

# A Platform for Local Government Services

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
MICROSOFT CITIZEN SERVICE PLATFORM

*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*



## Introduction

### People-Ready in City Hall

This paper is a response to a shift that has been ongoing in the relationship between government and citizens over the past years. In many countries, this change is now reaching a critical point that is straining current systems and processes from two directions. These tensions are created by dramatic changes in both the consumer or citizen context and also from major changes in the technology field.

On one hand we have the “Y Generation”—the emerging, sophisticated consumers and citizens. For these tech-savvy, Web-friendly users, online participation is as natural as face-to-face communication. These people place great expectation on the quality and availability of government services to the point where they will not tolerate conventional “top-down” or producer-centric methods of delivering public services. They want to be involved and consulted in decision making on all issues that affect them. They want to participate in lobbying, blogging, or other expressions on aspects that surround life related to public policy. At the same time, these always-on, always-connected citizens will not accept traditional methods of service delivery with their paper chases and counter based interfaces.

On the other hand, we have a significant community of potential ‘left behinds’ that governments cannot ignore, and the challenge is to move everyone ‘up the value chain’ to participate in the digital world, not just to accept participation from a ‘digital elite’. These issues are already well recognized. Some countries’ governments have taken a ‘push’ approach to reenergize service delivery and improve the experience it provides to citizens when dealing with government departments. While this effort has had positive effects in some situations, the majority of agencies at a local level are still struggling with balancing the traditional tensions of cost and service quality.

To really transform the customer experience, a wholesale redesign of processes is needed in tandem with the innovative use of technology. Only when the two are applied in combination will breakthroughs become possible.

Alongside these service delivery challenges the rise of the social internet, or Web 2.0 has been relentless. Mashups, wikis, blogs, RSS feeds and various software and service combinations allow previously unimagined scenarios to be created. One social network site claims to have more people than the population of Japan. The Parish of St. Mary in Jamaica (one of the case studies in this paper), now has a ‘software as a service’ Web site delivering weather warning alerts to citizens, something that many major developed cities cannot achieve.

When Bill Gates commented in his book ‘Business @ the Speed of Thought’ that we were merely at the ‘end of the beginning’ of the digital age, we are only now seeing how profound these changes are for the world of local government. To respond to these challenges we have drawn lessons from a vast number of customer projects and aligned these with the Microsoft People-Ready vision to describe a local government platform fit for this new world. This is the purpose and role of the **Citizen Service Platform**. We hope that what we introduce in this paper will assist all of our government customers on the rest of the journey ahead.

**Gordon McKenzie**

**Chris Bunio**

**Microsoft Local and Regional Government Business**



### The March of the Cities

Until recently, interest in government ICT has been focused at the national level. Today, the importance of using ICT to support and drive change in local and regional governments, particularly in cities, is becoming well recognized. In most countries, approximately 80% of transactions between government and citizens or businesses take place at local and regional level, and according to research conducted by Capgemini, two thirds of the world's population will be living in cities by the year 2050. This fact has profound consequences for the planning and balance of ICT investments over the coming years.

### No Choice for a Future Without Choice

In the near future, the active working population in the developed world will not be able to produce the volume of taxes required to pay for the public services that the same population will expect—just when it needs them most. Significant changes are needed. This summary outlines some ideas as to how these changes can be achieved by leveraging the underlying philosophy of component-based ICT-enabled solutions which forms the foundation of the **Citizen Service Platform**.

### Benchmarking or Benchwarming

Over the last few decades, competition has become both more global and more localized. In sectors such as fashion or design, analysts will quote Milan, Barcelona, Paris, London, or Tokyo

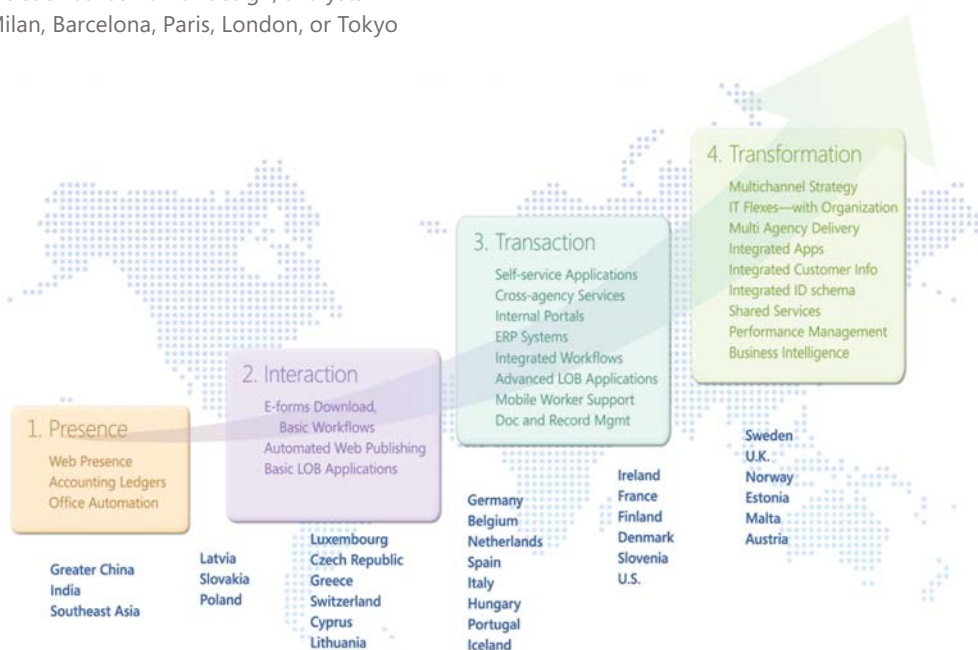
– not Italy, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, or Japan. Financial districts and stock exchanges have long been associated with cities (London, New York, or Chicago) rather than with their respective host countries.

