



Could your organisation benefit from an options appraisal?

Getting a 360° perspective on your organisation can be invaluable in identifying what's working, what's not, and what to do about it. It's particularly crucial when existing contract or other delivery arrangements are due to come to an end, in order to formulate your future strategy. We've recently performed options appraisals for Moat Housing, a housing group based in the south of England and Scottish provider Irvine Housing Association and been retained by both to support the implementation of arising recommendations.



So what does it involve? When echelon is asked to perform an options appraisal we go into an organisation and absorb as much information as we can, both quantitative and qualitative.

Every aspect of the service is analysed, from current cost base to how rigorous the performance management regime is and how well the service is performing against the targets set. We interrogate live data and benchmark it against comparable live projects that we're working on. Using real time field data rather than theoretical projections gives us a much more comprehensive picture of the organisation and its performance, and echelon has a substantial database across multiple different clients and workstreams.

In terms of qualitative assessment, we encourage organisations to let us talk to their stakeholders on a 1:1 basis. How do your exec team, your finance and IT departments feel the service is currently delivered? How do you think things are working now and what would like to see being done differently and better into the future? We also like to talk to the incumbent service providers and engage with residents on how the service is delivered as this really does provide the 360° view.

After that first stage of information gathering, we then play findings back to the client in multi-stakeholder workshops focused around the organisation's objectives and key priorities. Once the client is comfortable and has discussed the assessment, the next step is to discuss options going forward. Sometimes the recommendation is to renew existing contracts but more usually multiple options for improvement are reduced to two or three that will work for the organisation in terms of matching its corporate and performance objectives. Some organisations want complete control, in which case a self-managed option would work and some are risk averse and want the support of an external resource.

Models are chosen for the client based on their key objectives and culture. Once appropriate models have been identified, then clients are shown the benefits of each model through comparison against live case studies. We also help

facilitate contact between the client and case study organisation so the client can learn more at first hand.

We also test the appetite and capacity of the client in terms of their internal organisation and structures in relation to the different delivery model options, for example is a DLO a non-starter, do they need to buy in extra resource and expertise, etc?

Our approach is detailed and the support we can offer is wide-ranging. We have in-house IT, commercial and operational delivery expertise, both to undertake the options appraisal and, where needed, to offer interim support on the client side to free up its resources whilst the appraisal and facilitation of arising recommendations are underway. Engagement with stakeholders enables genuine buy-in and the result is that echelon has yet to perform an options appraisal for a client without its recommendations being implemented. More than 90% of organisations we work with on options appraisals retain us to support delivery of the outcomes. Is it something you can afford not to do?

To find out more contact us at
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"The engagement workshop facilitated by echelon was really refreshing and probably one of the most insightful and productive events I have been involved with in my 2 years at Moat"

Maria Jacobs, Head of Neighbourhoods, Moat Homes

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