

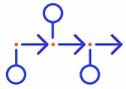
Case Study

Staffordshire County Council

Hybrid approach enables best of breed Call Centre and Unified Communications Solution for Staffordshire County Council



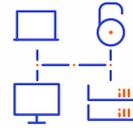
Collaboration



Forfusion's timeline

6 month engagement

- **01**
Vendor Proposal Evaluation
- **02**
Risk Mitigation Planning
- **03**
Technical Design Authority



Solution components

- Cisco Hosted UCS Platforms firmware
- Integrated Management Consoles
- VMWare ESXi Hypervisors)
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified Contact Centre Express
- Cisco Unified Border Elements
- Microsoft Office 365
- Microsoft Skype for Business (Teams)
- Microsoft Exchange for Messaging (hybrid)

Background

Covering an area of more than one thousand square miles and serving a population of over 870,000 residents, Staffordshire County Council (SCC) is keen to provide its local residential and business communities with the best facilities it can. This means keeping abreast of technology and taking advantage of the most effective solutions.

Communications, Telephony and Call Centre Dilemma

Staffordshire County Council's legacy unified communications and call centre platform comprised several disparate products and applications that were reaching obsolescence and would soon be outside the supplier's support lifecycle.

This was posing a costly and unacceptable risk to customer care and collaboration. At the beginning of Forfusion's engagement SCC were considering two or three different proposals for a replacement solution, but in an environment where there were multiple groups of constantly changing users, all with different requirements and levels of urgency, it was a challenge to see a clear way forward.





Requirement for greater workforce mobility and agile working

Ultimately SCC wished to identify partners who would assist in the long-term integration of emerging communications technologies to support greater mobility and agility in their workforce.

SCC also wished to identify greater organisational efficiencies and cost savings in their communications suite.

Their immediate requirement however was to carry out a strategic review of their on-going existing system audit. They also needed support in evaluating the quality of the replacement proposals they were considering.



Forfusion's vendor-neutral expertise

Stephen Long, Forfusion's project lead for SCC, explains: "SCC were already committed to replacing their comms and call centre platforms."

"They needed an independent consultant with the relevant technical expertise, certification and sector knowledge who could advise strategically on the options they had."

"They found Forfusion via the public sector procurement portal G-Cloud. With proposals on the table from both Cisco and Microsoft, SCC liked the fact that we have expertise in both. This meant we could identify and document all the wrinkles that would need to be ironed out to achieve a successful outcome."

"We undertook a review of work to date and made our solution recommendations for a hybrid environment integrating both Cisco and Microsoft products. This approach took into account the existing and sunk investments SCC already had in the technologies of both vendors."

"It was the ability to remain impartial and offer advice and challenge that most appealed I think."

Towards a Smart Working Solution

Forfusion worked with SCC across multiple project phases including the business case, project initiation and quality assurance. Working in partnership with SCC Forfusion acted as the Technical Design Authority and offered consultancy, integrated project management, engineering and implementation support.



01 Assess and Evaluate

Stephen says: "We began with vendor road mapping and evaluating whether a commercial arrangement or strategic partnership would be best fit."

"We carried out user and cost profiling in relation to licence usage and phasing in and out of legacy technologies. We also considered investment protection and whether any in-house skills could be utilised."

"Throughout this phase we audited SCC's environment and advised on contracts, vendor selection, migration plans and programme management. We de-risked critical decisions by working as an extension to SCC's team, which led to the Council requesting us to deliver a further 100 days' professional services, comprising project management, consultancy and engineering."



02 Hybrid Design

Stephen continues: "As the Technical Design Authority we provided quality assurance services for network upgrades and Cisco contact centre rationalisation, as well as the design and deployment of a Cisco and Microsoft hybrid environment."

"This work involved streamlining processes, ratifying scripts and consolidating call flows."

"Crucial to delivery was using commercial and technical people right at the top of their game who are used to delivering in-line with a tried and tested approach. Our advanced skills and knowledge in both Cisco and Microsoft camps were key to protecting the Council from short cuts by third parties."



03
Integrate

“One of our recommendations was to run multiple user workshops to determine user profiles and personas, before designing and deploying an in-production Skype for Business Proof of Concept,” says Stephen.

“This later became the unified communications platform for thousands of users, displacing a legacy Cisco platform.”

“The result was a split Cisco and Microsoft unified communications environment, working hand-in-hand with the council’s agile Smart working initiative and laying the foundations for the imminent best use of softphones and other UC applications from each vendor.”

“It afforded the council a clear path to deploying best fit communications tools across its user base.”



04
Operate

Stephen concludes: “Over an 18-month period the relationship with SCC grew, during which time Forfusion discussed many business and technological challenges.”

“Forfusion went on to win the first Technical Assurance contract and delivered subsequent support in other areas.”