The ideas and proposals offered here should help all of us make the best of the exciting opportunities surrounding the Citizen Service Platform. By attaching the right metrics to our efforts as analysts, producers, consumers, and citizens, we will be better able to contribute efficiently to the platform and to benefit from its success.

### Local Governments in a Global World

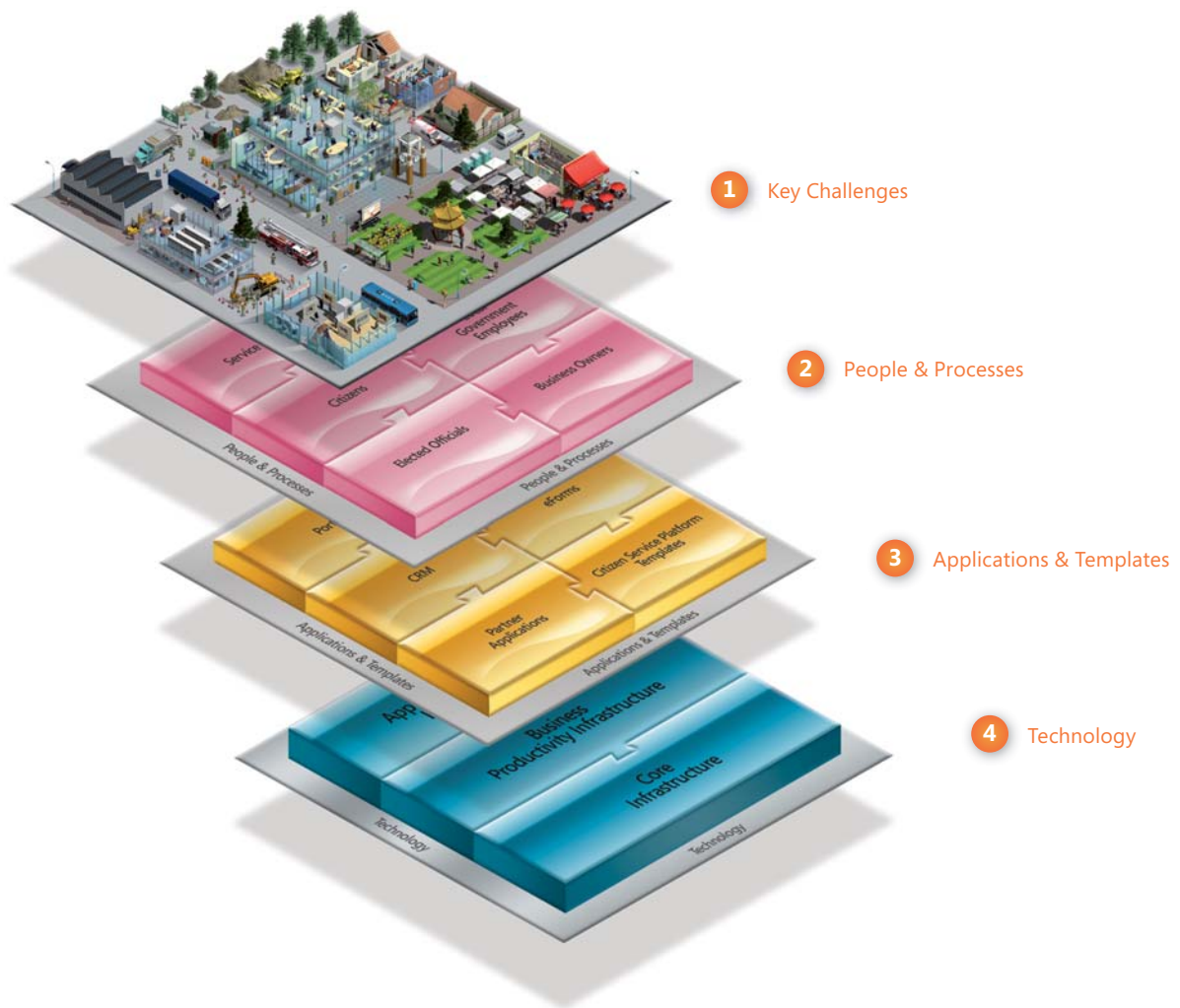
The world is changing rapidly, and the demands on governments to respond have never been greater. Macro issues such as global warming, political instability, volatile financial markets, and changing demographics are putting increased pressure on national governments to be much more proactive in the management of resources and the development of strategic policies.

