

The background of the slide is a photograph of a high-rise office interior. Large windows on the left and front offer a panoramic view of a city skyline at dusk or dawn. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, and the city lights are beginning to glow. The office interior shows parts of a ceiling with recessed lights and some furniture like a red chair and a white table in the foreground.

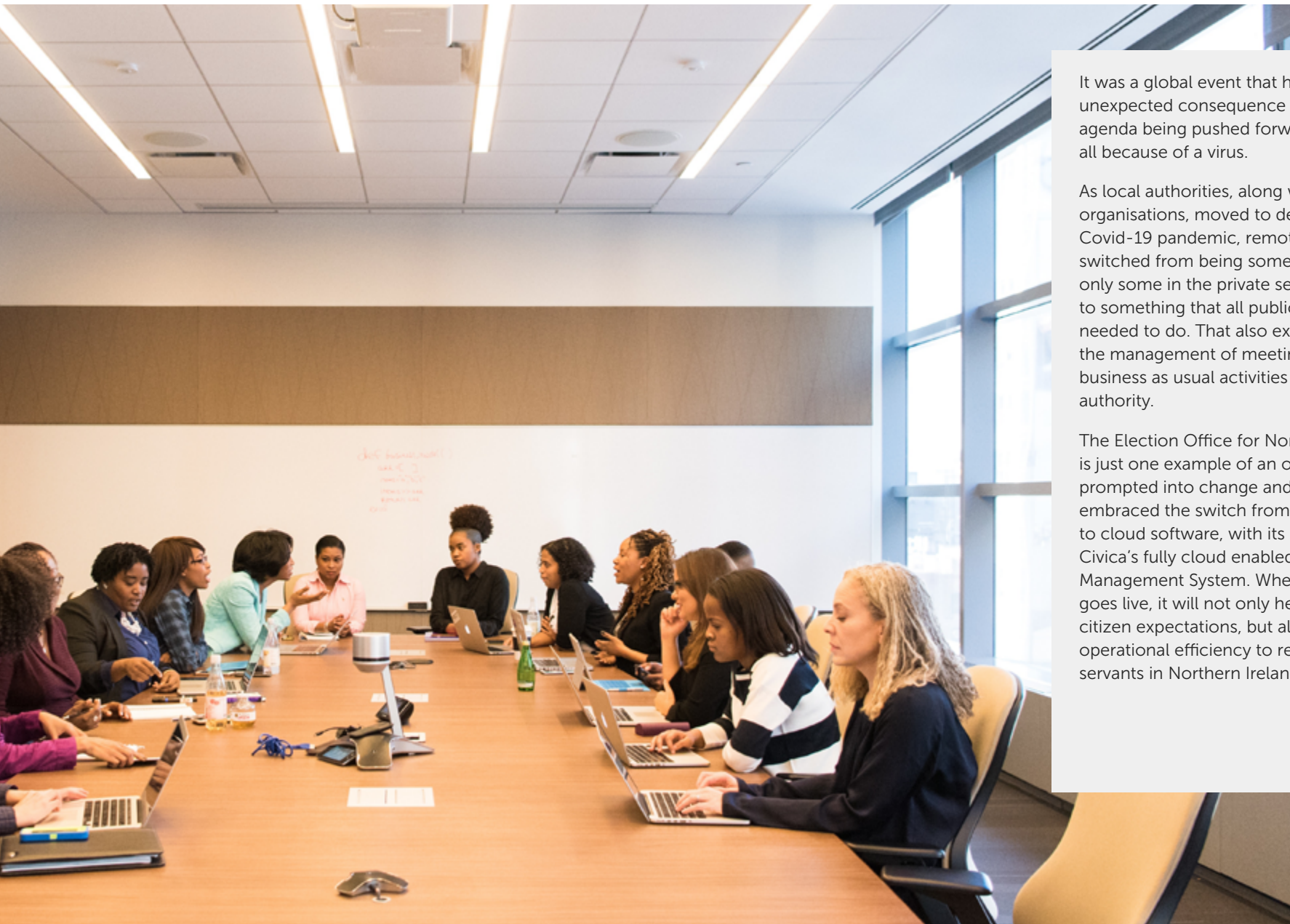
2021 Market Review Democracy and Governance

Building the smart software that
helps improve public services



Drawing on decades of experience, Civica supports hundreds of organisations, across a wide range of sectors, to engage their stakeholders and deliver secure, trusted voting projects. Over 70% of the UK's local authorities engage us to provide electoral registration services, paperless meetings and help them to administer local and general elections. We also work extensively with membership organisations, corporates, building societies and mutuals, NHS bodies and trade unions.

