



Luton Borough Council

Customer Testimonial



Luton Borough Council

Driving Change through Technology

Introduction

Luton Borough Council (LBC) has undertaken a major restructuring and transformation programme to help make cost savings, streamline citizen service and build a flexible and sustainable organisation for the future.

Jayne Robinson, Interim Service Director Transformation, Procurement and IT says, "We are using technology to enable change across all services delivered by the organisation, such as new telephony and a digital portal to help drive improvement for our customers and staff. This change involves encouraging citizens to use automated telephony, self-service and self-help so that the council can deliver efficient services and thereby drive savings."

The Transformation Project provides Unified Communication and Contact Centre services for seventy-five customer service agents and 2,450 back office staff throughout the council's main offices in Luton.

Robin Porter Corporate Director, Commercial and Transformation Services said "Luton Borough Council's vision for the future is very simple, it is to put the needs of our customers at the heart of everything we do and build a sustainable organisation to ensure that we continue to support them.

That sustainability is incredibly important to us. Over the past 5 years we have faced a number of challenges. We have lots of money to take out of the organisation, in 2010 our revenue support grant from central government was £110 million and we have forecast that by 2020 it will be around £8 million pre Chancellors 2015 Autumn Statement."

Challenges

LBC had an existing aging estate that was made up of disparate telephony and contact centre platforms. As part of the transformation strategy the council wanted to modernise and simplify their communications infrastructure through IP and SIP enablement; improve and increase the services available to both staff and the public with automated services and additional communication channels; at the same time as reducing their technology hardware footprint by migrating all IT services into their data centres in Luton and Manchester.

This allows them to gain cost efficiencies through reduced power consumption, centralised management, administration and rationalisation of costly ISDN services. It also improves customer service by giving their citizens a range of contact options and also offers their staff better means of managing and monitoring communications.

Sue Nelson, Service Director Revenues and Customer Service says, "Our call centre provides twenty six different front line services and receives over 350,000 calls a year. Our old telephony system was clunky and outdated; we needed to develop commercial opportunities and to deliver these we had to have a flexible, adaptable and well-resourced workforce.

We need to ensure that we have a sustainable financial council for the future and the commercial development of our telephony is an important part of this."



2,450

Amount of back office staff throughout the council's main offices in Luton.

350,000

Calls per year received

Solution

Luton Borough Council went to public tender for the full replacement of their front and back office telephony services. Clive Roberts Change Analyst at Luton Borough Council said, “We went through an in-depth tendering process. We met a number of service providers both here at Luton and also off site and the way that 4net conducted themselves, their integrity, their in-depth knowledge and the way they were able to make technology understandable made them a superior partner of choice.”

The core telephony services delivered by 4net were based on the Avaya Communication Manager 6. Avaya is a Global leader in U/C and Contact Centre solutions, with an unrivalled legacy in resilient voice communications.

PSTN voice traffic is now delivered over active/passive SIP trunks in the LBC data centres. This replaces a large number of costly ISDN connections across numerous locations with very little flexibility for load balancing. By consolidating all the ISDN lines to a smaller volume of SIP channels connected in 2 locations, LBC were able to reduce costs, but also increase resilience and DR capability.

All internal calls are now VoIP across the MPLS WAN. This eliminates the need to call out via the PSTN thus removing the cost of calls between offices.

Benefits

The Contact Centre includes agent functionality for 75 agents split into five service teams. Each agent has an IP handset & headset and also a desktop agent tool for personal and team wallboards displaying statistical information, activity reporting, multi-media queuing for email and chat, and presence indication for individual availability. Calls can also be recorded and played back by team leaders for compliance or training purposes.

Sue Nelson continued, “The solution has given us three clear benefits. Firstly around cost savings and efficiencies, we now have the ability to gear up at short notice to deliver new commercial contracts, which is very important to us.

As a result of new system and our ability to be able to resource plan, we can now improve customer service to ensure that consistently high quality advice is given, with a better right first time resolution.

And finally we can enable our workforce to be much more flexible, which both they and I are extremely excited about. This gives them the agility to work from any other location in the town centre, in their own homes and as we take on more commercial contracts they will be able to work as far afield as we want.”

All the back office users throughout the council offices and depots in Luton have been provided with IP devices and personal voicemail boxes. Each user can now work from any location through hot-desking or via an inclusive softphone client, giving LBC staff full mobility and flexibility. Calls can be easily forwarded to mobiles allowing staff to be contacted easily either when they are in or out of the office.

The addition of a virtual operator or speech attendant IVR service has also allowed the council to remove simple enquiries for individuals or depts. from their call queues by providing a simple transferal service. This lessens the burden on the Contact Centre and also provides the public or their staff with an easy means of quickly contacting the people they need.

Hazel Lunn, Business Analyst with the Customer Transformation Programme said, “The introduction of the new solution has helped the council to introduce new ways of working. Agent Workplace has given the contact centre agents a full view of their colleagues presence, what they



are doing and they can see what is happening on a day to day basis, which makes them feel much more a part of the whole operation.

We can now automate business processes and improve the flow so that they can now process emails at the same time as they answer calls. Speech recognition combined with traditional IVR has allowed us to seamlessly get customers to the right place first time.”

Robin continued “Our telephony strategy is going to deliver savings in the region of £570,000 per annum and in addition will increase the robustness of our systems providing us with a flexible and agile workforce and a flexible solution for the future.

4net have worked as a true partner. They are flexible in their approach and proactive and have worked hard to find a solution to any problems we might have. I am very happy we chose 4net.”

4net's powerful combination of service excellence and technical expertise makes us the partner of choice for organisations who want to transform the way they communicate with customers, staff and stakeholders, reduce costs and gain competitive advantage.

Our contact centre, unified communications, managed services and telephony solutions are designed to address today's complex business challenges, helping you to respond to your customer and staff requirements.

From simple IP Telephony Solutions to Virtual Contact Centres, from Unified Communications to Cloud Services, we partner with best in class vendors such as Avaya, Microsoft and Enghouse, to deliver a solutions portfolio that will address today's changing workplace and build tomorrow's future, making 4net the preferred communications partner for many businesses across the globe.