

**Remotely  
implementing  
HR and payroll  
for Cherwell  
District Council**



# Introduction

Serving Oxfordshire communities and towns including Banbury and Bicester, Cherwell District Council has around 600 employees and is responsible for the delivery of a broad range of services, including housing, waste collections, planning decisions and council car parks.

With Cherwell looking to upgrade its entire HR and payroll functionality – replacing a number of different manual-based systems with one cloud-hosted solution and at the same time increasing manager and employee self-service, the challenge for both MHR and Cherwell was implementing the new iTrent system remotely.

“The entire implementation was conducted remotely.”

**Teresa Reed**

HR and Learning and Development  
Cherwell District Council

# Summary

## Organisational objectives

- Remove time-consuming manual tasks
- Enable employee and manager self-service
- Consolidation of multiple systems
- Automate HR and payroll functions

## Results

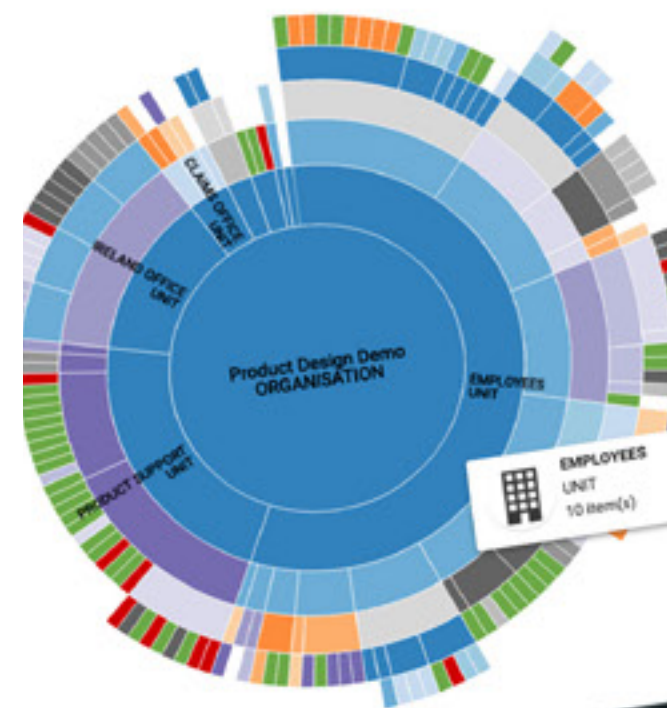
- Accurate pay for all employees
- Time and effort savings on removal of data input
- Self-service for employees and managers
- One system controlling all HR and payroll functions
- Improved recording and reporting of data



# HR and payroll in one place

Before the introduction of iTrent, Cherwell District Council used a number of different systems to complete its HR and payroll functions. None of this was automated, with the HR and payroll teams undertaking all processes manually. This took time and effort, with double-keying of data taking teams away from more productive activity.

Following the ESPO framework, the iTrent solution was selected to bring multiple areas under one fully hosted and controllable system.



# Transforming the council's operations

Cherwell first became a customer of MHR in May 2019, bringing in iTrent functionality across its HR and payroll functions. Go-lives through 2020 included payroll, online payslips, time and attendance, expenses and absence management. Learning and development, recruitment and onboarding are to be added in future phases.



# Remote training and implementation

The initial implementation proved to be a smooth and seamless process, as HR and Learning and Development lead Teresa Reed confirms: “We ran a pilot in January 2020 with our IT, HR and transformation teams. Then COVID-19 hit, and we put everything on hold. When we realised it wasn’t going away, we rolled it out remotely in less than two weeks. We conducted training sessions in 45 minute shared screen sessions across April 2020.”

“Overall from our viewpoint all timescales have been met and no issues have been encountered. Support has been provided where required to ensure developments and changes are implemented efficiently,” she added.

“MHR’s consultants gained a good understanding of our organisational structure that helped lead to the smooth remote implementation. This has enabled them to deliver targeted solutions that meet our own development requirements.”

**Teresa Reed**

HR and Learning and Development  
Cherwell District Council



# A simple and efficient solution

While benefits of the iTrent solution are still being realised through on-going development, already the overall original requirements have been met.

These include the security of having a hosted system, a greatly enhanced user experience, significant increases in online work, easily accessible training and an all-in-one solution for employees across Cherwell District Council and CSN.

Teresa said, "The project management resource provided by the MHR team has worked really well for us, with issues raised resolved. IT support for the Cherwell team has also been able to resolve issues logged."





# A phased roll-out of functionality

Almost immediately, the advantages of working with iTrent has delivered efficiency and time savings into Cherwell's HR and payroll functions. In addition, iTrent has led to improved accuracy thanks to the solution's standards for data storage and updates.

Notable efficiencies regarding time spent completing tasks and managing employee data are expected as full functionality is rolled out.

In particular, the advantages of using the singular iTrent solution over multiple systems and manual processes have included big improvements in:

## **Payroll**

Including accurate pay for complex flexi-time arrangements and the provision of online payslips.

## **Time and attendance**

Cherwell's employees have the ability to check-in and out of work live, and in real time.

## **Expenses**

The online sign-off approval process has removed all paperwork from expense submissions, allowing manager and employee self-service providing a seamless and controlled sign-off process for managers.

## **Absence and leave**

HR teams moved away from time-consuming manual holiday and sickness forms as iTrent's flexible functionalities can be adjusted in response to changing requirements.



A woman with dark hair is smiling and looking at a laptop screen. The background is blurred, showing green foliage. The image is split into two main sections: a light grey area on the left containing text, and a dark blue area on the right containing a quote and a name. The woman's face is visible in the top left corner, and her hands are visible at the bottom right, holding a smartphone.

# Welcomed by all employees

Already welcomed by employees with excellent feedback, iTrent is allowing for improved, more efficient self-service and reporting, which reduces data input errors and the time required to collect data.

In addition, iTrent has improved the work experience for employees who require less training (for both new starters and current employees) with an easy to navigate interface making their working life easier.

“iTrent allows for a more controlled centralised solution for HR and payroll to liaise and interact with other service areas, especially those modules being brought in over the coming months,” added Teresa.

“Thanks to MHR, our new solution was deployed 100% online, without any face to face contact. We could not have achieved this without the flexibility of iTrent, the MHR team and the Cherwell District Council and Entec Si joint partnering.”

**Teresa Reed**

HR and Learning and Development  
Cherwell District Council



The MHR logo consists of the letters 'MHR' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid black square.

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