Globalization has amplified these tensions as government agencies often struggle to respond to the rapid movements of jobs, skills, and people. The most successful government agencies are able to recognize the power of technology and to focus on implementing business solutions that solve real-world problems.



Source: Gartner maturity model + Capgemini Consulting EU e-government benchmarking, 2006

## Architecture Reference Model for a Local Government organisation



### Translating Business Challenges into Technology Solutions— The Four-Layer Model

Microsoft has developed a conceptual four-layer model for mapping the business challenges facing local governments and the technology solutions to address these challenges. The diagram above summarizes the model.

The top level identifies the business challenges; to respond to each challenge requires an understanding of the people and processes that are affected on Layer 2, and the capabilities of the applications and technologies that support these are shown in Layers 3 and 4 respectively.

Defining the technology architecture for a local government is a challenge in considering the

advantages of immediately available packaged software, while at the same time creating a flexible future oriented platform, and also with the opportunity of using new web services to create the right combination.

As this Software + Services combination is adopted into an organization's architecture, the boundaries between services and applications become blurred. Ultimately, an inflection point is reached where applications can be leveraged across agencies and internal and external partners, improving execution of business processes and optimizing service delivery. The aim of this paper is to guide our customers' thinking through this journey.

# 1: Key Challenges



The top layer of the model considers the key challenges that most local governments face. These are cross-cutting issues that slice through services and structures. These issues challenge the chief executives and policy makers and cascade down and across the organization.

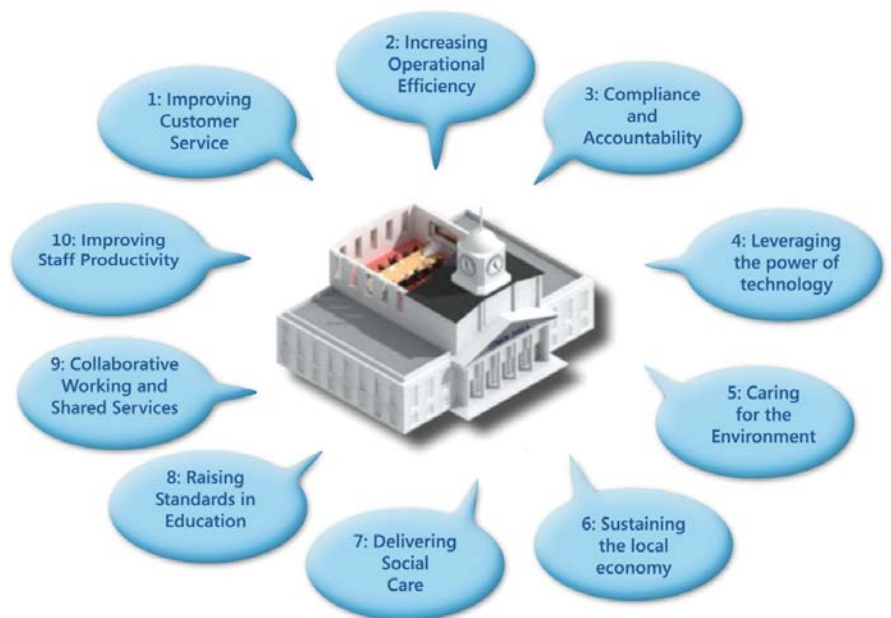
Microsoft engaged local government experts to survey the market and provide baseline requirements definitions. From this work, ten common key challenges were identified that local governments face worldwide as shown in the diagram below.

What is interesting is that while local governments worldwide operate in different cultural contexts and scale, the following challenges arise consistently in spite of these differences.

Every citizen wants to get better quality lower cost services. Every politician wants to see statutory compliance obligations met. All civil servants want to work with the best tools, having one accurate picture of up to date information and to make decisions without taking risks.

There is however a much wider variation in the way the challenges are delivered and this is where the four layer model attempts to identify opportunities for rationalisation and efficiency gains by sharing common technology components where possible.

For example many of the services which are required to address the Key Challenges are delivered by closed technology legacy applications that often cause many duplications of the same processes to be created, incurring inefficiencies and errors in operations. 'It's a bit like running a restaurant with a separate cooker for each table, as opposed to sharing a common kitchen', as one of our commentators said.



Challenges for Local Governments

## 1. Improving Customer (Citizen and Business) Service Delivery

Every council is under pressure to deliver better service to the community without increasing costs. Citizens and businesses want greater access to government information and services with simpler processes, less paperwork, and more efficient interactions.

