



A CRM Deployment is Not the Complete Answer

Real transformation comes from connecting existing systems around residents





Overview

Many councils have invested heavily in CRM to create a single view of the resident and deliver joined-up services. Too often, the result is a better front door sitting on top of the same fragmented back office — leaving residents navigating silos and staff reconciling disconnected systems.

This article explains why CRM and traditional workflow tools, on their own, rarely solve fragmentation. It reveals how focusing on a single “master record” or digitising departmental processes tends to reinforce silos rather than remove them.

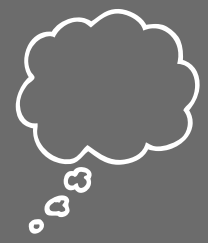
It then introduces the Connected Council model: an identity-first approach that creates a shared Single Point of View of the resident and uses orchestration — supported by AI and digital workers — to coordinate activity across services. Instead of replacing existing systems, this approach connects them above the back office, enabling one resident interaction to trigger one coordinated response across the council.

Finally, the article reframes the transformation challenge for council leaders — away from buying another platform, and towards connecting what already exists around people rather than departments, starting small and proving value quickly.



Connected Council





The CRM Promise and the Reality for Councils

Many councils have invested heavily in CRM to create a single view of the resident and deliver joined-up services. Too often, the result is a better front door sitting on top of the same fragmented back office — leaving residents navigating silos and staff reconciling disconnected systems.

This matters because silos are not harmless. When services are fragmented, residents experience the council as multiple organisations rather than one. They repeat their story, chase different teams, and endure delays that feel avoidable. Inside the council, staff spend large amounts of time re-checking information, re-keying data, and reconciling records that don't align.

Individual teams may look efficient, while the whole system remains wasteful.



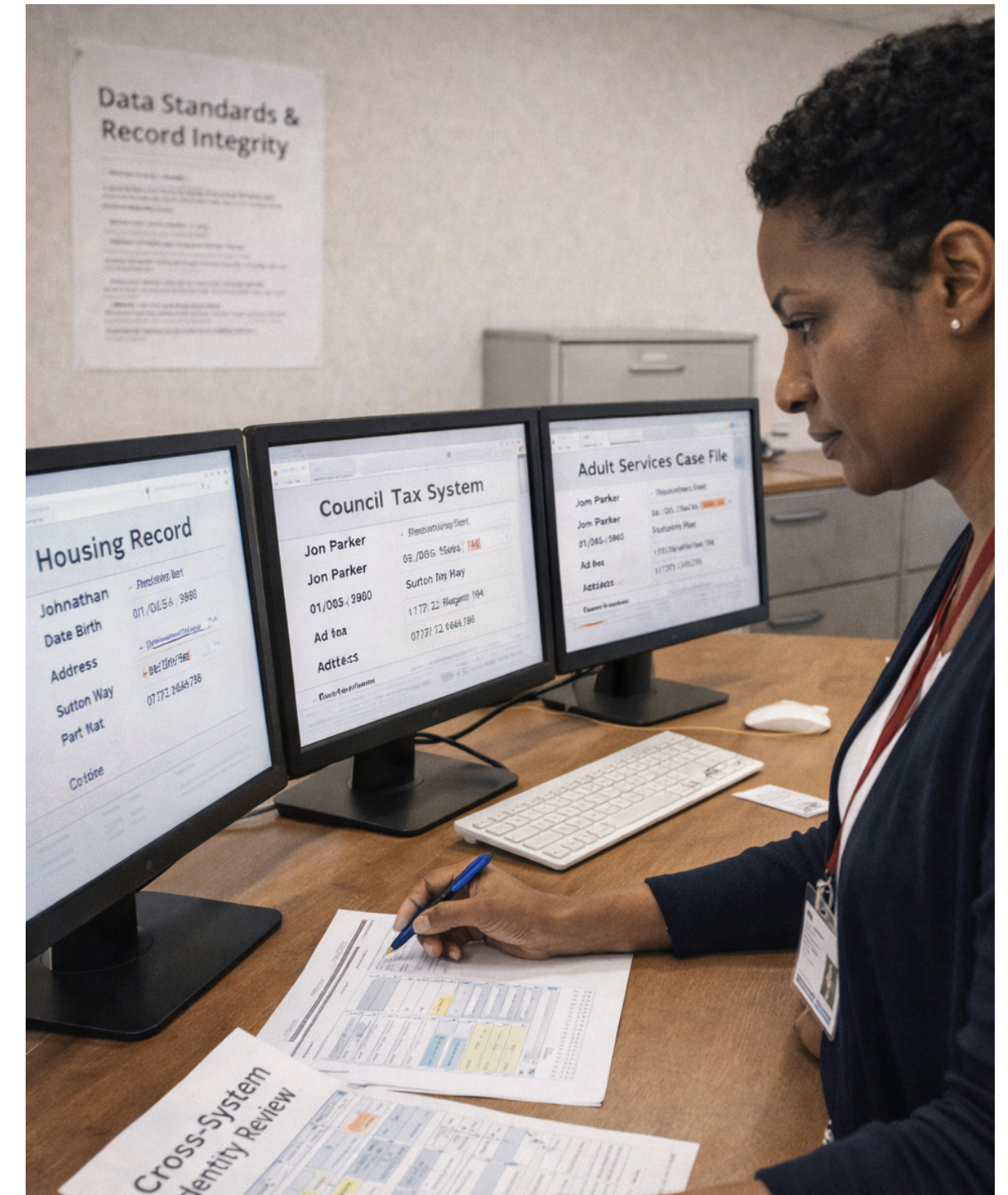
Why CRM and Work-flow Don't Remove Fragmentation

