed decisions and ability to change. Council needed to free staff from manual transactional processes to focus on public services strategy.

Key metrics



3 MONTHS

Reduced regulatory quarterly reporting from up to 3 months to potentially immediate



50,000

Number of paper payslips that were previously manual that are now produced electronically

“Over time, Unit4 ERP will become our primary data set, acting as a single version of the truth... This ‘golden record’ will reduce duplication of effort, streamline day-to-day processes, and enable more timely and informed management information reporting.”

Stuart Greaves

ERP Senior Responsible Owner, Renfrewshire Council

He explains, “Our vision is to develop a seamless, integrated, consistent, and personalized digital experience across all channels and devices. The better we make our digital experience, the easier it will be for our customers, service users, and staff to access and use our information and online services.”

The Unit4 ERP system went live in 2018, with migration to Milestone 7 and the Azure Cloud planned early in 2021. It provides the council with a single, unified system to manage those previously separate back office processes: finance, HR, payroll, and purchasing.

“Over time, Unit4 ERP will become our primary data set, acting as a single version of the truth, hopefully feeding other core systems, such as social care, education, and the ICT Active Directory of all network users. This ‘golden record’ will reduce duplication of effort, streamline day-to-day processes, and enable more timely and informed management information reporting,” says Stuart.

Freeing council staff to focus on public services delivery

Unit4 ERP is already achieving success throughout the council:

- **Payroll:** Some 6,500 council staff are already accessing current and historical electronic copies of their payslips and other pay related documents, such as P60s, via the personnel information tab. Besides increasing employee

satisfaction and streamlining payroll management, this digital payroll is good for the environment, potentially eliminating up to 50,000 physically printed payslips every month. Staff can also check their payslips ahead of the actual payment, supporting salary enquiries and corrections.

- **Overtime, planned leave, sickness:** Council staff can action planned/unplanned absence requests and manage overtime reimbursements in a self-service environment. Pay is more accurate, as it reflects a more up-to-date view. Managers can approve requests, such as time off, electronically, and share a real-time picture of overtime, leave, and sickness across the team. The council will look to reduce the delay in rolled-up absence reporting, then the reporting to the Scottish Government to almost immediate regulatory reporting.
- **Budget management:** The council benefits from a single, integrated view of budgets, with data drawn from multiple sources. Staff can route financial transactions for approval — such as sales invoices and expenses — through an automated, self-service workflow. Finance managers can also drill down into valuable management information, including payroll and analysis of full-time versus contract staff.

- **Support for mobile workforce:** Staff can access self-service tasks securely from a personal device. For example, they have the flexibility to view and update their personal information, see their payslip, and process overtime claims, increasing productivity and service quality. A council road maintenance team member, for instance, could request overtime via their iPad. The request would be approved digitally by their line manager overnight, enabling the next-day overtime payment to be processed by payroll.

Based on the success to date of the ERP platform, the council recently extended the original agreement with Unit4 through a new eight-year contract. Stuart explains, “We have already laid the foundations for digital services delivery. Over the coming years, citizens and council staff will reap these rewards, in terms of new digital-first services delivery, improved staff engagement, and increased efficiency. By moving to the Azure Cloud, we will also benefit from continual upgrades, reduced maintenance, confident performance, and tighter security. The Unit4 ERP system creates trust in the data. That golden record will become the source for all future decision making.”