



CASE STUDY

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council

VOIP services for the Public Sector, leveraging investment in legacy technologies by introducing new telephony, LAN & connectivity services.

THE OVERVIEW

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council is one of the largest councils in the UK, providing services to 20,000 residents and more than 1,000 businesses based in the Southern and South Eastern part of Manchester. Trafford Council employs more than 1,500 people in 228 locations and has a total of eight main council buildings.

THE CHALLENGE

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council wanted to improve the service that they offered to their citizens, providing easier and more direct access to council workers and departments, not just by telephone but also via the internet.

The legacy communications solution was expensive to operate and maintain and also proved to be inflexible in terms of supporting Trafford Council's aims, objectives and KPIs. Intra-company call costs were excessively high and in addition to this, managing the moves, adds and changes was a cumbersome, inefficient process that was therefore unnecessarily costly. In addition, not all of the local authority's sites such as schools, sports centres and libraries were "on net", leading to greater inefficiencies and higher costs.

THE SOLUTION

During the initial consultation phase, the benefit of a combined or converged voice and data network was highlighted, however Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council wanted to leverage the investment already made in some of the existing legacy technologies. GCI therefore introduced new Voice over IP (VOIP) systems that had a positive impact from day one, phasing in the remaining VOIP solution over time. GCI provided:

- A new LAN infrastructure solution, initially serving eight Trafford council offices at Altrincham, Carrington, Friar's Court, Sale Town Hall, Stretford Public Hall, Timperley Hall, Trafford Town Hall and Urmston.

- VOIP and TDM voice applications over the new LAN infrastructure, providing a mixture of IP and TDM voice services to more than 2,000 extensions integrated into a common data infrastructure.
- External connectivity for voice services such as inbound call routing and outbound tariff structures.
- A numbering scheme which meant that many of the specialist community support units were able to retain their existing and highly publicised telephone numbers, regardless of which council office they choose to work from.

The phasing in of a complete VOIP solution has now been rolled out to a total of 228 council facilities including council-run libraries, schools and sports centres and another 1,500 users, resulting in dramatically reduced call costs between council offices and remote facilities.

The combined voice and data network now supports the handling, routing and storage of enquiries and requests made via phone and email by residents and local businesses.

THE BENEFITS

The CEO's perspective...

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council has met key Government KPIs for citizen access to local services, with over 80% of calls answered at first point of contact. The organisation is not only more responsive and accountable, but also more flexible in terms of work locations.

The Financial Director...

Has saved significant money, seeing the initial investment of £1.5m in the combined voice and data network recouped in cost savings within the first 15 months of operation. In addition, costly reprints of brochures and leaflets for the Council's specialist community support services were avoided because the existing numbers could be kept in use.

The IT team...

Has been able to deliver a phased solution that resulted in unified messaging including fax, voicemail and web conferencing being delivered to over 3,000 extensions, with the result that response times to residents' requests are now below 48 hours.

Residents...

Have benefitted from increased levels of customer service with over 80% of all calls being solved at first point of contact, and a call centre being able to handle up to 70% more calls. Queries are turned around in less than 24 hours and the cost savings that have been accrued by this investment have been reallocated elsewhere.

"We have cut inter-office telephony expenditure by 50 per cent since installation across the whole council. These savings will be diverted into delivering higher quality services to local residents. The new system will enable us to manage organizational changes more effectively and serve Trafford citizens better on the phone and via the internet."

**Mark Gibbison, Head of e-Government
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council**

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