“We were able to identify some very common challenges experienced by many organisations wishing to consolidate, and/ or operate a hybrid environment with migration to cloud in mind.”

Hybrid Vendor Solution Results and New Possibilities

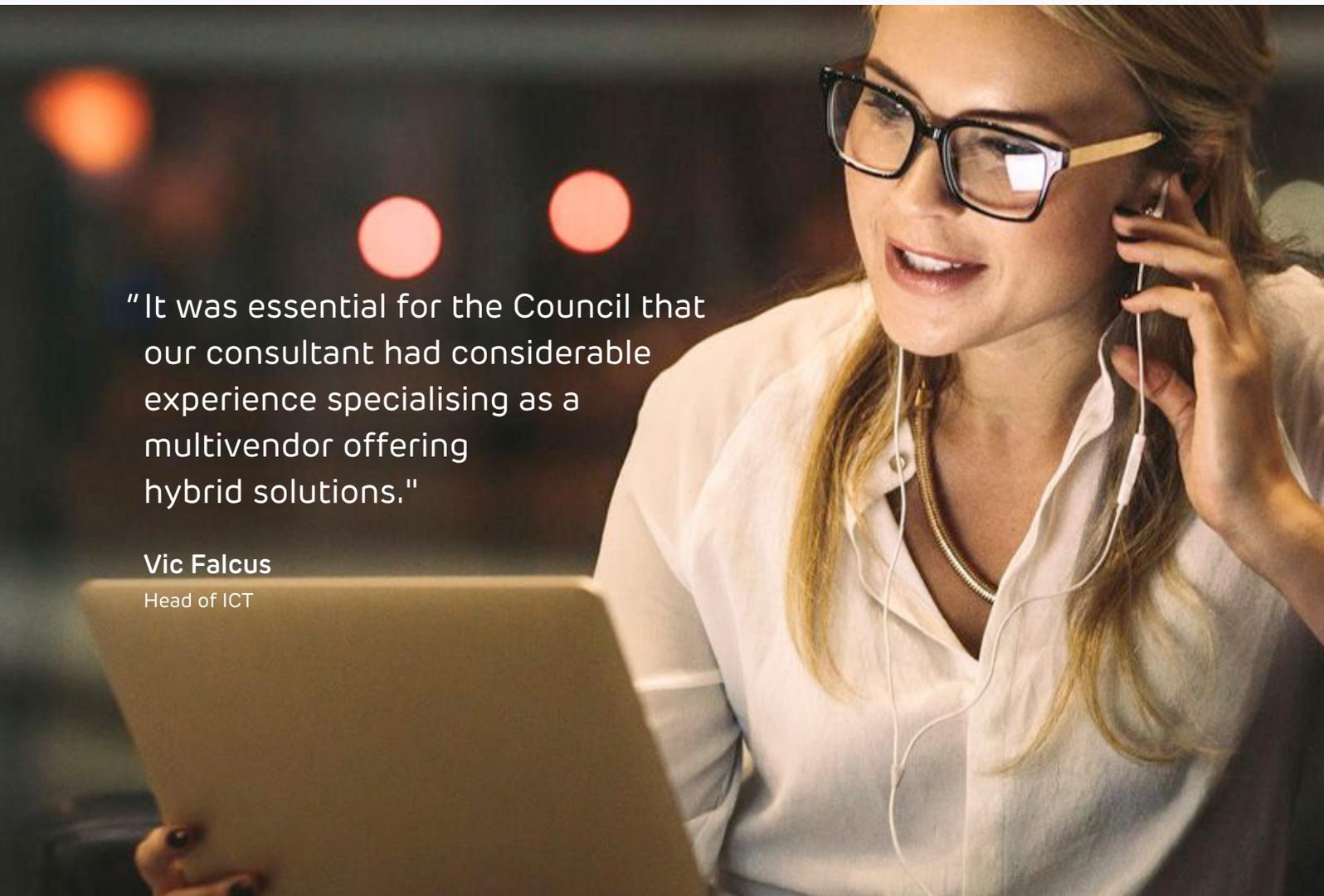
The Council continues to exploit Skype for Business as its Unified Communication toolset and has seen exponential growth in the use of Video conferencing and Video meetings well ahead of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The enabling of Smart Working initiatives means SCC are adopting a 2:1 staff to desk ratio at its Headquarters in Staffordshire. This is saving around £750,000 over a five year term in accommodation costs.

SCC successfully migrated all Cisco phones and Contact Centre agents to a Public Sector network partner, ensuring compliance and avoiding further operational overheads of £100,000 per annum.

Client Feedback

Forfusion's ability to understand the complexities associated with hybrid environments, particularly Cisco contact centre and Microsoft Office 365, enabled the best solution to be implemented, introducing new technology alongside legacy equipment.



"It was essential for the Council that our consultant had considerable experience specialising as a multivendor offering hybrid solutions."

Vic Falcus
Head of ICT



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