The way we see it



It was a global event that had an unexpected consequence – the digital agenda being pushed forward by 5 years, all because of a virus.

As local authorities, along with many organisations, moved to dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, remote working switched from being something that only some in the private sector did, to something that all public servants needed to do. That also extended to the management of meetings and other business as usual activities of a local authority.

The Election Office for Northern Ireland is just one example of an organisation prompted into change and who has embraced the switch from on-premises to cloud software, with its selection of Civica's fully cloud enabled Xpress Election Management System. When the system goes live, it will not only help address citizen expectations, but also deliver operational efficiency to relevant public servants in Northern Ireland.

Notwithstanding the need for the right empowering legislation in England, the demand for permanent mechanisms to allow a hybrid way of working and virtual delivery of formal meetings is clearly established. In Australia the NSW Office of Local Government has provided a Model Code of Meeting Practice that all council meetings should be available online for community engagement and a guide to webcasting and meeting management is also now [available](#). Both the public and officials have seen how 'online' could work – the genie is out of the bottle and can't be put back in. Originally focused on improving the paperwork side of meeting management in the public sector and with formal settings, Modern.Gov has adapted to suit this new hybrid world. With its usage of cloud technology, allowing access and operations from anywhere to anywhere, we expect to see greater demand for this sort of digitally-enabled solution as local authorities adapt in sync with the new working world. The merging of local authorities in various areas of the UK will only heighten this demand, as the new combined entities (with some of them quite large) seek to demonstrate modernity and immediate benefits from the merger.