This isn't a problem with CRM as a product. It's a problem with how it has been used.

Most councils don't replace their core systems for housing, revenues, benefits, planning, or social care. CRM becomes a new front door layered over the same fragmented back office. You get a nicer screen, but underneath, the silos are still there.

Many CRM programmes also chase a single "master record". In reality, councils already hold multiple records for the same person — created at different times, for different purposes, in different systems. Trying to force everything into one database often becomes a long, expensive data-cleansing exercise that slows delivery and creates resistance.

Traditional workflow tools fall into the same trap. They help teams manage their own work better, but each service still runs its own process. Workflow tends to make silos run faster — it doesn't connect them.



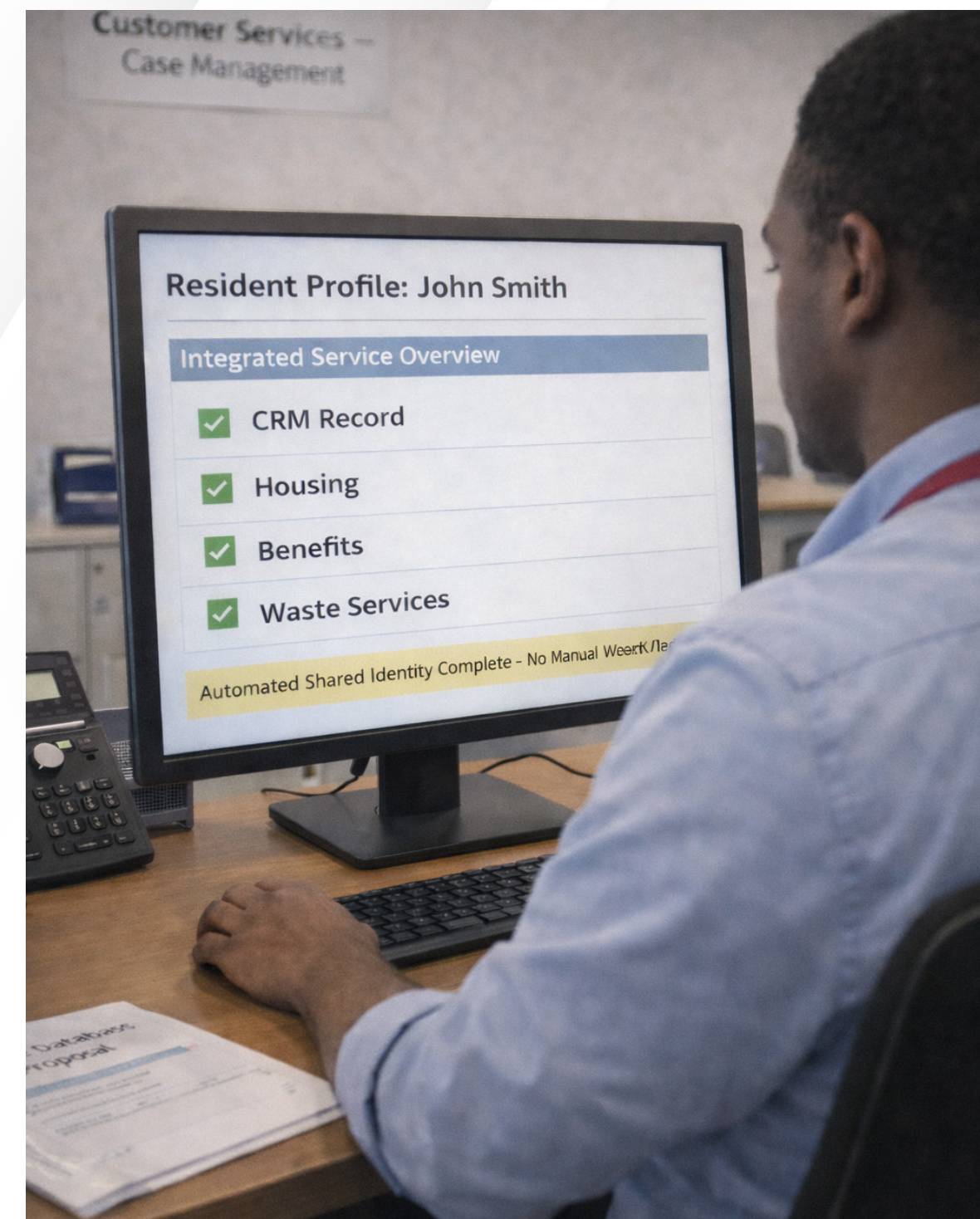
Introducing the Connected Council Model

A Connected Council starts from a different place.

Instead of trying to make one system fix fragmentation, it creates connection above systems.

At the centre is a Single Point of View of the resident held in an abstracted dataset — a shared reference layer for the whole council that relates records across services without forcing everything into one giant database or requiring mass data cleansing.

That view is anchored in a verified identity — the Golden Thread — which deliberately links people to the services they actually use. Once that exists, every channel works from the same trusted context.



Orchestration Across Services, Not Just Workflow

Above this sits orchestration, not just workflow.

When a resident contacts the council, AI interprets intent and context to gain a view of who they are and what services they are linked to. Orchestration then decides what should happen across the whole council, not just inside one department.

Digital workers carry out routine actions across multiple back-office systems — updating records, retrieving balances, and triggering downstream steps. Humans are brought in where judgement is needed, rather than being stuck copying data between systems.

