



Microland transforms a public service from paper-based to digital with an D365 platform that cuts time for requests from 25 to 3 days, slashes costs by 30%, and enhances customer experience by 100%

There is much more to the London Borough of Ealing than its spacious parks and vibrant everyday amenities that make this area one of London's greatest places to live. **London Council of Ealing** is determined to develop its attractive suburb into a digital-first community, offering 'a connected place and smarter services for residents, visitors and businesses', as their slogan states. Today, Ealing's public services are transformed from a paper-based service, where it took weeks to resolve applications, into a highly efficient, fast, responsive institution, delivering the most complex services in days through a digital portal, having a 360° view of its users, and slashing operational costs by an estimate of 30 per cent.

How did they do that? They relied on us at **Microland** because we know how to ensure the same high-quality experience from public services that citizens have come to expect from other aspects of their lives – by using the powerful capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Customer Service suite.



"We are modernising our digital services so we can offer the best-in-class online customer experience that residents expect from the borough. By investing in our technology, we'll be better able to anticipate their needs and provide them a service that is more intuitive to use. We are also transforming the way we work internally so that we can be more efficient and target our increasingly limited resources where they matter most. To do this, we have partnered with Microland, which shares our outcome-focused approach to making our services better."

- Edward Axe, Director of ICT, IDM, and Property Services (CIO), Ealing Council.

Read the full [press release](#).

Paper forms passed around for 25 days

Up until recently, Ealing Council was relying heavily on manual processes and offline channels, which resulted in an extremely **time-consuming** practice and **low levels of citizens' satisfaction**. Applying for Council Tax exemption is one illustrative example, where borough residents needed to fill out a paper form, submit it to the Council, and then wait for weeks until it got passed on through various departments to finally reach the concerned team. If the request needed additional information from the customer, the communication was again carried out through offline channels such as phone or mail. Postal service was also how the citizen would receive the final resolution. The time required for all this? **20-25 days!**

In addition, the overall **costs of maintaining** such offline channels were **high** (customer care staff, scanning and post teams, local kiosks, etc.), while line-of-business (LOB) **application systems** in the Council were **disparate**.

That meant further **redundancies and data errors**, having only a **single view of the customer** (data) and **struggles in identifying frauds**.

The Council requested a thorough change in how they work internally and externally and a solution that could ensure:

- channel shift from offline processes into e-Services
- clarity of data, including an ability to recover debt and identify frauds
- modernization of business processes with automations
- consolidated activities and running costs reduction

The right fit with D365

We at Microland have built a comprehensive solution that pivoted around **Dynamics 365 Customer Service** and targeted UK councils and local authorities to help them enhance citizen service effectiveness, increase employee productivity, reduce cost to serve, and improve overall citizen engagement. The platform includes different business areas such as council tax, business rates, benefits, affordable housing, complaints/enquiry addressal, environment and street services.

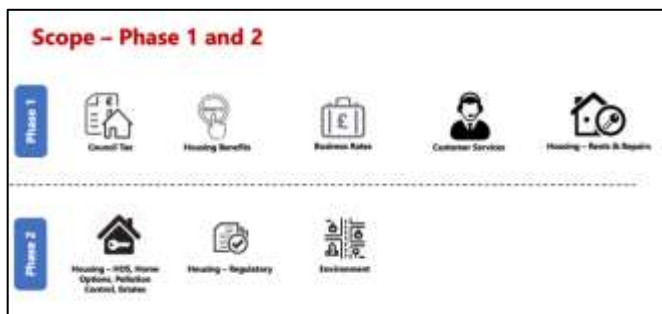


“Together with Microland, we are digitally transforming the Ealing Council, while saving money, increasing efficiency and improving the delivery time for our customers. Customers can now access many services, where the new Dynamics portal gets requests routed in real time and directed to the right team.”

- Peter Green, Head of ICT, London Council of Ealing.

Watch his [video testimonial](#).

The solution **empowers both citizens** - to seamlessly pay their taxes, raise complaints, request housing repairs, report a pavement problem, etc. - and **council staff** to respond and resolve such requests with a quick turnaround. The same solution was deployed at Ealing Council, which partnered with us due to an earlier established business relationship and trust to build the right-fit digital transformation strategy. There are two deployment phases across different services, as shown below.



