



WORKING WITH NEXTIRAONE

"We knew NextiraOne had an excellent track record in Local Government transformation projects. We chose them for their ability to look at the bigger picture in advanced ICT design while also focusing on the finer points of detail in every area of implementation."

*Deborah Poole,
Head of E-Government & Customer Services, Bromsgrove District Council*

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S NEW ICT INFRASTRUCTURE IS PLATFORM FOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Bromsgrove District Council has completed an ambitious programme to radically upgrade its ICT infrastructure. With technology partner NextiraOne, the Council has replaced and consolidated legacy servers, installed a new IP network and implemented unified voice and data communications. The new infrastructure includes capacity for wireless networking and provides a foundation for future business transformation.

THE CLIENT

Bromsgrove is situated on the southern edge of the West Midlands conurbation and extends into the rural landscape associated with the County of Warwickshire. With excellent communication and employment links, Bromsgrove provides an attractive place to live and visit. The District Councils staff are located in its three core sites – the central administrative offices, a customer services centre and the Council depot.

THE CHALLENGE

As part of central government's local authority modernisation agenda, Bromsgrove District Council embarked on an ambitious programme to upgrade its ICT infrastructure. "We effectively had a blank slate to make improvements," said Mark Hanwell, Technical Project Manager, drafted in specifically for the programme. "That meant a green light to conduct a thorough review of existing systems and their replacement with some of the most up-to-date infrastructure and communications technology."

This was a fast track project – the Council planned to complete all the work between mid-February and June 2006, providing plenty of time for the systems to bed in before a government review, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), in 2007. The Council therefore looked for a technology partner who could rise to the challenge of meeting extremely tight deadlines and help meet the stringent demands of the CPA.

Out of three bidders, the project was awarded to IP communications specialist, NextiraOne. "We knew NextiraOne had an excellent track record in local government projects. We chose them for their ability to look at the bigger picture in advanced communications design while focusing on the finer points of detail in every area of the implementation," said Deborah Poole (Head of E-Government & Customer Services).

THE SOLUTION

The first stage of the programme was a two-week review of the existing situation, followed by NextiraOne's design and implementation proposals. In addition to replacing and consolidating ageing servers, a completely new network was required. This would support the installation of an IP telephony system and include wireless networking throughout the Council's three sites. State-of-the-art disaster recovery and business continuity procedures were an important pre-requisite of the new technology platform. The infrastructure also provided a foundation for the introduction of web-based transactional services to be implemented later in the year.

The heart of the new system, and stage one of the programme, was construction of a computer centre – a highly secure environment to house the computer equipment representing the Council's most important data assets. "NextiraOne is very experienced in this kind of work - a specialised mix of construction and technology expertise," said Mark. The data centre has steel doors, a high level of fire and water protection and advanced security facilities.

CUSTOMER REFERENCE

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS - DATA CENTRES - CONTACT CENTRES - MOBILITY- BUSINESS PROTECTION - EXPERT SERVICES

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"Both teams meshed extremely well to achieve remarkable results within some very tight timescales. We have a shared understanding of the importance of implementing the right ICT infrastructure to support and enable a programme of business transformation."

*Martyn Butcher,
Head of Public Sector,
NextiraOne UK*

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"We are now ready to move on to the next stage of electronic service delivery at Bromsgrove DC. The sheer scale of the project with NextiraOne provides tremendous scope for future innovation."

*Deborah Poole,
Head of E-Government & Customer
Services, Bromsgrove District
Council*

The next stage was the implementation of a completely new, 21st century, intelligent network infrastructure. The Cisco IP network designed and deployed by NextiraOne not only supports fully converged voice and data communications but also provides a future-proof platform for newly emerging rich media technologies and collaboration tools.

NextiraOne recommended using the IP network for telephony services as this solution provides the Council with access to a wealth of complementary productivity tools, such as unified messaging and can readily be enhanced to address the Council's evolving needs for the foreseeable future. A feature of the new infrastructure is the integration of a secure Cisco overlay wireless network, which provides comprehensive wireless connectivity across the Council's office space in its three separate locations. This enables flexible working and mobility for the Council's staff by allowing them to connect to the network whenever and from wherever they may need to work, using a variety of wireless enabled devices, including laptops, tablet PCs, PDAs and telephone handsets.

Among the other core infrastructure changes was the replacement of old, increasingly unreliable servers supporting the revenues & benefits, finance and other standard council applications. Currently a work in progress, this is a significant consolidation programme that will reduce the database servers by a ratio of 5 to 1. Server reliability is paramount – with more and more public sector bodies moving to a 24/7 service culture it is essential that critical servers are clustered to provide optimum resilience.

Disaster recovery is naturally an integral part of NextiraOne's business continuity planning for the new infrastructure. In addition to resilient network links between all sites, Bromsgrove DC's key systems are duplicated at Worcestershire County Council. "It effectively means our data is never more than 15 minutes old so that we can always be operational very quickly if the worst should happen," said Mark. "We're also using a diesel generator to feed the uninterruptible power supply (UPS) so we can run for several days if the power is out." The installation of a Storage Area Network reduces backup windows and also enhances business continuity. A large storage capability means additional storage can easily be allocated, giving extra life to the equipment and reducing total cost of ownership.

System security has been a big priority with intruder detection, firewalls, internet access and email content filtering now in place. NextiraOne has also advised the Council on how, in the future, they can adopt BS7799 by implementing various policies such as the use of email and the internet. Citrix has also been implemented. This ensures remote users can log-in via a quarantine zone and receive the latest patches, keeping the system virus-free. Central client management software has also been included that enables the IT support team to roll out software to all users from a central point, reducing response time significantly.

The Council has also opted to outsource help desk calls. Managed by NextiraOne, the outsourcing of the front-line call logging element of the help desk function will result in a much more efficient and effective service, allowing in-house technical expertise to be focused where it is most effective - solving users' technical issues. "We can demonstrate exceptionally high levels of security and resilience across all systems," said Mark. "Use of the wireless network and unified communications gives us a huge amount of business agility." Productivity gains are a major benefit as the telephones have more functionality and extensions can easily be transferred, as people move around, without moving handsets. Implementation of central client management software also means the Council is making best use of resources – there is no need for technical staff to spend time going from desk to desk to support customers. The project has also meant other changes for the Council such as the adoption of Prince2 (Projects IN Controlled Environments), the de facto standard for project management used extensively in the public sector.

Bromsgrove District Council is working in partnership with NextiraOne to continue the development of a robust, resilient and secure ICT infrastructure strategy with proactive system monitoring and advanced capacity planning. The new infrastructure will also provide a foundation for future implementations, such as the delivery of web-based transactional services and puts the Authority in an excellent position for the next stage of business transformation.

NextiraOne are Europe's leading experts in communications services. The company designs, installs, maintains and supports all of its customers' communications needs from voice to mobility, security and applications. NextiraOne provides seamless, end-to-end communications solutions working with the leading technology vendors in the industry to deliver maximum business benefit to customers.

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