



Review of the IT Shared Services Delivery Model
at the
United Counties of Stormont Dundas and Glengarry

Submitted by: Student 235024
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Executive Summary

Self-production of municipal service is the most common way of delivering municipal services. The significant pressures put on municipalities to improve services and the rapidly changing technology and cyber risk landscape are drivers for local municipalities to seek alternative ways service delivery models.

The delivery model of the County IT service was compared to member municipalities of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) and 3 common service delivery models as presented in literature. The self-production model was used as the baseline model. Outsourcing and shared services were the other 2 models used in the comparison.

The review of the County IT Service delivery model reinforces the current approach of sharing IT services within SDG as the model that makes most sense for the County and the local municipalities. Improving the shared service is a way to keep capacity within the local region and strengthen local autonomy. The shared services approach is also in line with how most of our EOWC peers operate, or are working towards.

Increased value can be generated by reducing the challenges and enhancing the service to provide more benefit. Reducing challenges can be achieved by:

1. Simplifying the governance process.
2. Developing the performance measurement and reporting framework to simultaneously satisfy internal performance monitoring and governance needs.
3. Establishing the intermunicipal IT working group.

Enhancing the service can be achieved by:

1. Formalizing the service catalog to clearly define the IT service which will help identify gaps in the service.
2. Review the cost recovery model to ensure value.
3. Augmenting IT security and project delivery with external resources.

The recommendations will be reviewed with the internal steering committee and investigated in the near future.



Scope and Methodology

This research report presents the current method that the County uses to provide IT Services to participating local municipalities within the United Counties of Stormont Dundas and Glengarry. The IT Service delivery model is compared to other counties within the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) and evaluated against common municipal service delivery models. The service delivery models considered are:

1. Stand-alone: build and operate in-house;
2. Outsourcing;
3. Inter-municipal cooperation by way of shared service.

Inter-municipal cooperation amongst upper tier municipalities is not considered in this report because it is out of the direct control of the County and is a topic worthy of its own study. Amalgamation is also excluded from the report since this would be a drastic measure, especially for the purpose of delivering IT services. Lastly, municipally-owned corporations or boards are not considered since doing so may introduce a lot of overhead therefore making the IT Service less cost effective.

A literature search was conducted to find scholarly articles and expert papers related to municipal service delivery. Only freely available literature was selected. A survey was sent to IT leaders of the member municipalities of the EOWC to gather information regarding IT service delivery models amongst members. For each service delivery model discussed, factors considered include:

- Governance
- Human resources
- Cost
- Benefits
- Disadvantages

Based on this comparison, a series of recommendations are made to improve the current delivery model. The context for the comparison is organizations like the County and its local municipalities and not large metropolitan areas that have vastly different capacities.

IT Service Delivery at United Counties of Stormont Dundas and Glengarry

The United Counties of Stormont Dundas and Glengarry (County) IT Service is not a traditional municipal service that is delivered directly to residents, but rather a corporate service like human resources, finance and payroll. The IT service is provided internally to County Departments and externally to local municipalities to drive the adoption of technology in the provision of improved, efficient municipal services. In June 2017, the County engaged Perry

Consulting Group to review the IT service and develop an IT strategy for the County. The review recommended that the County “redouble” its efforts to build a shared service model and made recommendations related to governance, staffing, infrastructure, and projects to create an effective service that meets the expectations of County staff and the local municipalities. Since then, County IT Services became a standalone department (formerly a division of Financial Services), grew from two (2) staff to six (6), made significant infrastructure investments, and started implementing a robust governance structure.


The County IT Services Department provides IT services to internal staff and four (4) of the six (6) local municipalities, hosts the municipal information system for one (1) additional local municipality, and does not provide any IT services to one (1) local municipality (Table 1).

IT Service	Number of Municipalities
IT Support Desk	4
Networking and datacenter operation	4
IT security/disaster recovery	4
Desktop and printer support	4
Municipal information system	5
Web hosting	3
Procurement	4
IT Project Management/implementation support	4
Business Application Support	4

Table 1: IT Service Uptake by Local Municipalities

All staff delivering IT Services to the local municipalities are employed by the County. The IT Services Department is made up of 6 positions, including:

- Director of IT Services
- IT Services Coordinator
- IT Systems Specialist
- IT Technician
- IT Support Technician
- Business Systems Coordinator



The complement of positions provides the breadth of skills required to deliver IT services, from providing strategic direction, business systems, network and server infrastructure, personal computers, and printers. None of the four (4) local municipalities served by the County has any of their own IT personnel on staff. Each municipality has an employee identified as the primary IT contact for efficient coordination of the service.