### Câmara Municipal de Abrantes (Portugal)

*Abrantes in Portugal has worked with Unisys to reduce the number of visits for a service request and cut the average time it takes to process a citizen transaction by 50%.*

## 2. Increasing Operational Efficiency

Across the developed world, an ever-aging population is placing increasing demands on public services, while at the same time a decreasing proportion of the population is working and paying taxes.

### City of Camden (New Jersey)

*City officials worked with Microsoft and Infusion Development as strategic partners and created the concept for the Camden Success Project.*

## 3. Improving Compliance and Accountability

Compliance and accountability are essentially about showing what money has been received, how it has been used to deliver agreed-upon services, and who is accountable for the delivery and performance of services.

### California Department of Corporations (U.S.)

*As part of a state initiative to use IT to make state offices more responsive to the public, the Department implemented a CRM solution using Microsoft Dynamics.*

## 4. Leveraging the Power of Technology

A key initiative of many local governments is to rationalize their IT so that they have a seamless, integrated, and secure environment that lets them deploy resources more efficiently while being easy to manage.

### Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (U.K.)

*After several years of experience in publishing information online, London's Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) installed an online publication platform based on Microsoft Office SharePoint® Portal Server.*

## 5. Caring for the Environment

IT can make a significant contribution for a more sustainable, "greener" approach which can help address the major environmental challenges facing the world today. Local government is at the forefront in this struggle having to consider key issues such as transportation, waste management and the potential impact of climate change on the local environment and security of its citizens.

### National Park Authority (U.K.)

*With the help of Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Silversands, the Broads Authority implemented an intranet based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003 to help them reduce their dependency on paper-based processes.*

## 6. Sustaining the Local Economy

Today, most local governments share a similar vision. They want "sustainable communities" that support local businesses, maintain local employment, and provide support to the local workforce through affordable housing, social care, and education.

### Algarve Digital Project (Portugal)

*Managed by Globalgarve, a public-private regional economic development agency, the Algarve Digital project was launched to provide online tourism and public administration services in the Algarve region of Portugal.*

## 7. Delivering Social Care

In most parts of the developed world, an aging population is placing increasing demands on public services. In other parts of the world, expanding populations are expecting better public services and putting local governments under pressure to deliver better-quality services with static or diminishing budgets.

### Multi-agency Cooperation with Statutory Partners (U.K.)

*Cambridgeshire County Council and the London boroughs of Islington and Lewisham are early adopters of the multi-agency working recommended by the U.K. government.*

## 8. Raising Standards in Education

Education is far wider than schools; it encompasses all aspects of lifelong learning and development. It includes ensuring that local residents have the skills and knowledge they need for continuing education and employment.

### Sardinian Ministry of Education (Italy)

*The Sardinian Ministry of Education wanted to implement a technology infrastructure that could better support communication among the region's 600 schools.*

## 9. Working Collaboratively and Taking Advantage of Shared Services

Public service bodies are increasingly collaborating to provide services to their citizens and service users.

### Association of Municipalities of the District of Évora (Portugal)

*The Association of Municipalities of the District of Évora (AMDE), in partnership with the Regional Development Agency of Alentejo, the University of Évora, and the Évora City Council, is leading the Évora Digital District Project to help grow the regional knowledge economy and to bring its 14 associate municipalities and tourism industry into the information age.*

## 10. Improving Staff Productivity

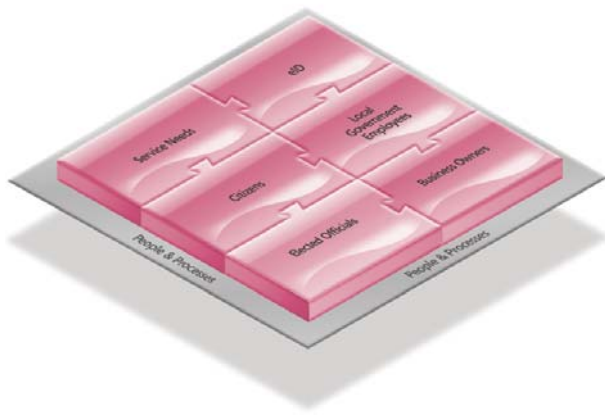
Local governments have historically labored with poor ICT tools and facilities for productivity and collaboration.

### Lewisham (U.K.)

*The London Borough of Lewisham has enhanced the productivity of its staff and the quality of service to its housing tenants by deploying a sophisticated mobility strategy.*

More details on all these case studies and others are available at [www.microsoft.com/csp](http://www.microsoft.com/csp)

## 2: People and Processes



### The People-Ready Vision for Local Government

Local governments do not serve citizens, control costs, balance budgets, or achieve operational excellence. People do these things, and organizations excel when they empower their people.

Microsoft has conducted deep research into the trends affecting the future of work, and it believes that people are the most important asset in helping organizations to meet the challenges of the future and to take advantage of opportunities. Unfortunately, most organizations use different systems for making decisions about investing in people and systems, at different levels and at different times. Microsoft believes that a “people-ready organization” ensures that its investments in both systems and in people reinforce the goals of the organization.

