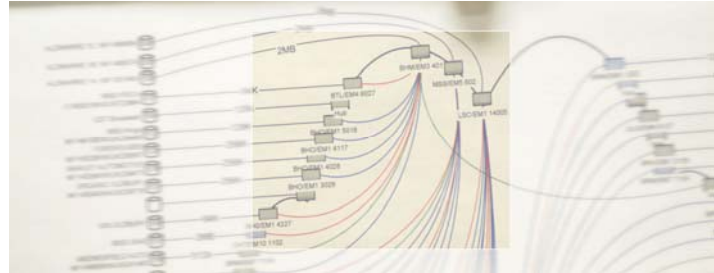


Broadening horizons to a 'Connected Cheshire'



“This strategic initiative provides an opportunity for the citizens and business communities of Cheshire to be at the forefront of electronic service delivery”



The Business Issue

The county of Cheshire boasts a history dating back over 2,000 years. Its landscapes reflect the gentle pastures of the English Midlands and Welsh Marches, as well as the rugged hills of England's North Country.

It is against this backdrop that the County Council is tasked with servicing the needs of the local community, businesses and environment in equal measure.

Consistent with central Government initiatives, its attention is focussed on the effective use of IT systems and 'eGovernment' methods; with the aim of continually improving the quality and accessibility of services available to the community.

The creation of a high-speed communications infrastructure linking all county services was seen as essential for achieving this vision.

Our Approach

The Council is working in partnership with a&o to design and implement a county-wide broadband solution to effectively connect schools, libraries and Council offices throughout the region.

Planning is critical to any large scale project and both a&o

and Cheshire County Council established an experienced project team to work together in evaluating, testing, implementing and supporting the technical and logistical migration process.

True partnership was vital in coordinating activities and open communication throughout the project ensured that a&o designed a flexible and scalable network that represented Best Value for the Council.

Key Benefits

The "Connected Cheshire" Project will launch Cheshire County Council towards achieving its 2005 Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) targets set by Central Government.

To the local community and Cheshire schools and libraries this translates as increased education, training and development across the Internet, now available through the new high-speed communications infrastructure.

This enhanced environment will also support ongoing development of the Council's financial and administrative systems, a factor which will improve the everyday speed and efficiency of Council services, whilst providing a modern, flexible IT platform for future Council services and initiatives.

Building the intelligent network foundation

The full realisation of the e-Government initiative can only be achieved by a council that is able to deliver information and systems seamlessly across the whole organisation as well as the wider community.

In the case of Cheshire, this necessitated the creation of a single network connecting some 192 remote council buildings and 352 primary, secondary and special schools and 39 libraries.

A particular feature of the proposed design was the adoption of high-speed radio technology. Boasting significantly reduced on-going costs over conventional leased lines, this solution also suited the close proximity of the core Council sites. Further use of broadband DSL circuits for the remote offices also allowed high bandwidth services to be provided at a minimal cost representing an exceptional return on investment compared to traditional methods.

Tailored service

Throughout the project, both Cheshire County Council and a&o followed a highly cooperative approach based upon long-term partnership. To this extent, a&o were able to gain a strong understanding of both the compelling reasons for the Council's objectives and external factors that will effect the development of the solution following implementation. This

knowledge sharing enabled the solution to be tailored around the specific needs of the Council's business strategy and subsequent technology objectives.

Technology Featured

- Synchronous Digital Hierarchy (SDH) microwave 100Mbps core network
- 11Mbps spread-spectrum radio and 2Mbps Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) edge links
- BT 'LES', Megastream and Learning streamcircuits
- Cisco Catlyst high-speed Ethernet switches

Services Featured

- Design study to determine technical strategy, migration and implementation plans
- Project Management to ensure budgetary control and achievement of objectives
- Technical implementation services
- On-site support during migration activities

Find out more:

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Jeremy Taylor
Chief Executive
Cheshire County Council