



“The Council will benefit from a truly Unified Communications solution, providing over 5,000 government employees with a platform to effectively communicate, share and interact together from anywhere at any time.”

Alan Shields, Technical Architect, Cambridgeshire County Council

power to you



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Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) has been providing a diverse range of services including education, housing, leisure, health, social care, transport, trading standards, waste and recycling to its 560,000 citizens since 1998.

Within this area there are also five District or City Councils covering Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire which are responsible for the provision of their own range of services.

The Cambridgeshire Community Network (CCN) provides the County Council and partners with up-to-date network coverage, capacity and facilities. CCN is a countywide IP based network shared by the Council, its partner councils, and many other public access outlets.

A key aim of the Council is to provide staff and citizens alike with the right information, in the right format, at the right time, accessed from the devices they have available and regardless of location.

Inflexible and time consuming

Its communications system was outdated and unfit for purpose. It could no longer provide the platform for its 5,000 employees to communicate, share information and, most importantly, deliver services to citizens in the way the Council wished. For example, the Council's old telephone system was proving to be very costly with moves, adds and changes becoming very expensive, inflexible and time consuming.

The Council resolved to carry out a true business transformation, helping meet its objective to develop an empowered and responsive workforce - whilst also delivering substantial cost savings.

A new and resilient communications solution would underpin the Council's Work Wise project, an initiative designed to improve the working environment, support flexible working, improve efficiency and save money to plough back into front line services for citizens.

Initially, the Council evaluated the technology it needed to support Work Wise, as they wished to decide what platform to use before appointing a partner to work with. They went through a rigorous selection process to ensure that the technology they adopted had the robustness and resilience they required and that the product was not proprietary.

Avaya was chosen for its resilience and open and expandable features, which meant that the Council would be able to add products from various suppliers. Vodafone was chosen by CCC to design, implement and support their solutions, as they had worked with them during the technology appraisal stage.



Improving the quality of public services

Vodafone's solution to the Council's needs was to provide an Avaya Communications Manager running from two data centres, one at CCC headquarters at Shire Hall in Cambridge and the other in Huntingdon. The first phase of the solution was configured to support 1,001 users and will eventually deliver applications to over 3,500 users over three years and ultimately to 5,000.

The IP solution deployed by Vodafone was based on Avaya's Communication Manager IP Telephony software. This created the ideal converged network, allowing them to make better and more flexible use of accommodation resources and helping them to move to a seven to 10 desk ratio as an average across the authority. The solution provides number portability, allowing employees to log into any handset, from any location, using their personal ID.

The new converged network was also a key building block to creating a Unified Communications solution, with new applications designed to drive productivity by increasing contact and collaboration amongst the Council's staff.

By using Avaya's Modular Messaging application employees can now answer voice messages and email from one Microsoft Exchange inbox. The solution also includes Avaya's Meeting Exchange which allows the Council to book conferences via a web browser, record and play back later and provides the opportunity for collaboration with users.

In addition to the current Avaya one-X IP Phones, the Council will be rolling out Avaya's software based telephone - the one-X Portal. This is another important productivity booster that will allow staff to place and receive phone calls from any desktop or laptop PC with Internet access, making it an ideal application for employees on the move or working remotely.

“By deploying the right Unified Communications applications we have shown how local government can improve business agility, creating a virtual workplace with fewer employees needing to work at headquarters.”

Public Sector Team Spokesman, Vodafone.

“It's a fast moving world where people need to respond quickly to meet their customers' needs – and in the government sector citizens are expecting higher quality of services,” says Vodafone Public Sector Team Spokesman.

“By deploying the right communications applications we have shown how local government can improve business agility, creating a virtual workplace with fewer employees needing to work at headquarters. Local government organisations are not just speeding up service delivery but are also changing the way they work to make services more cost effective and more accessible,” adds Vodafone Spokesman.

The new converged IP network has allowed the Council to achieve a true business transformation, helping meet its objective to develop an empowered and responsive workforce, whilst delivering more than 20% - £1.2 million - savings over a three year period.

Alan Shields, Technical Architect at CCC, explains: “Our vision is that staff work flexibly, balancing work life pressures and the needs of the community - satisfying these and their own requirements.

“On completion of this project the Council will benefit from a truly Unified Communications solution, providing over 5,000 government employees with a platform to effectively communicate, share and interact together from anywhere at anytime, enabling new forms of flexible working and significantly improving the quality of public services offered,” concludes Alan.

Significant benefits

- The Council has achieved a business transformation, helping meet its workforce and service objectives, whilst also delivering £1.2 million savings over a three year period
- On top of these savings the Council expects to reduce costs on mobile, fixed-line, network operational management, ISDN and private network connections
- The solution will produce a large reduction in miles travelled and expenses incurred by council employees with many journeys now not required
- Savings are being ploughed back into front line services for citizens
- Greatly improved communications will make staff more effective, efficient and motivated, reducing wasted time trying to make contact with colleagues
- Citizens will enjoy improved services and information now that CCC staff have the communications tools necessary to improve performance
- CCC is now able to make better and more flexible use of its accommodation helping them to move to a seven to 10 desk ratio as an average across the authority
- The Council now has a high quality platform on which to build additional features and services and to respond quickly to the changing needs of its citizens

