Appendix

EMSS Strategic Plan 2026 -2030

Strategic Aim

- To ensure that EMSS are a centre of excellence able to provide advice as well as a solid transactional services business.
- To grow and expand the service internally with existing partners and externally with potential new clients in the longer term.
- To maintain a drive for continuous improvement, demonstrate where possible EMSS can add value, streamline processes to deliver a professional service whilst delivering cost savings and efficiencies.
- Present Invest to save opportunities, that do not compromise the service quality, utilising A.I where appropriate to automate and streamline manual processes.
- Develop a self-service culture that enhances customer, supplier and partner experience.
- Maintain a productive and friendly team culture that sees everyone engaged and invested in council values and the EMSS brand of encouraging continuous improvement and welcome contribution from all staff.
- To add value and provide visibility of performance via reporting and data analysis.

People:

- To ensure EMSS are a credible and reliable source of support with multi skilled workers, remove single points of failure.
- To develop the teams allowing them to grow and develop personally and professionally.
- Identify training needs and performance issues and ensure they are managed accordingly.
- Create a structured succession plan for those looking to progress.
- Ensure that regular one to ones are conducted by line managers, not only to keep performance and morale on track but also identify potential skillsets or ambitions not being utilised, opening up the door for training and progression where possible. Frequency should be at least monthly but may be required more frequently where extra support or performance management is required.
- Ensure that sickness and absence levels are managed accordingly with support plans in place where required.
- Engage with Apprenticeship and Kickstart programs to employ and develop apprentices where appropriate.
- Promote and encourage use of the Learning hub for additional training across the teams.
- Promote contribution to new ideas from the EMSS team.
- Ensure expectation and accountability are in place.
- Promote the Councils policies on Equality and Diversity.

Activities to support Objectives:

- Regular updates to all staff ensuring they are fully aware of all current projects and future plans by means of daily Huddles, weekly management meetings, Staff briefings and project updates.
- Current projects have shown the value of ensuring the people who are close to the detail have a say in how EMSS can improve processes, as such, these people are involved in all relevant implementation projects.
- Encourage the team to contribute to our continuous drive for efficiency and improvement by creating an ideas board where they can be part of the bigger picture and feel included in the development and expansion of the service.
- Ensure that staff have an outlet to air suggestions and concerns and ensure that they are heard and responded to. As well as one to ones and daily team huddles where staff are encouraged to report any concerns regarding work or wellbeing.
- Ensure that team expectations are made clear and that performance is measurable, creating both accountability and increased job satisfaction.
- Utilising the FTE analysis to demonstrate the average and acceptable output levels required from each person.
- Ensure all processes are clearly mapped with specifically defined via Oracle Guided Learning to ensure all processes are followed to the same high quality by all. This also allows EMSS to identify any gaps in the process and demonstrate a clear end to end journey where risks and exposure can be satisfied on request.
- Regular meetings with team managers to ensure that the tone, expectation is consistent.
- Circulation of wellbeing services to ensure staff are aware of all support offered.
- Regular review of SLA and service performance.
- Utilise reporting to understand blockages and or service success.
- Ensure processes are documented and change boards correctly record any changes.
- Appropriate learning and development to meet business needs such as appropriate leadership training, performance management, service non negotiables and team culture.

Projects

2026 Ongoing projects due for completion in 2026

- Performance metrics and Local Authority Benchmarking Club
- Improved Performance Reporting – KPI Packs via FDI.
- Caseware replacement (identifies duplicate and erroneous supplier payments)
- Seeded Payroll & Pension reporting (maximising Fusion functionality)
- Official written process to solidify the salary overpayment recovery process

2026 – 2030

- Scope additional debt recovery service provision within NCC
- Explore new Commercial opportunities
- Explore Kefron functionality for supplier credit note processing.
- Explore A.I to improve overall Finance and Payroll functionality, address some Oracle functionality.
- Be on standby to complete Redwood deadlines for additional modules not yet announced – (Oracle system update, look and feel)
- Customer self-serve Portal Review and business case. (Customers to obtain copy invoices, make payments and obtain statement of account via self serve)
- Electronic customer statements (Debt collection efficiency)
- Proposed business case for Credit Risk team
- Engage and prepare to support LGR for both partners
- Reduce FSC Phonelines, move to online / self-service/ AI BOT
- Business Development Growth, expand internal knowledge and resource for in house system change delivery.
- AR Payment up front options
- Extend HR triage to LCC – ESC
- Ensure service providers and contract renewals are completed following the correct procurement processes.
- Improved Payroll report checking.
- Business case for internal Credit Risk team.

