

SOFTCAT HELPS DELT BUILD A ROADMAP TO IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

Datacentre



180 staff providing critical services to local government and NHS organisations

'Desktop-to-Datacentre' provision underpinned by leading-edge IT infrastructure

7,000 end users delivering services to a population of around 900,000

Plymouth-based Delt Shared Services Ltd (Delt) is a private company wholly owned by the Public Sector. It delivers a range of back-office support, including end-to-end IT service management and hosting of critical data and applications for local government and NHS clients, alongside payroll and pension administration services for local government, education and the private sector.

Around 7,000 Plymouth City Council and NEW Devon NHS end users rely on Delt technical infrastructure and support to deliver services to a population of approximately 900,000 local residents. Concerned only with providing services better, faster and cheaper than can be achieved with traditional in-house teams, Delt brings private sector agility and performance outcomes, underpinned by public sector ethics, to critical public service provision.

The Challenge

The Devon Sustainability and Transformation Plan (Devon STP) is one of 44 local initiatives tasked with encouraging a collaborative, systematic approach to delivering essential services for NHS and local government organisations. Over five years, it aims to transform local service delivery and ensure a comprehensive, sustainable strategy drives improvements in health, care and organisational efficiency.

Devon STP wanted to learn more about the economies of scale, process efficiencies and reduced complexity that can be achieved with a single shared service provider for the region's critical IT systems. As an existing provider to many of the organisations involved in Devon STP, Delt had extensive knowledge of the current delivery models and was asked to create a strategy setting out how it could scale to meet such a demand.

"Delt was created by Plymouth City Council and Devon NHS back in 2014," said Giles Letheren, Delt CEO. "We've been delivering IT services for multiple organisations across the region since, so we certainly knew the territory. It gave us a real insight into the specific requirements such a transformation would entail, and we knew from the off that although it would be a challenge, it was definitely achievable.

"Devon STP includes eight NHS organisations and multiple local government sites. The potential for rationalising duplicated infrastructure and technology, as well as streamlining services, was clear to see from Delt's perspective. We were confident that we could develop a strategy capable of underpinning significant improvements in back office systems and helping people collaborate more effectively - we just had to show Devon STP how it could be done."

The Solution

Softcat began working with Delt in April 2015 on a year-long implementation of a Microsoft Surface mobility solution for children's social care field workers. Following that initial project, the relationship has developed and Softcat has delivered service desk and networking solutions as well as providing ongoing support services ever since.

"We developed a really positive working relationship with Softcat during those projects," said Giles. "The people we'd worked with were tech-savvy and approachable and we knew that as a business it had a strong track record of successful transformation projects for public sector organisations.

"Discussions with Devon STP were ongoing for around eighteen months. As with any group made up of disparate organisations, there was much debate about the best way forward. A minority questioned the very feasibility of a single service provider being able to fulfil the requirements, given the complexity associated with the project. I felt we had to shift certain mindsets, and we thought Softcat could help us do just that."

Giles reached out to his Softcat Account Manager, Alexander Longos, who in turn introduced him to James Seaman, Softcat's Account Chief Technologist. James is a senior member of the Office of Chief Technologist Officer, (OCTO), Softcat's consultancy and advisory service. More importantly, however, he had hands-on experience of implementing a similarly complex project in the North of England.

James, acting in the capacity of an independent technology specialist rather than a Softcat employee, gave a detailed presentation to Devon STP. "It was a great opportunity to highlight exactly what had been achieved in the earlier project and illustrate how we could apply any lessons learned to Devon STP's strategic plan," said James. "Yes, it would be a challenge, but history had shown it could be achieved with the right strategy, the right technology and the right service provider. That was exactly the message I hoped to get across."

Following the positive reaction to James' presentation, Delt seized the initiative and contracted Softcat to help create a clearly defined Strategy Paper and Target State Model of a future where shared services are the norm. Softcat organised a series of workshops with the Delt executive team to get to grips with the challenge ahead.

Delt's existing provision was examined with a view to understanding what would be needed to fulfil on future expectations. Once that analysis was complete, a 3-phase approach was recommended: Enable-Transform-Innovate. More a driver for change than a simple strategy document, Softcat's input helped illustrate 'what good looked like' at each stage of the transformation and clearly defined how individual technologies could support those changes.

The strategy included comprehensive detail around how the virtual can be made physical, a position statement for every stage of the process and suitable options for delivering the capabilities Devon STP would need from a Service Design and IT Infrastructure perspective. Suggestions and recommendations about how best to attain measurable and achievable results informed every element of the Strategy Paper and all recommendations were backed up by a tangible implementation schedule.

The Benefits

"It's often the case that projects like this run the risk of becoming 'Shelfware' – lots of work goes into creating the strategy, but then it's put on a shelf and not acted upon," said James Seaman. "That really isn't the case here. The output we've helped to create is a tangible shared IT services roadmap capable of delivering achievable and measurable results. Delt has already implemented some of the recommendations in house, including an ID Management solution, and the project is having a big influence on how it delivers services to existing and prospective customers."

"We're an organisation that embraces rather than resists change," said Giles Letheren. "Delt is more than happy to do things differently if it enhances service delivery and enables more positive outcomes for our clients. Although Devon STP has yet to make the final decision on how it moves forward, we have provided a clear strategy highlighting the service improvements and cost savings we can deliver.

"Our public sector experience and close working relationship with many of the participants puts us in the best position to help achieve the radical transformation Devon STP needs to fulfil on its five-year plan. Yes, we took a risk commissioning Softcat to help formulate the strategy at our own cost, but it was definitely a risk worth taking. Even if Devon STP decides to do things differently, the lessons we've learned and understanding we have gained working with Softcat has provided the insight we need to deliver successful transformation projects for clients long in to the future."

Benefits at a glance

- Tangible shared IT Services roadmap
- Effective collaboration providing deep industry insight

- Strategy highlighting deliverable and achievable outcomes

Why Softcat?

"Plenty of vendors pay lip service to the notion of 'partnership,'" said Giles, "but I can honestly say that when Softcat says it, it means it! Throughout our ongoing relationship, it has consistently negotiated great value deals and delivered solutions, support services and industry insight that are second to none.

"Softcat's team of industry professionals are knowledgeable, helpful and fully conversant with the very latest technologies and how they can be leveraged to help transform IT Services. Quite simply, Softcat consistently delivers on its promises!"