Working with the Keystone Research Group to understand the correlation between IT investments and the priorities of organizations, Microsoft found the four capabilities which were shown in this diagram were highly important to a majority of firms and highly dependent on IT investments for their success.

Successful organizations exhibit strong core competencies in these areas. While this research is based on commercial organizations, it is interesting to map the need for these competencies against the key challenges facing local governments.

While the correlation is not absolute, it is clear that these core competencies map across the needs of

local governments, particularly in the areas of citizen connection, operational efficiency, and improving staff productivity. They connect to the “people-ready” technology choices discussed in later sections of this paper.

Research shows companies that invest in software as a strategic asset for their people perform better. It also stands to reason that business solutions engineered to meet customer needs, and to anticipate changes in the social, economic, and political drivers of the world, deliver more value to organizations than software developed by whim or committee.

Our vision for people-ready local government allows people to drive the key tasks that make local government work and enable it to deliver high-quality, value-for-money services to its citizens. This is not as simple as deploying software to employees. A people-ready local authority must recognize the relationship between its goals and the systems, practices, and people that drive toward those goals. It must provide its people with the software that takes



into account their practices and methods, and it must prepare those people to take advantage of the technology at their disposal.

The government ecosystem consists of many users with unique needs for information and access to applications. Local

governments are typically the “face” of government to most citizens, providing access to services delivered directly in a local context.

In some countries, local governments are responsible for delivering services on behalf of regional or national authorities in addition to the services within their geographic or organizational domain. Designing business solutions for local government that are intended to serve thousands or millions of people is a significant challenge.

One way in which Microsoft and its partners have responded to this challenge is to use ethnography (the study of people in their natural settings) to better understand the needs of users. Microsoft has developed the concept of personas, or representative users, to develop real-world solutions, manage services, and respond to business challenges.

## Service Needs

Each of the key personas in the local government context requires their own view of information and services provided by government and service delivery partners. Focusing on the common personas in the local government context allows for clear definition of the interaction mode for each of the following:

### 1: Citizens

- Are the primary recipients of local government services
- Participate in the selection of elected officials
- May have multiple roles within the government context (e.g., business owners, local government officers, customers, parking offenders, and applicants for permits)
- Participate in politically important communities

### 2: Elected officials

- Are elected by the citizens of a local government constituency
- Are the figurehead of the municipality or region
- Are held responsible for political environment

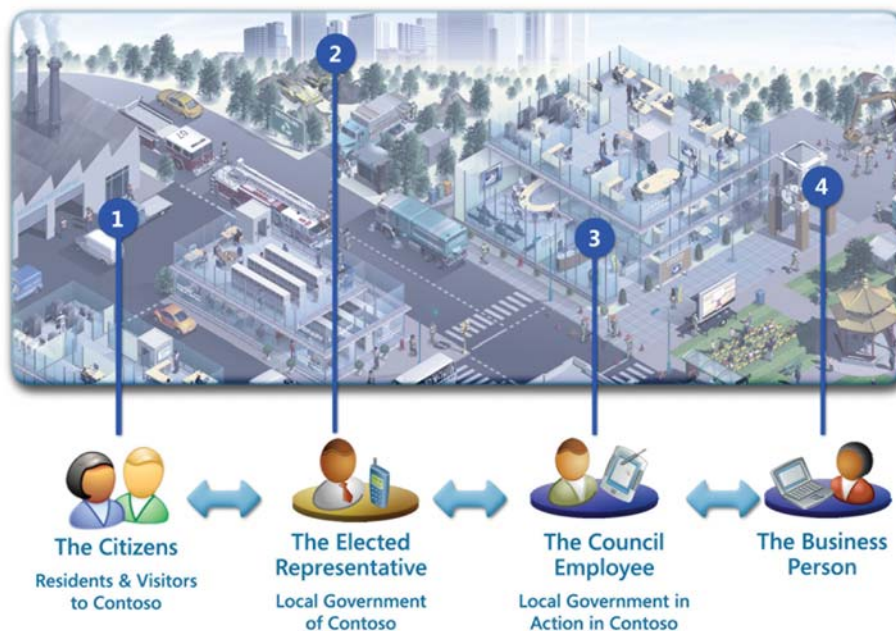
- Are the government leaders and are ultimately responsible for proper function of the local government

### 3: Local government employees

- Carry out the business of government
- May interact directly with citizens and businesses
- May have roles that cross government agencies
- Are accountable to elected officials

