

SOFTCAT DELIVERS ENHANCED MOBILITY, SECURITY AND FUNCTIONALITY

End User Computing & Mobility



Networking & security



6,500 staff delivering services to a population of around 150,000

Annual spend of £351 million on essential services and local investment

Leverages up-to-the-minute technologies for improved service delivery

Dumfries and Galloway Council (DG&C) is the third largest council area in Scotland and provides services to a population of around 150,000 people. Recognised as an industry-leader when it comes to leveraging technological innovation in search of improved efficiencies and service delivery, D&GC has rationalised and harmonised IT provision to continue delivering high-quality services, while simultaneously achieving significant cost savings.

The Challenge

Like every UK local authority, D&GC is under intense pressure to rationalise processes and drive down the cost of service delivery in the face of reduced central government funding. In an environment where the biggest challenge is to do more with less, improved mobility for council staff was seen as an essential way to continue to deliver high-quality services, and reduce expenditure.

Of course, improved mobility enables staff to do things differently and work far more productively, yet enhanced mobility can come with added security risks. As many of the services that would benefit most from improved mobility involve handling sensitive data about individuals and organisations, the need to ensure that any proposed solution would be highly secure was absolutely essential.

D&GC will have stringent commitments as far as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) guidelines are concerned when they come into force in May 2018. It will be obliged to ensure that any system used by staff, including Social Workers, Teachers etc, will provide the highest available level of cyber security to help ensure the safety of not just data, but the community as a whole. And in the light of recent high-profile cyber-attacks on both public sector and private organisations, security is an ever more pressing issue.

Penetration testing performed by D&GC's Cyber Security partner in 2015 recommended that improvements should be made to their existing Mobile Device Management solution. If it was to extend mobility services to even more staff, it would need to implement a mobility solution capable of providing end users with the very latest functionality, underpinned by optimal security.

Critical Success Factors

- Deliver significant cost savings alongside productivity improvements
- Improve mobility capabilities

- Ensure enhanced security and compliance with upcoming GDPR obligations

The Solution

Following the penetration testing, DG&C contacted Softcat to investigate potential solutions. Softcat carried out significant pre-sales work as part of the strict procurement process, including free-of-charge consultations, on-site visits and a five-day proof of concept pilot. Softcat also made DG&C aware of a Microsoft funding package that was available and would enable it to make considerable savings on a full roll-out of Microsoft Enterprise Mobility + Security suite (EM&S) across the organisation.

The first phase of the solution involved bringing DG&C's licensing estate up to date. Softcat completely re-modelled its existing estate by spreading licence types across a number of various agreements that both ensured software licensing compliance and realised significant cost savings for D&GC.

Enhanced mobility

Once completed, the next phase involved improving the functionality and security of D&GC's mobile infrastructure. The EM&S funding package available through Microsoft offered considerable cost benefits, with a maximum of \$15,000 worth of funding available for a commitment of 1,000 end users. Given the financial constraints faced by every local authority, the funding package proved particularly attractive and D&GC decided it was a worthwhile investment.

Delivery partner Apajove were engaged to implement a solution which would use the Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Suite, particularly Intune, which would be adopted in a hybrid design, integrated with the existing on premise System Centre Configuration Manager Current Branch instance. This would provide management of mobile devices from the same interface used to manage the existing laptop and desktop estate.

"Softcat and Apajove went to great lengths to highlight the improved functionality the solution would bring and ensure we obtained full value from its extensive capabilities," said Carol Brownlie, Mobile and Desktop Services Principal Officer, D&GC (Corporate Services). "Apajove also illustrated what options were available to deliver enhanced security for more than 500 connected Apple devices, an essential capability for any organisation dealing with sensitive data and the compliance criteria associated with GDPR."

Enhanced security and functionality

To further boost security and functionality, the decision was made to migrate to the very latest Windows 10 environment. Its added security features would ease D&GC's security compliance obligations as well as enabling end users to access the most up-to-date and secure apps and productivity tools. The migration would enable D&GC to leverage all of the productivity benefits delivered by Microsoft EM&S, including the capacity to implement full Office 365 capabilities, and prove a more cost-effective route to securing critical IT systems with Microsoft Defender and Firewall applications.