Most services are provided directly by the County. Vendors or outside resources are contracted by the County where specialized knowledge or skills are required. The County uses external resources for:


- Municipal information system maintenance and support. The County hosts the municipal information system for local municipalities on its infrastructure and has a service agreement with the vendor for ongoing support and maintenance of the system. The County also contracts professional services when implementation of system modules or other custom work is required.
- IT security audits and testing. County IT staff do not have the specialized skills and tools to perform in depth IT security audits and testing. Outside firms are contracted to complete security audits and testing on an ad hoc basis.
- Email and file storage. The County and local municipalities subscribe to Microsoft 365. The subscription provides email, collaboration tools, personal file storage and office productivity applications.
- Off-site backup storage. The subscription to the backup solution includes cloud storage that is specialized for this purpose.

The cost of delivering the IT Service is funded through the tax levy and direct payment for equipment, software and third-party services. The IT budget is apportioned the same way as the rest of the levy regardless of the level of participation of each local municipality. The cost of any computer hardware, software and other systems procured on behalf of a local municipality is borne directly by the municipality.

Governance of the IT Shared Service is by way of the IT Shared Services Governance Committee. The Committee is made up of the local municipalities' CAOs, the County Director of IT Services and is chaired by the County CAO. The Committee began implementing a governance process based on the COBIT 2019 information and technology governance framework. The Committee authorized the formation of 2 project teams: the first to implement the actual governance process and the second to optimize and manage risk. The work of the IT Shared Services Governance Committee was suspended in March of 2020 when the pandemic took hold in Ontario. The Governance Committee is expected to resume its work in the fall of 2021.

The County also has an internal IT Steering Committee which is chaired by the Director of IT Services and composed of the CAO and Directors. The role of the IT Steering Committee is to:

- Provide strategic guidance to the IT Service
- Review, approve and track IT related projects

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- Review and approve new or amended IT policies
 - Provide input into the annual IT budget

Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Member Survey

A survey was sent to the IT leaders of the other 12 members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus. The purpose of the survey was to collect qualitative information about IT service delivery across the catchment area of the Caucus to facilitate a comparison of County IT services to peer organizations in the region. Seven (7) responses were received and varied from EOWC members providing no IT services to local municipalities to the provision of IT services to all local municipalities. Most respondents were somewhere in between. The services delivered, cost recovery and maturity of governance also varied amongst the responses.


The first question, *"Do you provide IT Service to local municipalities?"*, was asked to see how common it is for counties to provide IT services to their local municipalities. Five (5) of the seven (7) respondents indicated they provided IT services to their local municipalities.

The degree of coverage varied from providing services to less than fifty percent (50%) of local municipalities to the high of one hundred percent (100%). One (1) respondent indicated that the provision of services to local municipalities had been discussed, one respondent indicated that no serious discussions had occurred to date, while one other anticipated that such discussion will happen within the next five years.

The County is with the majority providing IT services to local municipalities and is in the upper range of providing services to four (4) of six (6) other organizations.

The next questions were for the about the range of services provided to local municipalities, whether local municipalities provide any IT services themselves and if local municipalities have any IT staff. Four of the respondents stated they provide full IT services, while 1 respondent stated that they provide the full range of traditional services, however higher end services such as project planning, strategy, and business analysis have been requested in the past but that they currently do not have the capacity to provide these services. Four (4) respondents indicated that the local municipalities did not provide any IT services for themselves (*one respondent indicated the local municipalities have coordinators responsible for local decision making and managing licenses). The last respondent indicated that local municipalities are responsible for contracting with vendors for external support for finance platforms. All five (5) respondents answered that all IT staff are county staff with the exception of the coordinators mentioned above.

The County IT service provides a full IT service including contracting with a vendor to support the municipal information system (MIS). There are some exceptions to this where local municipalities went out on their own to procure systems such as water meter management systems, recreation systems and web sites. Also, we currently have limited capacity to provide



project management and business analysis due to staff vacancy. Similarly, all IT staff are County staff.

The question of allocation of cost provided the most varied response – the range of answers were:

- Standard annual fee with all participating municipalities paying the same amount.
- Hourly rate for hours worked with responsibility for their own hardware and software.
- Annual fee per user for infrastructure plus hourly fee and each municipality pays for their own equipment.
- Cost recovery based on hourly rate.
- County levy and pay for their own hardware.

