



## Business Justification for Democracy Counts Technology

### Background

With the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) each Local Authority (LA) was tasked with carrying out a more resource intensive process including channel shifting electors to an online journey, engaging with electors for encouragement purposes, and improving the accuracy of the Electoral Register by incorporating Identity Assurance. The IER process has meant a process shift from tracking households, to tracking households and every elector at varying stages.

### Vendor Approach

Democracy Counts responded to this change by full re-writing its previous Electoral Management Software recognising that the only sensible approach was to redesign the software with the elector at the centre of the architecture. The resulting system, Elector8, was delivered 1 year ahead of the IER Deadlines, and has now redefined the standards to which this specialist software is measured. Democracy Counts was the only vendor of the 4 in the market to have chosen this route, with the other choosing to “bolt-on” modules for IER, which has led to more of an effective service delivery. The software solution was delivered to the Cabinet Office at a cost of £400,000 to £1,000,000 less than the other vendors showing respect for the public purse. A full re-written system presented a unique opportunity to completely support the modern business processes and create a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Platform. We believe that this will improve engagement and participation, whilst lowering cost, and is targeting at embracing web technology and low cost communications. It fully recognises the fact that budgets in this area will remain under continued pressure and addresses the challenge through technology rather than increased resources.

### Key Features

In completing the design of IER ahead of schedule, Democracy Counts were given the time to think and the time to analyse where efficiency could be added. By embracing web technology a staffing self-service portal was launched in 2012. This has led to great efficiency by proving repeatable savings of hundreds of hours of administration time and thousands of pounds in communication costs.

During 2014, a tablet based solution for Canvassing, Polling Station Management and Count Management was launched. Whilst this was considered to be ahead of its time, it has now become the standard to which most authorities operate and the canvassing portion has been widely copied recently by other vendors as they struggle to keep up with the pace of technology. The tablet solution also embrace the idea of identity checking and so already exceeds the recommendations made by the recent Pickles report which is being considered by Government. This solution offers impressive time and cost savings to an LA.

In 2016 Democracy Counts introduced a Candidate Self Service Portal which provides Candidates and Agents the opportunity to input and validate their nomination ahead of submission. Saving time and money at a critical period.

2017 has already started with the launch of our Citizen Portal Application. This allows citizens to download a smartphone application to empower citizens with more control and self-service abilities, ranging from proving their identity, changing their voting preference, or receiving an e-poll card and information on Candidates standing. This will further redefine the standard by which Democracy is provided as the Citizen is given more control of this vital function.

On a day to day level, the Democracy Counts system provides the most efficient processing of regular transactions. Each process has been carefully analysed to devise a system that offers choice and efficiency and minimises user intervention.

It is recognised that the data held in systems of this nature are now highly sensitive with National Insurance and Banking Data. As such Elector8 provide industry leading data encryption, securing data both in transit and at rest. Democracy Counts are the only vendor to offer this with other systems holding sensitive data in unencrypted formats. We believe this improves security.

Democracy Counts are highly accredited and hold ISO 9001, 14001, 27001 and 22301. Each of these accreditations have been held longer than any vendor in the sector.

Clients shape Democracy Counts products via useful user groups and seminars that keep focus on day to day efficiency as well as longer term roadmap issues. There is full support for wider initiatives from the Cabinet Office and the Electoral Commission and they are completed ahead of other vendors due to the improved development time created by newer technology. Any enhancements will be made available at no additional cost and in a timely fashion. The business has numerous unique features, such as compliance to HMRC Real Time Information, which are described on <http://www.democracymcounts.co.uk/elector8.php#> > see features tab. All technology is built using standard Microsoft components that are readily accessible and understood.

All staff are well trained to Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) standard in the business processes, as well as to a suitable technical level. The company holds the best client to staff ratio in the industry and provides timely support on a 24/7 basis during key times.

As a CRM, the system understands intelligent communication. From installation, the system has the ability to offer 2 way integrated communications using Email, SMS, Voice Broadcasting, Campaign Email (Measuring click through, Bounce backs etc, devices used etc.) and Push Notifications

By encouraging channel shifting activities, it is possible to save tens of thousands of pounds over the course of a year by utilising lower cost channels over postage, whilst improving speed and accountability. Furthermore, response rates can be increased by communicating to the citizen in their channel of choice. Democracy Counts supports the governments Digital by Default initiative.

As an open technology integrators, Democracy Counts can readily take data from a range of sources such as your gazetteer, mapping system, Council Tax or other business systems via file based transfer or direct links with API's in order to help you confirm registrations, find potential electors or identify movers. Integration to the Government Digital Service (GDS) is via the secure Public Service Network (PSN) .

A powerful reporting engine will give new insight and access to an existing database and improve the performance and understanding of your citizens.

### Testimonial

"We have now been using Elector8 for over a year, during which time we have had The London Mayoral and Assembly Elections in May, the EU Referendum along with a local Neighbourhood Planning Referendum in June followed by the Annual canvass; so you could say we have really tested Elector8 this past year. Our working lives have been transformed thanks to using a system that is fast, accurate and does a lot of the tedious work for us, during the elections running data files was quick and efficient - no late nights trying to produce print files! Our electors have benefited from a quicker, more efficient service both during the elections and during the Annual Canvass ; our Annual Canvass did not feel like the normal sinking under mounds of forms - where were all the paper forms? - they were on Canvass tablets which proved more receptive by electors and a more secure way of Canvassing. We are looking forward to continuing to work on a reliable and modern system that will evolve with us to meet all our future requirements."

Clare Oakley Electoral Service Manager London Borough of Camden

### Summary

The main benefits of Elector8 can be identified as:

- Immediate and ongoing Communication savings on print and postage
- Improved engagement with citizens
- A more supportable modern platform
- Immediate back office efficiencies with "self-service" options for staff, candidate, and electors
- Superior data security