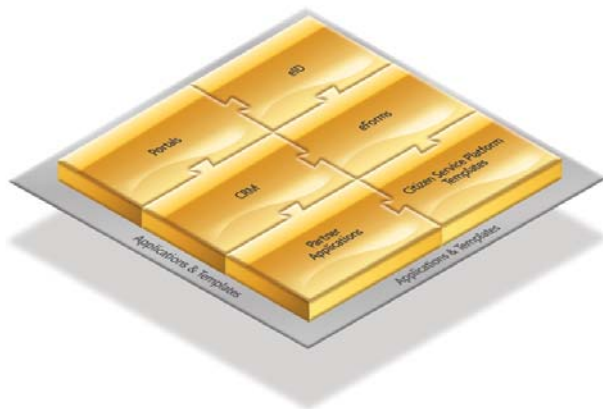
### 4: Business owners

- Generate valuable economic activity
- May pay local business taxes
- May contribute to the political process
- Participate in public-private partnerships



Local Government Relationships

## 3: Applications & Templates



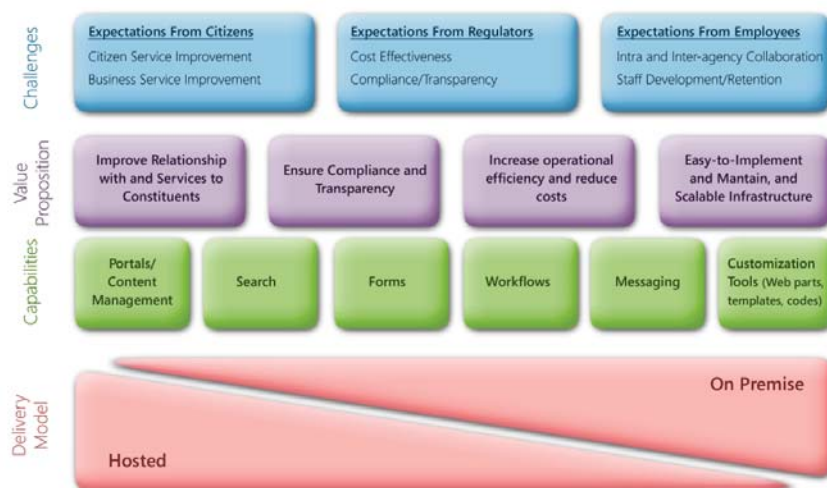
### Requirements for the Citizen Service Platform

So far, we have looked at the business challenges, people and processes that typically must be provided by local governments. This section explores the underlying application components that local governments require to implement such services, which is what Microsoft refers to as the **Citizen Service Platform**.

Microsoft commissioned Capgemini to research the capabilities needed and has come up with the generic architecture model illustrated at the top of the opposite page.

This shows that a number of key capabilities were needed to support the services and also that a significant number of customers wanted to have the option of running with a hosted or partially hosted solution either onsite or remotely operated.

- **Communication applications:** Application enabling an agency's employees to receive and send e-mail, to manage calendars, and to communicate in real-time.
- **Search:** Functionalities for desktop and Internet content search.
- **Citizen portal:** A Web site that provides search capabilities, links to other Internet resources, and functionalities for personalizing information and services pages for citizens and businesses
- **Interactive forms:** Services application forms that citizens and businesses can fill out and submit online
- **Geographical information systems (GIS):** Tools for cartographic data entry, mapping/spatial query, and visualization of maps
- **Intranet portal:** Provides staff with an integrated view of information across an organization with single sign-on to Web-based applications
- **Web space:** Personalized Web pages where citizens can create and post their own content and create their own e-mail accounts
- **Citizen contact center (citizen relationship management):** The ability to provide multichannel access (phone, Web, e-mail, and instant messaging) to the information and services of a government agency and to integrate with case management
- **Case management:** Functionalities that, in response to internal or external event triggers, enable government employees to set up workflows to assess, plan, perform, monitor, and evaluate the options and services required by constituents
- **Document and record management:** Applications that enable gathering and feeding of documents and other media into collections, formatting and conversion, organizing and maintaining information, and managing user access and editing rights
- **Electronic procurement:** E-commerce solutions with e-catalogs and e-marketplace functions that enable online ordering, payment, and tendering functions for managing the entire tendering call, negotiation, and award
- **Dashboards/balanced scorecards:** Applications designed to measure, analyze, and optimize financial and operational performance management processes using predefined key performance indicators
- **Financial Management/Reporting:** ERP and Financial Applications enable governments to manage resources and finances effectively and responsibly through accurate and transparent accounting practices and reporting.