The County allocates cost through the County levy and local municipalities pay for own hardware, software licenses and external systems procured themselves.

The next question regarding governance structures also produced varied responses:

- One local municipality is starting a technology committee – others report to CAO.
- No governance committee – IT manager in contact with local IT contact.
- Inter-municipal IT working committee.
- The County does not have a steering committee with local municipalities – it is a challenge for local municipalities to make sufficient time for IT matters.
- Ad-hoc, expected that an IT steering committee will be struck in the coming months.

The County IT service has a formal governance committee with local CAOs (although it hasn't met in over a year due to pandemic), internal IT steering committee and plans to create an inter-municipal IT working group.


Next, respondents were asked if all IT services are delivered internally, or if they use a managed service provider:

- Three (3) responded that they provide all IT services except for larger projects, or for augmenting for part-time or time limited engagements or for services out of scope.
- One (1) stated they used to do all but because of HR challenges, now use MSP for full managed service and various projects.
- One (1) stated all service provided by county, and do not use any provider.

Similar to the majority, the County provides all IT services and occasionally augments with external resources.

Finally, the respondents were asked to provide the top benefits and challenges with their current IT service delivery model. The stated benefits had several common themes:

- Cost savings: three (3) respondents.
- Efficiency: three (3) respondents.

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- Experience and trust: two (2) respondents.
 - Standardization, (2) respondents.
 - Improved service: (1) respondent.

Stated challenges included:

- Lack of budget: three (3) respondents.
- Adopting new technology/getting everyone up to standard: one (1) respondent
- Liability to county: one (1) respondent.
- Conflict with local municipalities when management changes: one (1) respondent.
- Only works when everybody onboard: one (1) respondent.
- Cost recovery and time tracking: two (2) respondents.
- Allocation of resources/competing priorities: three (3) respondents.

Stated benefits and challenges of peer organizations are in line with what is experienced at SDG except for challenges with cost recovery.

Comparing peer member municipalities to SDG shows there are many similarities in the service it provides to local municipalities. The differences noted were the varied approaches to governance and service costs allocation.

Comparison of Service Delivery Models

The various service delivery models considered in this report include:

- Self-produced stand-alone service.
- Outsourcing.
- Shared service.

The self-produced, stand-alone model is presented as traditional status quo service delivery model and provides the baseline scenario. The outsourcing model is presented in the context of a single municipal organization contracting service as an alternative to self-production.

Stand-alone Service

A self-produced, stand-alone service is delivered directly by the municipality, using municipal resources. Municipal government is responsible for all aspects of delivering the service. Municipal staff produce and deliver the service and the municipality is responsible for determining what the service will provide, operating costs and capital costs (Brown 2003, 441, 443).

Since a self-produced stand-alone service is the traditional status quo model of delivering services, there is not much research describing this model directly. Rather, the literature reviewed used this model as the baseline comparator to alternate service delivery models.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing is contracting with a private company to provide the service. The service is procured through a competitive process and managed via contracts. In this case the municipality is still responsible for delivering the service (governance) and the external private provider is responsible for the production of the service.

Intermunicipal Cooperation - Shared Service

Intermunicipal cooperation occurs when 2 or more municipal organizations decide to work together to pool resources to deliver a service (Spicer 2018, 2). Shared services can be arranged informally through verbal agreements or formally through Memorandums of Understanding (MoU), by-laws or service contracts. Most municipalities engage in intermunicipal cooperation and is more likely to occur when the benefit is clear of self-production of the service is not likely (Spicer 2015, 5).

Governance Considerations of Service Delivery Models

Each of the service delivery models have unique governance considerations (Table 2).

Service Delivery Model	Governance Considerations
Stand-alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete autonomy to deliver IT services (Spicer 2016, 5)) without consideration for other organizations requirements.• Internal IT Steering Committee for strategic direction, monitoring and decision making.• Decision making can be quick since no need for consultation with external stakeholders.• Accountability of service is only to the organization's own council.• No need for external reporting.
Outsourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same considerations as stand-alone with the added responsibility of monitoring the contract to ensure contract fulfillment and value for cost.
Shared Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional governance required to ensure arrangement is accomplishing intended purpose. (MFOA)• Participating organizations needs to provide direction to and monitor service.• Delivering organization is accountable to and reports performance to participating organizations.