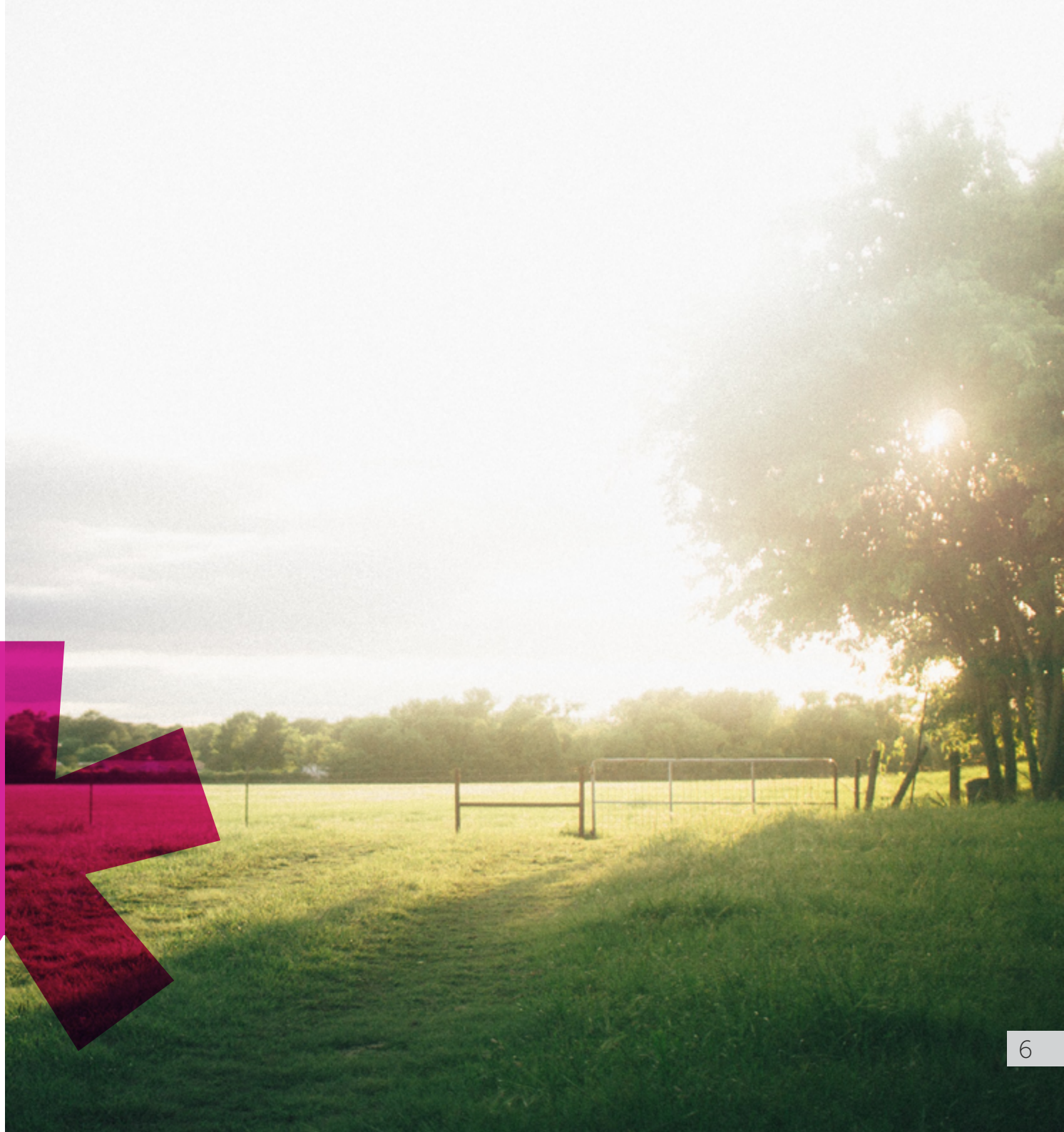





In Australia, this core paper-saving functionality of Modern.Gov has been utilised by Rous County Council (NSW). Prior to the implementation of Modern.Gov, staff needed to print 300+ page meeting documents, but now these can be delivered via the cloud instantly to all attendees both on premises and remote. The fully automated, cloud-based meeting management software solution has saved users vast amounts of time while providing greater transparency for all. Yarra Ranges Shire Council in regional Victoria has also signed up for Modern.Gov within the last year.

Although online voting in public elections has not been established yet, we see that as a logical next step as we embrace our new working world in a post-pandemic age. Trials through the armed forces or overseas voters may well be a start to test functionality and controls, but an online voting mechanism will come. This has the potential to drive up voter turnout as access is made easier for all and more in line with general consumer expectation. Civica's CESjoinIN and CESvotes platforms have been established with this future in mind, allowing both public and private organisations with meeting and voting requirements to operate within the hybrid and virtual world. Whilst we don't see an immediate decline in the traditional local authority voting mechanisms (14m poll cards, 3.1 million postal packs, 28 million polling station ballot papers delivered by Civica for the May 2021 UK elections), we do see more and more interest in reducing these traditional 'ink on paper' pieces and embracing online alternatives.

This sort of demand for change and improvement is also coming to the fore in other consumer and citizen interface areas – complaint handling and access to citizen information being key areas where we see the momentum building. There is growing demand from citizens and consumers for consistency and systematic approaches. Whether it be complaint handling, Freedom of Information requests (in the UK), or requests for details of data held about an individual, the demand for a higher standard of delivery is clear. Addressing this type of need, Civica APAC has secured a customer for the iCasework solution with GESB Superannuation fund in Western Australia, and also signed the International Education Agency of Papua New Guinea. Supporting this, we have continued to invest in our iCasework platform, to address what we see as a long term and a digitally-fuelled appetite from consumers and citizens.





// Digital transformation and delivery, has been given a shot in the arm by a global virus; not something many would have foreseen. An independent nudge is often needed to create change and this is what we have seen in the worlds of meetings, voting and democracy systems."

Sian Roberts, Executive Director, Civica Democracy and Governance

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