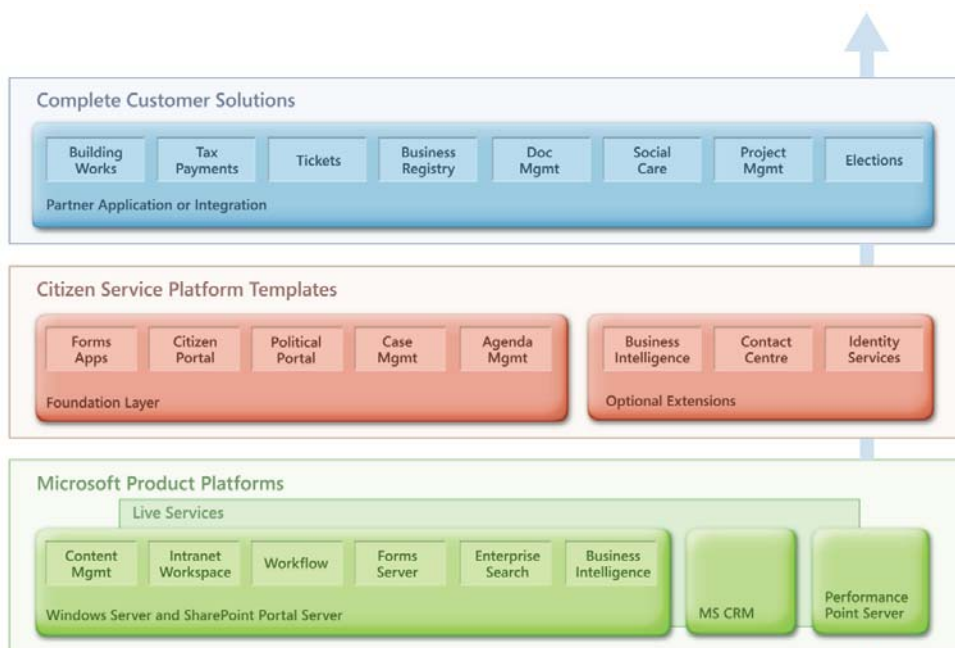
Generic Architecture Model

## Design of the Citizen Service Platform

In considering the design of a generic solutions to meet these needs Microsoft has architected the **Citizen Service Platform** in the following structure shown below in the **Citizen Service Platform Design**.

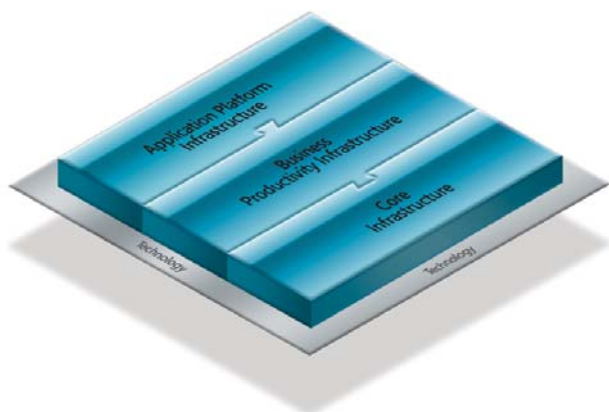
This builds upon the foundations mentioned before, and then provides a set of local government specific templates that can be deployed or customised into a complete solution. These templates take advantage of the core infrastructure platforms, and also provide templates based around Microsoft Office SharePoint Server and Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Some capabilities are provided by standard products and therefore need no further customisation.

Additionally Microsoft partners can provide a wide range of applications which extend the capability of the **Citizen Service Platform** to provide more specialized functionality to meet very specific local government requirements. They can also integrate your existing applications to provide greater efficiencies by enabling processes to be automated from end to end and by providing your users with easy and familiar Microsoft front-end interfaces such as Office, Outlook and SharePoint.



Citizen Service Platform Design

## 4: Technology



### Transformational Government depends on Optimised IT Infrastructure

To support the drive to transform government and enable it to be more citizen-centric it is important for local governments to ensure that their IT investments are really performing cost-effectively for them. Microsoft has developed a model for ensuring this called Infrastructure Optimisation. This model is explained in much more depth elsewhere but a brief explanation is provided here. It separates infrastructure into three key elements : Core Infrastructure, Business Productivity Infrastructure and Application Platform Infrastructure.

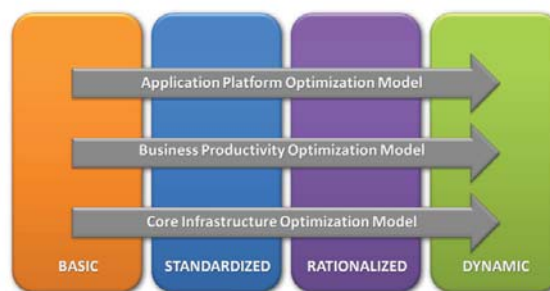
The **Core Infrastructure** optimization model helps customers understand and strive for a more secure, well-managed, and dynamic core IT infrastructure that will help enable them to reduce their overall IT costs, make better use of IT resources, and make IT a strategic asset for the organization. The key challenge in this area is to support IT professionals in the management of servers, desktops, mobile devices, and applications and in achieving efficient resource usage to help local government eliminate unnecessary cost and complexity, ensure that their organization is always up and running, and establish a responsive infrastructure. As an example the City of Edinburgh, by upgrading its Core Infrastructure, generated taxpayer returns of some £15 (\$30) per citizen.

The **Business Productivity Infrastructure** optimization model is a complete set of technologies that helps streamline the

management and control of content, data, and processes across all areas of a local government organization. It helps simplify how people work together, make processes and content management more efficient, and improve the quality of business insight while enabling IT to increase responsiveness and have a strategic impact on the organization.

