

MidlandHR has a strong track record working with local authorities and is able to meet their specific needs. For example, iTrent enables Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to easily keep up with recent changes to the local government pension scheme. The Council's old HR and payroll systems could not support these changes, which would have resulted in a huge number of manual calculations each month. Clarke explains: "iTrent automatically calculates the pay awards whereas with our old system this was done manually; as a result, we have reduced what would have taken days to just a couple of hours."

As phase two progresses Epsom and Ewell expect further efficiency savings to be realised. Absence management for example is a module being implemented to produce more efficient sickness reporting. Managers will be able to view real-time information so they can act quickly and effectively when someone has gone over a certain amount of sick leave and action needs to be taken.

"The system will ensure best practice procedures are easily adhered to as it acts as an automatic reminder," explains Clarke. "For example, we require return to work interviews when someone has been off sick and this is a process that can be easily forgotten. iTrent will ensure sick time is not processed until the return to work interview has been completed; and this will negate the need for the HR team to send reminders to line managers."

Another planned area of focus is to reduce the time spent on the administration of the recruitment process. iTrent will interface with surreyjobsinfo and job applications can be made online: through automation and workflow the time spent on multiple data entry will be reduced. Irene Clarke concludes: "iTrent is already enabling more efficient working practices within HR and payroll through a reduction in administration time spent on double and triple data entry. We are working more seamlessly and have great confidence in future efficiency savings as a result of working with iTrent." Clarke's vision for the Council is being realised: the e-environment has been embraced, employees are taking control of their own information and the HR team is experiencing efficiency gains. Epsom and Ewell Council's forward looking approach has paid off.

MIDLANDHR

Ruddington Hall, Ruddington, Nottinghamshire NG11 6LL

t +44 (0) 115 945 6000 f +44 (0) 115 940 5286 e [info@midlandhr.com](mailto:info@midlandhr.com) w [www.midlandhr.com](http://www.midlandhr.com)

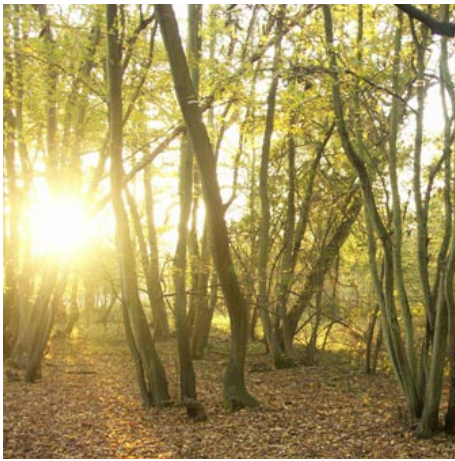
Midland Software Limited. Registered office: Peterbridge House, 3 The Lakes, NN4 7HB. No. 1852206 England



## CASE STUDY

### EPSOM AND EWELL COUNCIL EMBRACES THE INTERNET TO DRIVE HR EFFICIENCIES

Perhaps best known for its racecourse, the borough of Epsom is set within the heart of Surrey. But it is not just the Derby that sets it apart as Epsom and Ewell is one of the few local authorities in the UK that remains independent and unincorporated.



*"The web-enabled version of iTrent has been incredibly easy for managers to get to grips with as it is so intuitive"*

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is a highly customer-focused Council driven to meet the needs of the Borough's residents. This local authority takes a progressive approach to the development and delivery of public services, utilising web-based technology where possible. It is this forward-looking approach that Epsom and Ewell embraces when dealing with people management processes, choosing complete web-based HR and payroll technology to increase efficiencies.

#### DRIVING FORWARD: SEAMLESS HR AND PAYROLL

Epsom was facing a mound of administrative work due to separate, manual HR and payroll systems.

The HR system used was ineffective and had resulted in the Council needing to create its own processes via the intranet. Payroll was outsourced to Surrey County Council, however the processes were cumbersome and being manual, data had to be entered at Epsom and Ewell before being sent over for entry once again at Surrey County Council – with such unwieldy processes mistakes were inevitable.

Spending such large amounts of time on administrative duties meant that the HR and payroll department was not being utilised in the best way, so the decision was made to move HR and payroll technology back in-house.

Director of HR and Communication, Irene Clarke had a vision of increased efficiencies within HR enabling greater value to be added to the local authority at a strategic level. To make this vision a reality involved a three-pronged approach. Clarke explains: "Firstly, we wanted to simplify the entire administrative process and meet Gershon efficiency savings by integrating HR with payroll for a more seamless approach. Secondly, we are always keen to embrace the e-environment at Epsom & Ewell Council for more effective working practices and our HR and payroll processes were no exception. Finally, we wanted to give something back to our employees through new technology and empower them to take control of submitting and changing their own information whilst providing greater visibility."

