

# GOOD COUNSEL

UK council extends flexible working opportunities to almost a third of employees with Dell Unified Communications



According to a survey commissioned by the UK National Projects Programme Office, mobile working has the potential to generate benefits of up to £336 million across local authorities in England and Wales.<sup>1</sup> More than half the councils participating in the survey had adopted some form of mobile working while 37 per cent planned to – figures that highlight the cost, productivity and lifestyle advantages of working away from the office.

## SOLUTIONS:

- GREEN IT
- UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS



*Basingstoke  
and Deane*

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

**COMPANY:** Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council  
**INDUSTRY:** Local Government  
**COUNTRY:** United Kingdom  
**EMPLOYEES:** 650  
**WEBSITE:** [www.basingstoke.gov.uk](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk)

## CHALLENGE

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council wanted to increase flexible working opportunities. An upgrade to Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 prompted the exploration of Unified Communications, based on the deployment of Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007 R2.

## SOLUTION

Seeking a partner to assess, design and deploy a framework for Unified Communications, the IT team turned to holistic solution provider Dell.

## BENEFITS

### Get IT Faster

- Dell consultants develop strategy for phased implementation of Unified Communications
- Dell expertise ensures smooth deployment, completed in 11 weeks

### Run IT Better

- Cost-effective technology opens up mobile working to 20 times more staff
- Contact centre call transfer experience set to improve
- Web conferencing supports green agenda
- Knowledge transfer helps IT team optimise disaster recovery features

### Grow IT Smarter

- Functionality can be extended across employees at minimal additional cost



<sup>1</sup> [www.projectnomad.org.uk/docstore/85/pdf/244\\_BeginnersGuide.pdf](http://www.projectnomad.org.uk/docstore/85/pdf/244_BeginnersGuide.pdf)

Flexible working technology has a broad range of implications on the way that council employees communicate, share data and interact with members of the public – whether this is the processing of housing benefit claims directly from citizen’s homes, or contacting a colleague in another office faster. For Geraint Davies, ICT manager at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, an upgrade from Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003 to Exchange Server 2007 was an opportunity to enhance the council’s flexible working policy.

“We were interested in the advanced communication features of Microsoft Exchange Server 2007. We’d also looked at how we could run Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2 alongside it to create a comprehensive Unified Communications environment. What we needed was guidance on how to deploy and use all of this technology to maximum effect,” he says.

As the council’s sole IT solutions provider for three years, Dell was included in its comparison of potential partners for the project. Davies says: “We wanted a holistic approach – hardware, software, services – as well as support in setting up internal surveys and pilots to assess outcomes. Dell won on all counts with its Infrastructure Consulting team.”

Davies saw benefits in two key areas: home working and contact centre response times. Historically, the council had 13 home-working

options used by up to 15 employees. These options range from taking hard copies of documents home, through to a complete home-office including a telephone line, broadband router and laptop. “In theory, up to 200 employees stood to benefit from flexible working, but the cost and complexity of our previous home-working options prevented this. People need to feel connected with the organisation, especially if they work at home regularly. Dell Unified Communications addressed these challenges,” Davies says.



**“WE WANTED A HOLISTIC APPROACH – HARDWARE, SOFTWARE, SERVICES – AS WELL AS SUPPORT IN SETTING UP INTERNAL SURVEYS AND PILOTS TO ASSESS OUTCOMES. DELL WON ON ALL COUNTS WITH ITS INFRASTRUCTURE CONSULTING TEAM.”**

Geraint Davies, ICT manager, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

## HOW IT WORKS

### HARDWARE

- Dell™ PowerEdge™ 2950 and 1950 Energy Smart servers with Intel® Xeon® Processors E5420
- Polycom CX200 Desktop Phones
- Polycom CX700 Office Communicator Phone Edition IP Phones
- Dialogic DMG2060DTI Media Gateway

### SOFTWARE

- Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2007

### SERVICES

- Dell ProConsulting Services
- Dell Education Services
- Dell ProSupport for IT
  - Mission Critical option

Davies also saw the potential to raise customer experience at the council’s contact centre. Staff answer hundreds of calls each day on issues such as environmental care. If they need specialist information, they transfer the call. But, without visibility of a colleague’s availability, this process relied on chance and often involved several attempts. “I was interested in using Dell Unified Communications to streamline the process of fielding calls,” Davies explains.

