



Device estate refresh helps underpin cultural change at Blaby District Council

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Established in 1974 and located in Leicestershire, Blaby District Council (BDC) serves a population of just over 100,000 people living in an area of approximately 129Km2.

It oversees a range of essential local services. They include, waste and recycling, employment and skills, licensing and benefits, as well as working with third-party providers to deliver community safety and cultural and leisure services. BDC is supported by more than 300

staff, the majority based in its main office in Narborough, with a separate site nearby hosting its Neighbourhood Services division. BDC aims to 'put residents at the heart of everything it does and recognise the importance of the services it provides.'

Key facts

1 Provides a range of service to more than 100,000 residents and businesses

2 300+ staff headquartered in Narborough

3 Strong commitment to delivering effective services

The challenge

BDC is in the process of transforming and bringing back in house its IT services to help improve colleagues' end user experience and effectively support its evolving service delivery strategy. Having already invested heavily in replacing its existing IT infrastructure with a cloud-based provision, transforming its device estate was the next critical step.

Its existing device estate, provided through a managed service, was ageing and problematic to manage. BDC had poor visibility of essential information, including the status of individual devices, their condition, and if they were fit for the purpose of complementing the ongoing infrastructure transformation. Any replacement devices needed to be configured to seamlessly integrate with

the new infrastructure, deliver improved service life and be available to roll out in time for BDC's full launch of its enhanced ICT service.

BDC is working to drive cultural change and ensure employees feel valued and take pride in their work. It sees a refreshed device estate as an opportunity to provide a high-quality end user experience and deliver the digital capabilities staff need to maintain, and enhance, service provision. But as with every other local authority, cost is a factor that can't be overlooked, BDC needed to source the best quality devices, while remaining within its restricted local authority budget.

Critical success factors

New device estate required to support ICT transformation project

Desire to improve end-user experience and deliver enhanced functionality

Cost-effective pricing needed to stay within restricted budget

The Solution

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"We contacted Softcat to discuss our device estate and investigate potential replacement devices. We're aiming to transform not just our ICT provision, but also our workplace culture and were looking for something disruptive, a little out of the ordinary that would illustrate how much we value our colleagues and the contribution they make.

"In local authorities there's often a reluctance to procure technologies that aren't traditionally used in the sector. So, while we considered the 'traditional' local authority hardware providers for end user devices, Softcat suggested we take a look at what Samsung had to offer and provided some demonstration laptops for us to assess. We rolled out the demo kit to our senior leadership team for evaluation and they were immediately impressed with the quality, performance and feel of the devices.

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Every Samsung Galaxy Book 4 laptop will be configured to BDC's precise specification, including biometric sign-on capabilities and delivered with a pre-generated Hash ID to simplify and enhance ongoing device lifecycle and asset management.

"Although Samsung doesn't have a common provider of end user devices to the local authority sector, we were able to negotiate a great price on individual units and deliver an exciting opportunity for Samsung to break into new markets. Samsung immediately recognised the potential in the deal and has gone above and beyond to make it work. Softcat collaborated with Samsung in the early stages to help ensure device configuration delivered on BDC's expectations. We've also carried out extensive discussions around how we can both contribute to making the launch of the new ICT service a success, and everyone's convinced that it's just the start of a strong and productive relationship." - Jessica Townley, Softcat SIP Manager & Integrated Care & Government Account Manager

Solution highlights

Extensive market research to identify cost-effectively sourced, high-quality devices

Device pre-configuration and hash ID generation

Extensive vendor support to assist with new ICT service launch

The benefits

“The feedback we've had on the devices has been encouraging in regard to user satisfaction. Our colleagues appreciate the extended battery life, the aesthetics and the enhanced functionality, such as biometric sign on, that enables them to work more securely, effectively and take pride in what they do.”

James Hickens
BDC ICT Operations Manager

The strong vendor relationship between Softcat and Samsung helped ensure the device estate was refreshed, and could be maintained, cost-effectively and sustainably. Softcat negotiated effectively with Samsung to help drive down individual device costs, as well as providing help with effective Microsoft licensing and sustainable peripheral procurement to reduce ongoing costs even further.

"Of course, we were pleased to be able to bring the device refresh in on budget, but the solution represents a critical tool in our effort to change the workplace culture; and that adds significant value from our perspective," said James. "We've managed to procure cracking devices. We're sure they'll symbolise how much we value our colleagues and the importance we're placing on ICT as a sustainable enabler of improved service delivery, now and into the future.

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Every device came with a pre-generated hash ID to help reduce set up time. It ensured laptops could be quickly configured and added to Microsoft Intune, a cloud-based mobile device management (MDM) solution, to smooth the onboarding process, improve device estate visibility and facilitate sustainable asset management. BDC is confident its ICT transformation will have a positive impact on staff retention and help minimise lost hours and operational disruption caused by legacy devices and infrastructure.

"We view our ICT transformation as establishing the foundations of a high-energy future," said James. "We envisage a workplace where technology makes it easier to book meeting rooms, view a colleague's diary and collaborate more effectively using the very latest Windows 11 productivity tools. Throughout this engagement, Softcat has shared our commitment to enabling the cultural change we're seeking. It's great to have a like-minded, high-energy partner on board to help drive our digital transformation forward."

Benefits at a glance

High-quality Samsung Galaxy Book 4 laptops to replace existing device estate

Simplified asset management

Increased user satisfaction

Why Softcat

"Here at BDC we're trying evolve from traditional ways of doing things and bring a fresh perspective on how best to deliver essential services using ICT as a transformational tool," said James. **"Working with Softcat has shown us that it shares that mindset. Jessica and the wider Softcat team are happy to challenge what we do and suggest alternative ideas, to both reduce costs and deliver enhanced solutions, rather than being wholly reactive.**

"It makes a refreshing change to work with a provider that shares your vision and is prepared to roll up their sleeves and make it happen. We feel Softcat are just the type of people we're keen to develop a long-term relationship with."