Harnessing cloud-based services

Softcat delivery partner, Core, a Microsoft Gold Accredited UK provider of the very latest IT solutions, was brought on board to migrate D&GC's email services to a cloud-based Exchange solution hosted remotely in Microsoft's datacentre. Migrating to a hybrid system, where certain IT functions are retained on-premise but others take advantage of cloud-based services, would enable D&GC to maintain a centralised approach to IT governance, yet eliminate the burden of managing essential Microsoft Exchange and datacentre services.

Throughout the project, Softcat worked closely with the D&GC IT team to ensure a smooth implementation. It provided extensive support, including hosting workshops and training events to ensure that end users could gain full value from the enhanced capabilities the solution would deliver. "Softcat and its delivery partner's ongoing support provided great peace of mind during the implementation," said Carol. "We're now confident that we have a solution in place that will enable us to meet all of our obligations under GDPR much more easily and that we're ahead of the game when it comes to delivering secure and highly functional IT services."

Solution highlights

- Optimised Microsoft Licensing across a number of agreements including: Enterprise, Server & Cloud Enrolment, Online Services and Select Agreements
- Enhanced cyber-protection and agile working capabilities
- Microsoft Enterprise Mobility + Security Suite, Windows 10 and Office 365

The Benefits

The solution has delivered an extensive range of benefits. Most importantly, D&GC now has much improved security and access to the very latest suite of Microsoft products. It will provide secure access to cost-effective, enhanced IT functionality and an IT environment equipped with the tools to boost job satisfaction, aid personnel retention and help end users work more effectively.

The foundations are now in place to help ensure simplified GDPR compliance and cyber security has been significantly enhanced, while simultaneously reducing the cost of anti-virus and firewall technologies. Softcat's longstanding relationship with Microsoft helped secure a favourable funding package, which, when coupled with the significant ongoing cost-savings the new technologies will deliver, will enable D&GC to meet its cost-cutting obligations without compromising on the effectiveness and security of its IT systems.

The migration to cloud-based Microsoft Exchange services and datacentre storage will both enhance data security and minimise the management complexity associated with managing email services. And with the migration to a Windows 10 environment, D&GC now has the capacity to switch to the full suite of Office 365 Enterprise E3 products. It can also take advantage of industry-leading cloud-platform technologies, including Microsoft Azure and Intune, to enable anytime - anywhere - from any device - connectivity, while benefiting from reduced management complexity and enhanced security.

D&GC's Office 365 programme now facilitates the delivery of several Council objectives, such as Health and Social Care integration, Smarter Working, Customer strategy, Schools for the Future and legal obligations such as GDPR, whilst maintaining a Safe and Secure ICT environment. Microsoft have identified D&GC's usage of Office 365 as very forward thinking, providing a model that other councils facing similar challenges may find interesting to consider moving forwards.

End users will now always have access to the most up-to-date apps and software, increased storage capacity and a much more agile working environment. The risk of cyber attack and sensitive data being compromised has been massively reduced and D&GC now has the peace of mind that legal requirements and council information management policies can be simply and robustly enforced.

Benefits at a glance

- Simplified GDPR compliance and significant cost savings
- Radically improved security and IT functionality
- Cloud-based services for added resilience and reduced management complexity

Why Softcat?

Softcat's extensive public sector experience and longstanding relationship with industry-leading technology providers like Core and Apajove contributed significantly to the success of the project. In challenging projects like this, where organisations have a pressing need to transform capabilities, reduce costs and ensure the safety and resilience of essential business processes, Softcat has the ability to deliver exactly what the client needs at a price that's right.

"We've had an excellent working relationship with Softcat and its delivery partners throughout the planning and implementation of the solution," said Carol. "Its help with building a robust business case, securing Microsoft funding, and providing consultation and training to help us get the most from the solution, really added value to the service it provided. We can now face the future with confidence."