Total Account Signup	81,476+ in 9 months
Business users	301 in 1 month
My Account Council tax Verifications	4,179
Payment Transactions	34,908
Successfully Collected	GBP 5,388,525
Failed Transaction	3,404
Cases Created	11,774
Service Redirect	514,386
Council Tax Redirect	285,174
Business rates Redirect	331
Benefit Redirect	228,863

Microsoft cloud solution components

- **D365 portal** integrated with CRM to form the end-customer (citizen, residents, businesses) facing channel; used to mainly raise requests, fill applications, make payments, report problems
- **SharePoint Online** integrated with D365 CRM is used as a document management system - helps in easy document tracking and accessing while preserving data confidentiality
- **Azure AD B2C** utilised to manage customer registrations and login to the CRM/portal system

- **Outlook** integration that enables sending out automated or manual emails from the CRM to the end-customers
- **Power BI** integration with D365 CRM that builds custom dashboards and easy-to-understand reports
- **CRM with Bing maps** integration to help end-customers select addresses in their requests and for the CRM case owner to pinpoint the exact issue/request location

Processes cut down to 3 days – and other goodies

Remember the 25-day long tax application from before? This is how it works now: Customers apply for the Council Tax exemption via the D365 portal, the request is routed in real-time and processed in D365 CRM, as well as any outstanding information. Since all data from different LOB systems are visible in CRM, the Council staff has a 360° view of the customer's interactions with the Council, and in the final stage the resolution is passed back to the customer through the portal. Time? Only **three to five days**. Close to **150 business processes** for the Council are live and digitally **available through this solution**.

Solutions benefits at a glance

- **Faster request resolutions** - the average case resolution time has come down to 3-5 days
- **Increased customer experience** - customers can now interact/raise requests with the Council effortlessly by accessing the Council portal through either web or mobile. This becomes very important in today's challenging conditions when it is required to reduce direct contacts wherever possible
- **Simplified processes** - with automation, routing workflows built in the solution, council processes have now become more simplified and reduce redundancies
- **360° customer view** - staff can now see the full picture of every citizen tracked in the CRM system, which helps them understand customer activities and needs, identify frauds and recover any outstanding debts
- **Cut operational costs** - ambitious councils, as Ealing is, that are willing to transform everything they do (from procurement to how they organize) have a potential to save up to 30 per cent.

Helping vulnerable citizens during COVID

By leveraging Dynamics CRM, Microland also helped Ealing to ensure a fast COVID-related initiative, run by the National Healthcare Service (NHS). They urged local councils to survey locals to create lists of vulnerable citizens and establish their welfare, so that they could later send the necessary amenities to those households. The data was captured on the CRM forms and then suitably transferred to the required departments in the council to enable delivery of PPE and amenities.

Harvesting the benefits of Customer retention

To ensure customer retention and satisfaction, we added CSAT scores to our solution, which measure monthly or quarterly frequencies and help understand the satisfaction index. Because of our customer-focused services, the customer retention index is reported to be very high, while the new portal subscription base has grown **from 0 to 100K in only 12 months!** Also, nearly 30 per cent of the council staff are active CRM users, which is a high number given there are a lot of contractors and field workers among them. To drive growth in active usage, our Microland team regularly analyzes citizen issues, works proactively on their resolution, and continuously works on user experience improvements.

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“Microland has been a true partner throughout this journey, from design to delivery, showing great agility and flexibility in what's been a very challenging time for everyone. We have a full roadmap for further developments for the rest of 2021.”

- Peter Green, Head of ICT, London Council of Ealing.

Tailored for modern government services

After the COVID pandemic hit, London Council of Ealing had no issues in ensuring smooth operations and uninterrupted access for citizens in a work-from-home environment. Microland's D365 Customer Service solutions for public services are tailored to suit the needs of modern citizens. We leverage, re-use, templatize and package solutions from our experiences in working with different government and private sector customers, which we transform into solutions for commercial business use and faster onboarding into a customer

About Microland

Microland's delivery of digital is all about making technology do more and intrude less. As we help enterprises move to nextGen technologies, we make sure this embrace of brilliance is predictable, reliable and stable.

Incorporated in 1989 and headquartered in Bengaluru, India, Microland comprises more than 4,500+ digital specialists across offices and delivery centers in Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East and North America.