The Dell Infrastructure Consulting process of workshop, assessment, design, implementation (WADI) ensured a structured approach customised to the council’s business needs. This began with a workshop examining key considerations such as green IT, disaster recovery and security. From this, Dell

consultants created three initial solution designs covering all hardware and software – from servers to end-user headsets. The IT team chose the one best aligned with its goals and budgets.

The consultants’ design comprised 12 Dell™ PowerEdge™ 2950 and 1950 Energy Smart servers with Intel® Xeon® Processors E5420 to run Exchange Server 2007 and Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2. “We chose the PowerEdge 1950 Energy Smart server because of its green credentials, along with the high performance of Intel Xeon processors,” Davies confirms.



**“DELL FILLED THE GAPS IN OUR KNOWLEDGE AND HELPED US TURN OUR GOALS INTO A CONCRETE, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION. HAD WE NOT WORKED WITH DELL, WE WOULD BE SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS BEHIND WHERE WE ARE NOW.”**

Geraint Davies, ICT manager,  
Basingstoke and Deane  
Borough Council

Dell recommended a Dialogic DMG2060DTI Media Gateway to enable communication between the existing telephone network and voice over internet protocol (VoIP) devices. This allowed the council to retain the value of its existing infrastructure while managing a phased changeover to IP-based communications. Davies also purchased 10 end-user devices based on Dell's recommendations – a mixture of Polycom CX200 Desktop Phones and Polycom CX700 Office Communicator Phone Edition IP Phones.

“Dell Consulting Services worked with our resident telephony engineer to install our Dialogic DMG2060DTI Media Gateway in less than a day,” Davies explains. “For the rest of the deployment, each phase went to plan, and Dell more than met our requirement for knowledge transfer at each stage.”

The council now has access to:

- Enterprise Instant Messaging (IM), providing increased security compared to standard IM
- Audio, video and web conferencing
- Integrated voice, email, calendaring, IM and conferencing using the VoIP component of Office Communications Server 2007 R2 accessible through applications such as Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007
- Presence awareness, which provides availability indicators for all contacts – visible in applications including Office Outlook 2007 and Microsoft Office business applications

Davies and his team have just completed a six-week pilot project with 15 employees. This focused on Unified Messaging – the delivery of voice messages into Exchange Server mailboxes using VoIP. “Dell consultants were available for technical support throughout the pilot. We had positive employee feedback and we're now working with Dell on a thorough

analysis of the results,” Davies comments. A second trial testing the use of presence awareness in the contact centre will begin shortly.

#### **COMPREHENSIVE EXPERTISE DELIVERS TAILOR-MADE SOLUTION**

Rather than negotiating between multiple suppliers, Basingstoke and Deane Council had a single point of contact for all hardware, software and support. The assessment phase ensured that specific features were matched with the right end users. “Dell's approach to assessment and design gave us the technical understanding and strategic insight we needed to make informed choices about our Unified Communications deployment,” Davies says.

The consulting methodology customised both the design and installation of the solution to the council's goals and budgets. “We worked with the same Dell engineers on several phases of the project, so they developed a great understanding of the way we work. And our account manager was a constant presence throughout, making the process cohesive,” Davies says.