Table 2: Governance Considerations of Service Delivery Models

Human Resource Implications of Service Delivery Models

The different service delivery models also have different HR implications (Table 3):

Service Delivery Model	Human Resource Implications
Stand-alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or 2 IT staff at most to maintain efficient ratio of IT staff to end users. • No need or capacity to hire Director or other specialized positions. • IT “Department” is likely a division within a corporate service department. • IT staff are generalists and have a wide breadth of responsibility.
Outsourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical staff required by the municipality. • Still the need to have staff appointed or hired to be responsible for and lead the IT service, manage procurement and monitor the contract. • Depending on size and complexity of IT requirements, may still want to have a manager dedicated to IT services.
Shared Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires and can support more staff than stand-alone or outsourced IT service. • IT typically its own department. • Full complement of staff with mixed skills, specialized positions to deliver efficient service with capacity to absorb small peaks in demand. • Higher level of management to provide strategic direction and drive adoption of IT.

Table 3: Human Resources Implications of Service Delivery Models

Costs and Funding of Service Delivery Models

The differences in the way costs are managed and funded (Table 4):

Service Delivery Model	Costs and Funding
Stand-alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating and capital costs are completely the responsibility of the organization and directly related to the level of service provided.
Outsourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality is responsible for any internal operating costs and contract costs. • There is flexibility to make capital purchases for infrastructure and other computer equipment or to contract for infrastructure as a service
Shared Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of the service is borne by the service recipients.



- Administration costs are divided amongst participating organizations.
- Capital costs are also divided amongst several organizations.

Table 4: Costs and Funding of Service Delivery Models

Benefits Comparison of Service Delivery Models

Each of the service delivery models brings its own benefits (Table 5):

Service Delivery Model	Benefits
Stand-alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for maximum flexibility since no need to collaborate, cooperate with or be accountable to external organizations. • No need to manage contracts with external providers. • Decisions are made locally leading to quicker decision making. • Relationship building not necessary. • No need to report externally.
Outsourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major benefit has been reduced costs. • May benefit from economies of scale if service provider offers procurement services. • Reduced HR exposure (i.e small IT department & limited staff). • Shifting risk associated with providing service to third party. • Get the needed skill sets. • Flexibility on capital costs, can be zero if contract infrastructure as a service etc.
Shared Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economies of scale: purchasing power of all participating organizations can reduce overall costs of procuring equipment, software and enterprise systems. • Capital can be pooled to reduce cost (Spicer 2014, 6). • Local capacity to provide full breadth of IT services including project delivery. • Larger departmental staff allows for succession planning, coverage for absences and better able to absorb peaks in demand. • Less concern about monitoring performance of service – service is delivered by a trusted partner as opposed to the worry of opportunism related to a contracted service.

Table 5: Benefits Comparison of Service Delivery Models



Discussion of Benefits Realized by County IT Shared Service

The benefits realized by County and the participants of the County IT shared service are very similar to the benefits of a shared service identified in the literature. The benefits of the County IT service include:

- Staffing complement – full complement of IT staff with specialized positions vs department of one at local level. Positions include:
 - Director of IT Services – provides strategic planning, coordination of agreements, budgeting.
 - Supervisor – manage day-to-day, procurement, second level support working with vendors.
 - Specialized staff – staff dedicated to support desk, desktop and printer support and systems specialist to maintain infrastructure.
 - Business Systems Coordinator – take a larger role in training, support, delivering IT enabled business projects.
- Larger number of staff allows for coverage for absences: same number of staff as the case where each participating organization had 1 of their own staff.
- Timeliness of service desk – dedication person to respond to incidents and service requests. Other technicians are not interrupted if incident occurs or service request is made.
- Larger projects in-house due to staffing as opposed to contracting out every project. County IT was able to deliver managed wifi, voice over IP (VoIP) telephone system and security camera system at several County facilities and for local municipalities, implement enterprise-grade backup solution for local municipalities and stand up a backup data center. There is still the flexibility of contracting out projects when the IT department does not have sufficient capacity. The need to occasionally outsource work is a good indication that IT staff is efficient. The desire is to have near 100% utilization and contract out when demand exceeds capacity.
- Centralized coordinated of IT services – local municipalities that use County services rely on everything IT related (with some exceptions). Feedback was received from local municipalities that they do not want to go anywhere else for IT services and support; even for contracted or cloud services procured for themselves. There is a preference that County IT be involved to ensure they are making informed decisions.
- Capital expenditures – pooling resources and sharing infrastructure enables the IT service to deploy a robust server and network infrastructure and spread the cost over several organizations. An enterprise grade redundant virtualized server environment was deployed by County IT to host the municipal information system (MIS) and provide additional private cloud capacity to host other applications, i.e. web sites. It would not make economic sense to do this individually. Economies of scale and joint procurement reduce costs in purchasing end user equipment and services.