Customers:

- Ensure that professional guidance on all processes are readily available.
- Encourage self-serve culture by utilising tools available in Freshdesk such as the EMSS FAQ guidance portal.
- Ensure that our teams provide a standard of service that is professional and fit for purpose
- Ensure that regular account meetings are held with Partners to provide visibility of all relevant activities and performance.
- Ensure that Service Area relationships are developed and maintained to improve relevant processes and results.
- Ensure that KPI data provides a clear indication of performance, highlights areas that require service area escalation and demonstrates that EMSS are adding value as a service provider.

Technology:

- Ensure that Quarterly system updates are managed and have a finance representative for each area to ensure any changes created by systems update are captured and communicated.
- Ensure that there is a dedicated FOG representative.
- Utilise and build relationships with experts in the Business Support team to ensure systems expertise and reporting experts are utilised.

- Expand internal system support team to increase the number of change requests delivered in house.
- Ensure contractual obligations are met from system and support provider

EMSS try to ensure that all projects include the use of technology where possible and relevant, so that each change can create efficiency. Current projects utilise the relevant technology ensuring that we do not simply swap one data processing process for another, but that we drive forward improvements with every change.

Finance

- Ensure that budget setting and monitoring processes are followed and kept up to date.
- Maintain and monitor costs and use budget overview to drive decisions on cost savings.
- Identify opportunities to take on more work which will help relieve Partner resources.
- Potential opportunities to obtain external clients to create an income for EMSS in the longer term.

Challenges

- **System Downtime**: Occasional downtimes of the ERP and other critical systems such as Controc LAS and ASC Direct Payment systems can disrupt workflow and reduce overall productivity. Although this is considered relatively low risk.

- **Resource Allocation**: Inefficient allocation of resources sometimes results in bottlenecks and delays in service delivery, particularly when there are competing priorities and or spikes in volume.

- **Change Management**: Resistance to change among staff can slow the adoption of new processes and technologies, impacting overall efficiency. This resistance can exist across service departments as well as within EMSS itself. Without the correct level of engagement, projects could be slower to progress.

- **Financial Constraints**: Budget limitations can restrict the ability to invest in new technologies and training programs, which are essential for continuous improvement.

- **Compliance and Regulatory Requirements**: Keeping up with evolving legal and regulatory requirements, such as data protection laws and financial regulations, can be challenging and resource intensive. EMSS will utilise. Information Governance, procurement and legal departments to ensure all statutory and legal requirements are covered. Being bound by Local government policy on things like absence and performance management can make for very difficult long winded processes.

- **Stakeholder Expectations**: Meeting the high expectations of stakeholders for quality and value-for-money services requires continuous improvement and innovation is an expected, but constant pressure.
- **Technological Advancements**: Rapid advancements in technology necessitate ongoing investment and adaptation, which can be difficult to manage within existing budgets and resource constraints.

- **Data Security**: Ensuring the security and privacy of sensitive financial and personal data is a constant challenge, especially with increasing cyber threats. Regular system health checks are in place as well as a review of the EMSS Business continuity plan.

- **Integration of Systems**: Achieving seamless integration between different financial and HR systems to ensure accurate and efficient data flow can be complex and time-consuming.

Strategic Principals

- **System Integration**: Maximise core system functionality.

- **Enhanced Collaboration**: Strengthen partnerships with other local authorities and public sector organizations to share best practices and resources.

- **Technological Advancements**: Invest in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to further automate processes and enhance service delivery.

- **Expansion of Services**: Explore opportunities to expand the range of services offered to include additional transactional and advisory services.

- **Continuous Improvement**: maintain a culture of continuous improvement through regular training, feedback, and performance reviews to ensure high standards of service.

- **Automation**: continue to investigate opportunities for processes that can implement Robotic Process Automation (RPA) for routine financial tasks

- **Sustainability Initiatives**: Implement green practices and technologies to reduce the environmental impact of operations.

- **Training**: develop comprehensive training focussed on new technologies and process improvements to ‘grow our own’ experts reducing the reliance on external providers.

- **Change Management**: implement change through regular communication, training, and support to help staff adapt to new processes, policies and advancing technology.

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