#### A STEP CHANGE IN HR AND PAYROLL MANAGEMENT

Epsom and Ewell's Head of ICT, Mark Lumley shared Irene Clarke's vision of the future and is managing the Council's move towards increased efficiencies through the use of technology. He adds: "Another aspect of achieving efficient working practices was to take a partnership approach with local Councils. Local authorities within Surrey were already moving towards a partnership agreement and it was as a result of these discussions that we were first introduced to MidlandHR's system, iTrent."

Following a tender process, which included various HR and payroll management suppliers, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council made the decision that iTrent was the right solution to move them forward. In addition, they chose to go live on this new system with the hardware infrastructure hosted at Tandridge District Council, who make updates to the system and run back-ups. Mark Lumley explains: "This approach to HR and payroll management marks a step forward in partnership working between local authorities and enables many

benefits from an IT perspective such as lower total cost of ownership and shared maintenance. Ultimately, the Council will also benefit from shared knowledge and best practice."

"Between June and September 2007 iTrent 6 was upgraded to iTrent, with a successful go-live in time for the October payroll," says Hare. "We found the software easy to work with and had an excellent lead consultant on the project from MidlandHR who supported us throughout the implementation."

Key advantages now being experienced include a reduction in paperwork, more consistent processes and an increase in the automation of processes that were previously done manually.

"iTrent is being used to simplify internal processes and improve our reporting," concludes Hare. "The potential for massive efficiency savings through the long-term development of iTrent, including the simplification of business processes and increased automation is huge."

Following the decision to implement iTrent HR and payroll, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council was highly motivated to get payroll and core HR up and running – fast. Irene Clarke explains: "Surrey County Council was moving to a new system and so we had a tight three-month deadline to move over to iTrent if our employees were to be paid on time! It was a tall order for us all including MidlandHR, but one that we managed to achieve. April 2007 was the first payroll on iTrent."

In March 2008 Epsom and Ewell realised the vision of utilising a complete web-enabled HR and payroll technology by upgrading to MidlandHR's new web-based version of its technology called iTrent. This has moved them into phase two of the Council's project to

# A PHASED IMPLEMENTATION TOWARDS THE E-ENVIRONMENT

enable greater efficiencies in HR and payroll. Self-service is now in the process of roll out across the organisation. Recruitment and absence will follow.

## SELF SERVICE PUSHES AHEAD

Devolving responsibility to its employees to update their own details was just one reason for implementing self service; another was the huge efficiencies that it enables. After successfully piloting the functionality across three departments, the roll out of self service was completed in July 2008. Employees are not only able to update their own personal details, but can automatically submit expenses including travel such as car mileage as well as timesheets and overtime. They are also able to view payslips and P60 statements online.

Irene Clarke says: "The introduction of self service marked a big culture change across the Council and there was some initial resistance to this adaption of working process. Our first pilot self service was with the ICT team and this was hugely successful. We then chose to roll it out first to a group that were proving most resistant to change. The strategy worked as the ease of use of the web-based solution made the process of getting employees up and running on iTrent surprisingly smooth and other employees across the Council only heard good things about the new system."

For the manual workers at the Council without internet and ICT access or experience, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council have created a training room to ensure that they are confident in using the system. This training process is due for completion in early 2009 at which point all employees across Epsom and Ewell Borough Council will be able to submit expenses and view payslips online.

"Benefits are already being realised across the Council," says Clarke. "Feedback so far has been extremely positive with staff preferring the new system to paper processes due to the increased efficiencies. More specifically, one member of staff recently told me that he likes the ability to view payslips online and see the history at-a-glance. We are delighted with the response from everyone and from the savings in our department's administration that we are starting to see as a result of self service."

## SEAMLESS WORKING FOR EFFICIENCY GAINS

Commenting on iTrent, Clarke says: "The web-enabled version of iTrent has been incredibly easy for managers to get to grips with as it is so intuitive. All screens can be accessed from one point so it is fast as well as easy to use. It provides seamless working and greater efficiencies."

Epsom and Ewell recently completed its first tax year end in-house. Clarke says: "This coincided with the upgrade to iTrent and so we had some concerns, but in fact it was incredibly fast, returns were submitted a month early online and the process was effortless."

Lumley comments: "Working with an integrated system is showing benefits. We previously had to enter data into our systems two, three, sometimes four times and this re-keying of data was a huge drain on time. Now data need only be inputted into the system once and it goes to the appropriate manager for approval before being sent to payroll. The system is however entirely secure – HR cannot access payroll and vice versa except where it is required in an administrative capacity."

## CHALLENGE

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council required an integration of HR and payroll processes using an in-house solution in order to centralise information and increase efficiency.

## SOLUTION

In-house implementation of iTrent, the integrated web solution. Self-service has also been implemented to give their people the responsibility of managing their own personal details, submitting expenses, time sheets and overtime, further reducing HR administration.