- Cost sharing – the cost of IT service is captured in the County levy, which is based on the ability to pay. This helps municipalities with smaller tax bases receive the same service level as other municipalities within the County.

Additionally, some of the benefits of outsourcing has also been realized by the County IT Service:

- Specialized skills. The County has an external service contract with the MIS vendor. The vendor has also been contracted to provide specialized skills when additional work or module implementation is requested.
- Using cloud services for email, collaboration tools and personal cloud storage (Microsoft 365). Doing so shifted some of the risk of providing these services to an external provider.

Comparison of Challenges of Service Delivery Models

The service delivery models each have their own challenges (Table 6):

Service Delivery Model	Challenges
Stand-alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability of small organization to have IT staff with a full complement of skills while maintaining efficiency. • Generalist IT staff with wide breadth of responsibility. • Likely rely on contracted services for specialized skills and projects which inherently negates some of the benefits previously listed. • Risk of continuity due to unplanned staff departure, no coverage for sick or vacation time. • Lack of opportunities for succession planning or career growth. • Cost and efficiency of stand-alone service. • Does not benefit from economies of scale. • Capital costs are a barrier to providing enterprise systems.
Outsourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring contracts. • May be politically unpopular. • Opportunism of vendor. • Increasing cost over time and when retendering. • Inflexible service if contracted in rigid agreement over long period of time. • Cost increase directly proportional to level and volume of service.

Shared Service

- Governance. Time and resources to monitor agreement and service levels, providing performance metrics to external participants.
- Participating organizations agreeing on range of services and service levels, projects, alignment of service to meet the needs of each participant.
- Relationships. Mutual trust is important, valuing the joint benefits over the participants' own interests (Spicer 2018, 8).
- Risk to delivering organization Taking on some risk i.e. cyber security, data integrity, confidentiality and availability. Each organization is ultimately responsible for their own data, it is entrusted to the service provider.


Table 6: Comparison of Challenges of Service Delivery Models

Discussion of Challenges Faced by County IT Shared Service

The challenges faced by the County providing shared IT services are very similar to the challenges of undertaking shared services identified in the literature. The challenges faced by the County IT service includes:

- Governance. The current governance committee made up of local CAOs meets quarterly in conjunction with regular CAOs meetings. Meeting four (4) times a year extends the time it takes to get things done. The quarterly meetings usually have full agendas and adding IT governance to this meeting prolongs it.
- Project committees. Difficult to get participation due to time constraints on employees and competing priorities.
- Multiple organizations with different levels of IT maturity. Would like to get all participants to the same standard but sufficient budget may not be available.
- Participating municipalities may feel they have unique requirements that may not be shared by all which makes it more difficult to collaborate on business systems or other projects.
- Calculating the cost of service by recipient. Local municipalities may feel they are not getting value for money or feel they are subsidizing other municipalities, especially those that are not participating in the service.
- Staffing IT positions. While trying to build a full IT Service, the IT team has grown in the past 3 years from two (2) to six (6) positions. This has created some challenges politically. Further there have been challenges keeping certain IT positions staffed.
- Meeting needs of local municipalities. Core service and infrastructure is stable but project work needs to be better defined. Projects are not always contemplated at the beginning of year or during budget time. Deciding on which projects are joint initiatives and what level of IT Service involvement is required for independent ventures.

Some of the challenges of outsourcing is also experienced by the IT service include:

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- Annual costs increase. Experienced a one time increase of 20% due to restructuring of licensing cost. Pay per user model increases annual cost as staff grows.
 - Cost directly proportional to level and volume of service: External support vendor charges by the hour for implementation work. Hourly rate is 4x cost of internal staff with similar skill set.

Discussion and Future Considerations

Self-production is currently the most common way municipalities deliver services. Challenges to do so efficiently and provide value to residents include increased pressure from residents to improve services, increased responsibility to deliver services and reduction of resources. Small, rural and northern municipalities also face the challenge of hiring management and skilled workers because to the out-migration of residents to urban centers. (Fyfe 2004, 3).