So one resident request becomes one coordinated piece of work, instead of multiple disconnected tickets.

Take a simple change of address. In a siloed model, that usually triggers separate processes across services — often after multiple contacts. In a Connected Council model, one trusted signal cascades across systems.





Reframing Transformation and What to Do Next

Crucially, this does not replace line-of-business systems. It makes them work together properly.

If a council already has a CRM, it still has value as a front-line engagement and case system. It just shouldn't be treated as the engine that joins everything up — that role sits with identity, the Single Point of View, and orchestration.

That is why some councils can spend significant sums on CRM and still feel stuck: they have digitised their silos rather than connecting them.

The real question for leaders is not “which platform should we buy?”, but “how do we connect what we already own around people rather than departments?”

This is not a multi-year re-platforming exercise. Councils can start with a single high-impact journey and demonstrate measurable improvement within around 90 days.

~~Which platform should we buy?~~

How do we connect what we already own?



In Summary,

Councils have invested heavily in CRM to improve resident experiences, but too often this has digitised existing silos rather than connecting services, leaving residents and staff to manage fragmentation behind a better front door. The Connected Council model shifts the focus to identity, a shared Single Point of View, and orchestration above existing systems, enabling one resident interaction to trigger one coordinated response and allowing councils to prove value quickly without replacing what they already have.



Get in touch by sending Pete an email to learn more.
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Smarter together. Not harder apart.
www.oas.com/connected-council

