



# Lancashire County Council

Helping Lancashire County Council meet transformational goals

**telent's** relationship with Lancashire County Council shows what can be achieved when a true partnership works towards a shared vision. In addition to ensuring the smooth running of existing services, **telent** has helped direct the Council's investments in new technology to achieve incremental benefits whilst working towards ambitious long-term goals.

## Network supporting 8,000 users distributed over 1,100 sq. miles

Lancashire is a county of astonishing diversity, with unspoilt landscapes, an attractive coastline and many rural villages as well as more urbanised towns. Serving more than 1.1 million people, the Council operates a network that is distributed across 41 sites, handling over 8,000 users.

Driven by central government transformational change, County Councils must look for ways to improve services whilst also reducing cost wherever possible. This is where Information and Communications Technology (ICT) comes in – with the right assistance, ICT could help councils to achieve these goals. Stephen Pierrie, Principal Systems and Software Engineer for Lancashire County Council's ICT Services division, explains further:

*"We are able to achieve our objective by making the Council more efficient through the use of technology, but we need to work with an experienced partner that has a high level of technical knowledge and competence."*

Stephen continues, *"We chose **telent** because they demonstrated a clear understanding of the Public Sector, and of the unique environment in which we work. They also offered the most cost effective support arrangement, which comes with their experience and their ability to deliver 'best practice' in this sector."*

## Taking care of today's technology, preparing for next generation networking

**telent** started by supplementing Lancashire County Council's already comprehensive in-house support capability with enhanced service levels. This included a 24hr incident alert system and consultancy services focussed on refining the Council's system development plans and disaster recovery strategies. But **telent's** services go much deeper than this.

Primarily, the Council required a service partner to support and maintain existing communications infrastructure. The Council's network, facilitated by 60 Aastra MX-One switches across 41 sites, required some immediate expansion, adding 250 users to their existing user-base of 8,500. In addition, the Council required the replacement of two live switches, supporting over 1,000 users, without any disruption to existing services.

The Council was also keen to capitalise on advances in data technology and the reduced cost of rolling out IP enabled, feature rich services like intelligent contact centres. 'Going IP' would provide Lancashire with long-term cost savings, but the Council needed help to find the right balance between capital investment and operational savings.

## Sweat existing assets whilst investing for future cost reduction

At the start of the contract, Lancashire County Council's network infrastructure was sufficient but usage was growing at a steady rate. Given there would be continued investment in capacity, they wanted to take advantage of the cost savings and feature benefits of IP Telephony. Having advised the Council to this end, **telent** have developed a pilot scheme to implement the council's first fully IP-enabled site in Burnley.

**telent** also identified one particular IP-based solution that could provide immediate benefit across the Council's territory at a reasonably low cost, by upgrading their existing Ericsson Call Centre platform to the latest Aastra Solidus eCare Multi Media Contact Centre. Many Council departments are using the new facility including payroll services, trading standards, and the internal ICT customer support team. Its main user however, is the Council's 'Ask HR' team – a centralised HR facility, which supports over 45,000 council workers including those employed in schools, the district council, social care and the fire and police services.

Aastra Solidus eCare provides almost 200 contact centre agents with enhanced features such as load sharing, skill-based routing and multimedia response options such as SMS and emails which will be deployed this year.



## A solid foundation for a flourishing relationship

With comprehensive network support & maintenance arrangements, an enhanced contact centre solution and a strategy for the future of the network all in place, the Council has already begun to realise its aim to achieve reduced costs hand-in-hand with enhanced services.

Stephen Pierrie sums up Lancashire Council's view of our progress so far: *"We needed a true partner, a company that we could build a strategic relationship with, and I firmly believe that **telent** have taken on this role. They are helping us to look at the bigger picture and at future plans, always bearing the government's vision in mind – to rationalise, centralise and economise!"*

*"We have an excellent relationship, any issues that do arise are dealt with swiftly, timescales are never missed and they always bend over backwards to help us. Unlike many of my other major suppliers, I feel I am treated like a top 5 customer. It's a really, really good service."*

New government targets require councils to encourage employees to work flexibly and remotely, which in Lancashire's case, requires the creation of four regional hubs. **telent** plans to introduce Unified Communications to enable Council employees to access the office environment wherever they are located; a pilot programme is underway.

Whatever challenges the future brings, **telent** will be on hand to help out, working closely with the Council to ensure they can continue to support the people of Lancashire effectively, whilst aiming to meet government targets.

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