Outsourcing is seen as a way to reduce costs or provide a service that a municipality is unable to produce itself. The cost savings depends on the nature of the service outsourced and the cost benefit can be undermined by the cost of monitoring the contract (Marvel 2007, 529).


Shared services is a common way for local municipalities to save costs, build capacity and improve services (MFOA, 33) in a way that going it alone or outsourcing cannot provide. A properly designed and managed shared service allows local municipalities to maintain flexibility and local autonomy while increasing local capacity and delivering an efficient, cost-effective service (Spicer 2014(#4), 4).

Based on the review of 3 service delivery models and comparison with peers, the author recommends continuing using a shared service model to provide IT services to local municipalities within SDG with the following enhancements or changes:

1. Resume developing the governance committee with a smaller project team.
2. Develop performance measurement and reporting frameworks to inform governance committee and Council.
3. Commit to intermunicipal IT working group.
4. Formalize service catalog.
5. Review cost recovery model.
6. Augment IT security role and large projects with external resources.

Governance:

Governance is required for both contract management of a shared service and delivering enterprise IT. While contracting with another municipality does incur a certain cost it is typically less than when outsourcing (Marvel 2007, 529). The governance structure can be developed in a way that one (1) governance structure can meet both goals of monitoring the performance of the agreement and guiding the IT service.



The approach taken so far has involved the CAO group for every aspect of developing the governance structure which can slow the process and put additional work on the CAOs. A new approach could be taken where small project groups develop the governance structure based on direction of the governance committee and present completed work to the committee for approval.

Reporting Framework:

Related to governance is the performance measurement and reporting framework, a key component of both governance of enterprise IT services and contract management. SDG IT should prioritize developing regular reporting on key performance metrics. It is also recommended that the certain high-level information be provided to Council on a regular basis to ensure they are well informed and engaged in delivering IT as a shared service.

Inter-municipal IT working Group:

County IT staff have a great relationship with local staff and has contributed to the success of the IT service. Regardless, formalizing a working group would not only ensure continued regular feedback and communication between IT and local staff, but would have the added benefit of improving communication, collaboration and coordination amongst local municipalities. SDG IT can use the local Economic Development Officer or Fire Chief groups as a model.

Formalize IT Service Catalog:


This is an important step in ensuring that the expectations of local municipalities and the requirements of SDG IT are clearly defined. There are currently some uncertainties around the role of IT when it comes to larger project work which would be clarified by a service catalog.

Review Cost Recovery Model

Ensuring equitable distribution of cost is important to the satisfaction (there are references that talk about this will expand a bit later). The current model is simple, significantly reduces administrative overhead and ensures the IT service is properly funded. Funding the IT service through the levy has the added benefit of providing the same level of service to all local municipalities regardless of their ability to pay. This model should remain for core IT services and infrastructure but a cost recovery mechanism should be investigated in cases where local municipalities have a unique need do not want to look elsewhere for a service provider.

Augment IT security role and large projects with external resources:

Although SDG IT outsources certain systems to cloud providers (email, collaboration tools, HR system, council agenda system) all other services are provided by County staff. Recent challenges in recruiting certain positions and the rapidly changing cybersecurity landscape are reasons to look at opportunities to augment the core IT service with outside resources. SDG currently has strong security posture but with increasing security concerns options for procuring specialized services should be investigated.



Project management and delivery is another area that is currently a challenge. SDG IT could, on a project-to-project basis, consider hiring outside help to implement large projects and turn over the operation to internal staff at project completion.

Conclusion

The review of the County IT Service delivery model reinforces the current approach of sharing IT services within SDG as the model that makes most sense for the County and the local municipalities. Improving the shared service is a way to keep capacity within the local region and strengthen local autonomy. The shared services approach is also in line with how most of our EOWC peers operate, or are working towards.

Increased value can be generated by reducing the challenges and enhancing the service to provide more benefit. Reducing challenges can be achieved by:

1. Simplifying the governance process.
2. Developing the performance measurement and reporting framework to simultaneously satisfy internal performance monitoring and governance needs.
3. Establishing the intermunicipal IT working group.

Enhancing the service can be achieved by:

1. Formalizing the service catalog to clearly define the IT service which will help identify gaps in the service.
2. Review the cost recovery model to ensure value.
3. Augmenting IT security and project delivery with external resources.

As a final thought, it may be prudent for the IT leadership to engage with the 2 local municipalities currently not fully participating in the shared service to better understand their needs.



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