The **Application Platform Infrastructure** optimization model enables Microsoft and its partners to provide IT organizations with a tool to help them understand and adopt a more flexible and agile application platform. The Microsoft application platform enables IT to help drive the organization forward by quickly delivering connected, flexible and highly secure applications.

Within each of these three areas Microsoft has developed a benchmarking methodology that enables organizations to assess what level of maturity and optimization they have achieved as shown in the diagram below, and what further benefits could be achieved if they were to move up to a higher level.



The Microsoft Citizen Service Platform can start to help you no matter what level your infrastructure is currently running on, however to help you get the most out of your IT investments long term we would recommend that you ask Microsoft and its partners to help you understand how this model can be used to help support improvements in your organization's delivery of IT-based citizen services.

## Microsoft Citizen Service Platform Building Blocks

Microsoft has investigated the needs of governments in multiple dimensions to understand how to best compose products and templates and address the business needs of local government customers. The **Citizen Service Platform** can accommodate the varying levels of size and maturity of local government organizations.

- Very small local government agencies with limited technology resources
- Small local government agencies with a focus on internal optimization of processes and limited citizen interaction
- Larger local government agencies with needs spanning complex challenges, technology capabilities, and rich business processes

For all of these scenarios, common sets of presentation components, technology capabilities, and business templates have been defined. The appropriate Microsoft products are shown below in the context of the maturity and services model outlined above. These can be considered the “building blocks” upon which the application services templates are added to create real solutions. A key foundation layer is the provision of infrastructure for core technology, business productivity, and applications. Microsoft working with a wide variety of partners can use these “building blocks” to meet the needs of different sizes of local government organizations and agencies.

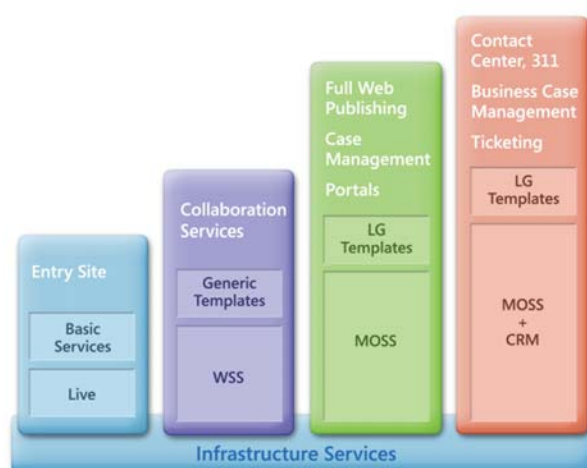
Shown on the right are the core building blocks from Microsoft and how they support local government services. In order from left to right:

**1. Windows Live and Office Live**, are general purpose web based services that can enable a basic level of functionality and do not require an onsite installation to get a basic government website up and running.

**2.. Windows SharePoint Services** (WSS is included with Windows Server), this requires an onsite installation of Windows Server but allows greater flexibility in the design of services. Also provided by Microsoft are a set of generic templates for organizational collaboration and common business processes.

**3. Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS)** is the next step up in collaboration and web publishing capability and where the majority of the Citizen Service Platform templates are published. These were described earlier and include web publishing, case management and document management. Microsoft partners can provide a wide variety of applications that will integrate with MOSS to extend the functionality while continuing to provide the familiar easy to use Microsoft interface.

**4. Microsoft Customer Relationship Management Server** (MS Dynamics CRM) provides specific support for citizen record access, contact centre support and flexible case management. In combination with MOSS they can provide a rich platform for further customisation and advanced application scenarios which can be provided by Microsoft partners.



Citizen Service Platform Technologies



## Conclusion

No matter what size of government organization you work with the **Citizen Service Platform** can help take the strain from your IT delivery systems and alleviate your current cost pressures while providing a better interface for citizens with all facets of your organization.

In reality Microsoft believes that the **Citizen Service Platform** is able to be configured to meet the unique requirements of many thousands of local government organizations worldwide. The "building blocks" we discussed earlier are provided to help make it quicker and easier for you to get started than trying to figure out how from scratch how to configure the multiple Microsoft products, templates and partner applications by yourself.

However we don't expect you to try and do this all on your own and we'd like to offer you some assistance. We have dedicated public sector teams and partners in place around the world and we'd like to work with you to help configure the **Citizen Service Platform** to exactly meet the needs of your people.

Please email your contact details to [csp@microsoft.com](mailto:csp@microsoft.com) and we'll be happy to get in touch with you to progress your interest in the CSP.

Many countries will be holding **Citizen Service Platform** seminars starting from April 2008. To see the schedule for these please go to [www.microsoft.com/csp](http://www.microsoft.com/csp). This website also provides many additional resources which can help you more fully understand how the Citizen Service Platform is being used by governments worldwide and how it can help you in your organisation.





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