



Gloucester City Council

Implementation of Gamma SIP gives Council employees greater flexibility



About

The major west country city of Gloucester has an array of historical attractions that together lure more than three and a half million visitors from home and abroad every year.

They include the cathedral with its origins around 678 AD, the Victorian docks that give the city the distinction of being the most inland port in Britain, and Kingsholm Stadium, the ground that is home to Premiership team Gloucester Rugby, founded in 1873.

But the city is far from static; it has cutting-edge housing developments blending old with new, a popular outlet shopping centre, long-established high-street retail and restaurants, and is growing rapidly as a vibrant and unique place to live and work. Overseeing the services that support the population of 150,000 within the city boundaries is Gloucester City Council.

The challenge

In 2018 the decision was taken by the council executive to move its 250+ staff from owned offices at the docks to a single rented floor of the nearby County Council building. Not only would co-location potentially improve collaborative working between the two tiers of local government, but it would slash accommodation costs too.

The move triggered a root-and-branch review of communications technology that ended with the council becoming what may have been the first local authority in Britain to adopt software defined networking (SDN). At the same time, voice services were also re-evaluated, the decision being to move to SIP, partly to reduce costs, but also to enable follow-me services as staff were equipped with Skype-loaded laptops and roles were re-defined to encourage more agile ways of working.

The solution

Richard Mobberley has the title of Intelligent Client Officer, a mediation role created by the council executive with the aim of combining private and public-sector knowledge and thus avoiding inefficient us-and-them relationships developing with outsourced suppliers.

The Council's network supplier recommended Gamma's SIP solution and soon SIP replaced their old ISDN 30 lines bringing greater efficiencies. Each staff member's personal Skype number follows them around as they log in meaning they can work effectively from any location.

More recently, Gamma's SIP Trunk Call Manager has been added, bringing even greater functionality.

The results

"We can't fault Gamma" says Mobberley. On the council's working relationship with Gamma he notes that Gamma has "...been very helpful with understanding our needs and making suggestions. We have a clear roadmap and Gamma has helped us develop it. The flexibility of SIP has enabled staff to work from home during the crisis. SIP Trunk Call Manager arrived just as the Covid-19 lock-down started and so we've not used it to its full potential, but it has already proved useful to study workflows and determine whether some of the changes we have implemented are delivering the results we anticipated. We will undoubtedly exploit it more as we return to normality."

The benefits

- SIP telephony yields line and PBX savings
- IT management costs also reduced
- SIP flexibility enables rapid response to changing needs
- SIP robustness delivers disaster recovery assurance
- Gamma proves to be a reliable partner

"We've seen massive savings - in the order of 40-50% on a previously circa £100,000 bill - and with the capacity for 60 concurrent calls we've loads of headroom; we never get anywhere near that. Now, rather than multiple numbers, one for tax, one for waste disposal and so on, we've a single number and that makes it so much easier for people to interact with us."



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