#### **COUNCIL ROLLS OUT SOLUTION FASTER WITH DELL**

With the technical and project management skills of Dell's consultants, the entire deployment – Exchange Server installation, migration of mailboxes, and Office Communications Server 2007 R2 installation – took just 11 weeks. In fact, Davies estimates that the council would be several weeks behind had it not engaged Dell. “Dell filled the gaps in our knowledge and helped us turn our goals into a concrete, comprehensive plan of action. Had we not worked with Dell, we would be six to eight weeks behind where we are now,” he says.

#### **DISASTER RECOVERY ENHANCED**

Dell also helped the council determine the best use of Microsoft System Center Data Protection Manager 2007 and the Dell PowerVault™ DP500 appliance, which provides continuous backup capabilities for Exchange Server data. “It was important to get quick wins from our Unified Communications deployment, as well as long-term incremental benefits,” Davies says. “Dell helped us assess and deploy Microsoft System Center Data Protection Manager as part of our Unified Communications environment, which immediately enhanced our disaster recovery strategy.”

Early on in the design process, Dell consultants also looked at the cluster continuous replication and standby cluster replication features of Exchange Server 2007. Again, the team was aware of these features, but relied on Dell's expertise to develop a solid understanding of how to use them effectively.

The council can depend on Dell support to maintain maximum uptime. “Dell has a proven track record of providing high-quality support for our servers. We chose Dell ProSupport for IT Mission Critical because it gives us the peace of mind that the right person will be in the right place, at the right time, whenever we need assistance,” says Davies.

#### **DELL CONSULTANTS HELP PROMOTE UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS TO END USERS**

The Dell team supported Davies in demonstrating the solution's advantages to council employees. This helped promote recognition of the relevance and benefits of Unified Communications.

# “WE CHOSE THE POWEREDGE 1950 ENERGY SMART SERVER BECAUSE OF ITS GREEN CREDENTIALS, ALONG WITH THE HIGH PERFORMANCE OF INTEL XEON PROCESSORS.”

Geraint Davies, ICT manager, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Says Davies: “End users sometimes perceive new technology with apprehension – they might think it’s going to consume rather than save time, or that it will take weeks to master. Dell’s role in publicising Unified Communications across the council helped us gain end-user buy-in and eased deployment.”

## HOME WORKING OPPORTUNITIES EXPAND

Over the next six months, Davies plans to deliver Unified Communications to the 200 employees eligible to work from home. “With Dell Unified Communications, employees can work from almost anywhere using their laptop or desktop for all communications – voice, email, IM and conferencing. They have a single interface and a single contact number that they can take with them when they work from home or travel abroad. And our overheads are negligible, beyond the initial provision of an Internet connection and a headset,” he says.

Employees also benefit from a wider range of communication options. Rather than relying on a mixture of email and telephone calls, they will be able to move seamlessly between voice, email and IM. “With Dell Unified Communications, it’s easy to start with an IM exchange, send someone a file by email, and then start a telephone conversation to follow up or initiate a web conference and invite others. It all happens within a single interface,” Davies says.

## CONTACT CENTRE CALL TRANSFER EXPERIENCE SET TO IMPROVE

With presence awareness, contact centre staff will know who is available to answer calls

through colour-coded status entries in their Office Outlook contacts list. “The presence awareness feature in Unified Communications means you can instantly see who’s available, which avoids the frustration of unanswered calls when a colleague is out of the office. We expect this to boost employee productivity and increase customer satisfaction through faster call transfer and issue resolution,” says Davies.

## UNITY IN THE FUTURE

The council’s use of Unified Communications will grow over the next six months to include additional users and functionality. Eventually, all employees will use presence awareness and enterprise IM to support their communications with colleagues and customers. Davies says: “Our main focuses are IM and presence, but we also hope to contribute to the council’s green commitment by using web conferencing. This will reduce travel for face-to-face meetings and cut our carbon footprint, as will our Dell PowerEdge Energy Smart servers.”

**For more information on this case study or to read additional case studies, go to [www.dell.com/casestudies](http://www.dell.com/casestudies) and [www.dell.co.uk](http://www.dell.co.uk)**

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