



STAFFORD & RURAL HOMES

On the 6th February 2006, Stafford and Rural Homes became the landlord of 5,600 homes. While the company would be moving to new premises in July 2006, initially an IT and Communications solution was needed at Stafford Borough Council, followed by a migration to the new headquarters, when completed.

BENEFITS

The infrastructure has provided the potential for more staff to access systems than before, helping to build an information rich environment.

CNT was chosen to provide the entire solution, from PC procurement right through to a fully converged wireless IP network, complete with a range of applications to help provide a customer-facing service and generally enhance performance and efficiency.

THE SOLUTION

The first phase of the project provided a partitioned network for Stafford and Rural Homes utilising the Council's infrastructure. The solution designed enabled the business to function for that initial period, mindful that the second phase of the project included migration to the new headquarters.

The move to the new premises was completed over a weekend with little disruption to the business. As well as physically moving the equipment and placing it in its new environment, data files were migrated from the various applications to ensure no loss of current or archived information.

From an IT and Communications perspective, CNT provided everything required for a stock transfer project. A full integrated solution for desktop, server, voice, data and video was

provided. This included a state-of-the-art Cisco infrastructure providing a standards based environment on which new applications and technologies can be easily deployed. Also provided were:

- PC's, servers and printers
- VMware ESX server infrastructure
- Citrix SAG (Secure Access Gateway) for remote/home working
- Internet access, security and monitoring
- Network infrastructure for voice and data
- Cisco wireless IP network
- Contact centre, call recording, desktop presence and unified messaging applications
- IPCC TV for surveillance
- Relocation services from the council to new premises
- PRINCE2 Project Management
- Professional Services to deliver the solution
- Support and maintenance



Wrapped around these solutions was a full design, consultancy, implementation and support package. Using robust project management principles, all third party suppliers were managed to ensure a smooth delivery of the project, on time and within budget. CNT also assisted with the procurement process, allowing Stafford and Rural to implement solutions prior to their funding being released. This allowed the newly formed organisation to have all IT and Communications systems in place from day one.

HELPING TO REALISE THE VISION

The vision at Stafford and Rural Homes is to provide affordable quality housing in a safe environment, to strengthen communities in towns and villages and to provide excellent services for all customers in partnership.

The solution provided supports this vision and it has provided the following capabilities to Stafford and Rural Homes:

- Handling of enquiries using intelligent routing capabilities
- Providing the links to Microsoft Outlook to assist the future implementation of appointment systems across the service

- Facilities for remote staff to access email and voicemail from an appropriate device
- ADSL connections at 19 sheltered housing schemes to provide the capability for Care and Support staff access to business systems
- Capabilities for those working at home to share the same office telephone system, directories and applications as their colleagues at headquarters

The solution has delivered many potential capabilities to the association and should enable information to flow more easily and securely.

DELIVERING PRACTICAL BENEFITS

Stafford and Rural Homes has achieved practical benefits from the solution we provided.

Above all, the cost benefits of operating a single IP network are significant, while the flexibility this network provides for further expansion and application deployment ensures the investment made is protected for years to come.

The infrastructure has provided the potential for more staff to access systems than before, helping to build an information rich environment.

“As a new business with a very strong customer focus, IT and Communications is always at the forefront of our thinking. It was essential that we maintained our services during the challenging transfer period and ensured that the key building blocks were provided for our ethos of continuous improvement.

I am pleased to say that CNT did much of the thinking for us, solving some procurement challenges. As a single supplier, they provided everything we needed and it was a relief to enter our new office on the first day and find the service functioning well.

We now have a secure and state of the art base from which to develop our remote and mobile working solutions and web-based services to our customers.”

Karen Armitage, Chief Executive at Stafford and Rural Homes

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