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Consolidation gives 'green' light to greater agility

"Fujitsu helped us to shape our ICT architecture and facilitated the achievement of our vision."

Vic Falcus – Head of ICT Service Management, Staffordshire County Council

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation
Staffordshire County Council

Services delivered
Implementation of an 'IT Landscape Transformation Project', including a consolidated ICT infrastructure, deployment of SAP Social Care and CRM applications, Microsoft Exchange upgrade and improved Disaster Recovery facility

Key metrics
• 30,000 staff serving 800,000 citizens

Benefits
• **Improved the customer experience** – is enabling more resources to be focused on front-line customer services
• **Extended service capability** – can undertake 'end to end' social care case management
• **Increased efficiency** – standard processes have improved availability, manageability and resource usage
• **Minimised risk** – replacing unsupported systems and adding disaster recovery has added greater resilience
• **Reduced operational costs** – has saved the cost of maintaining 120 servers and additional UPS systems
• **Achieved 'green' savings** – power consumption is down 15% and datacentre floor space will ultimately be cut by 50%
• **Minimised staffing** – improved efficiency has reduced Server Support staff numbers by 35%
• **Enhanced agility** – can manage latent server capacity to respond much faster to business needs
• **Enabled shared services** – spare datacentre capacity can be used to host systems for other organisations

Challenge

Staffordshire County Council (SCC) employs 30,000 staff who provide around 800,000 local people with vital services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In its drive to improve the value, choice and responsiveness of its operations the Council is undergoing a period of radical change. In particular, it needed to develop a new Social Care solution, based on SAP, to support the social care processes for adults and vulnerable children.

Vic Falcus, Head of ICT Service Management, Staffordshire County Council, says, *"When the Council looked at the new application demands it was clear that we had some challenges. The authority had underinvested in ICT in the past and services and applications had been added on a piecemeal basis with no infrastructural strategy. In particular, there was a massive sprawl of over 300 servers, running a huge number of diverse applications in support of the Council's diverse responsibilities, all operating to different standards. This was very labour intensive and physically cumbersome to manage and also caused us real problems with power usage and heat exhaustion. In addition, if our workforce is idle as a consequence of an ICT failure then that would cost us about £1 million a week in staff costs alone."*

So, the Council saw the opportunity to combine the implementation of new applications with the introduction of a strategic infrastructure platform that would allow it to consolidate its applications, data and backups and enable it to be more agile moving forwards. *"Rather than developing the Social Care and other business applications in isolation and simply exacerbating our problems by adding further islands of infrastructure, we chose to look in more detail at our reliance on ICT infrastructure and make a strategic decision that would help the organisation as a whole move forward,"* explains Vic Falcus.

Solution

As Staffordshire County Council was already using SAP's Human Resources (HR), Finance and Procurement systems it chose to develop the Social Care systems using SAP's Social Care and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications with electronic forms and workflow. However, it needed an experienced IT partner to help it implement its 'IT Landscape Transformation Project'.

Following a competitive evaluation, the Council chose Fujitsu to deploy a consolidated infrastructure platform, using high performance PRIMERGY BladeFrame technology for the Processing Area Network (PAN) and NetApp for the Storage Area Network (SAN). It was also contracted to remove old and failing systems, deploy the new SAP applications, upgrade Microsoft Exchange, introduce an improved level of Disaster Recovery, and migrate all non-SAP applications over to the new infrastructure.

Vic Falcus comments, *"Fujitsu came up with an innovative solution that was aligned to our vision for consolidation and single point management on one core platform. The overall package was also cost-competitive and we had confidence in its ability to deliver."*

Initially, Fujitsu installed and began commissioning the new BladeFrame hardware. However, during the acceptance testing process an unusual error was identified, whereby failover/failback facilities were not working as they should be. Vic Falcus says, *"The problem with the failover/failback was not a complete show-stopper, as it was deemed to be a manageable risk and we were confident that things were happening to resolve the problem. It took quite some time to fix, but it was a cutting-edge product. However, Fujitsu was still able to continue with the build of the SAP solutions. Ironically, this was our biggest concern at the outset of the project, but the SAP builds actually went very well and everything was delivered on time."*

The upgrade of the Microsoft Exchange system from version 5.5 to 2003 also went smoothly and reduced the number of servers down from 12 to just two. *"There was a need to build confidence at the start of the migration, but afterwards it was a 'sausage machine' process! We had accepted that there would be some disruption, but the Council's business was unaffected and it was also pretty much transparent to our 7,500 Exchange users,"* confirms Vic Falcus.

The Council already had a large amount of data stored on its existing NetApp storage systems that had to be migrated to the new Storage Area Network (SAN), but this was also achieved with no major difficulties and without affecting services to users.

Finally, Fujitsu undertook the consolidation of the Council's non-SAP applications, running on Windows servers, using its vBlade virtualisation solution, which is based on XenEnterprise Hypervisor. *"Most Windows servers run at low average levels of utilisation,"* explains Vic Falcus, *"so virtualising over 100 servers allows us to consolidate our CPU capacity and cater for peaks and troughs across the estate. In future, we will migrate other legacy systems, including our SAP HR and Finance systems onto the BladeFrame as part of our SAP ECC6 upgrade, which will consolidate a further 20-30 servers.*

"In line with our vision for a common, consolidated environment, we're now looking at moving to a virtual desktop environment, using XenApps running on the BladeFrame. Having a common server and storage architecture greatly improves our ability to manage and restore systems in a disaster situation. We want the back end ICT infrastructure to be utility like, so that we can focus innovation on facilitating the Council's main goals and improve service delivery and value to our clients."

Benefits

The new ICT infrastructure and SAP solutions implemented by Fujitsu are enabling Staffordshire County Council to:

- **Improve the customer experience** – removing disparate islands of ICT infrastructure is enabling more resources to be focused on improving front-line services
- **Extend service capability** – can undertake 'end to end' social care case management, support self-service/self assessment, improve performance management and information sharing and enable better financial control
- **Increase efficiency** – standard processes and procedures have improved availability and manageability, improved resource usage and enabled greater staff flexibility
- **Minimise risk** – has replaced unsupported systems and added greater resilience and disaster recovery to reduce the risk and cost of any failures

- **Reduce operational costs** – has saved the cost of maintaining 120 servers, avoided the need to purchase additional large-scale UPS systems and reduced the number of network connections from 120 to 10, freeing up high-end network equipment and associated maintenance and replacement costs
- **Achieve 'green' savings** – power consumption has fallen by at least 15%, which could rise to 20-25% once all applications are consolidated, datacentre floor space had been cut by 50% and the use of air conditioning has been reduced
- **Minimise staffing** – improved efficiency has reduced IT staff numbers by 35%, with fewer manual back-ups, less management and a more focused skill-set
- **Enhance agility** – can manage latent server capacity to respond much faster to business needs – instead of six weeks to procure and build a new server it now takes just 30 minutes to build a virtual server on the BladeFrame
- **Enable shared services** – spare datacentre capacity can be used to host systems for other organisations, such as the 'Staffordshire Partnership' supporting local schools and businesses.

"While the project certainly came with its challenges, we have achieved our initial objectives and now have a strategic platform that gives us a clear infrastructure strategy moving forwards," adds Vic Falcus. *"Fujitsu helped us to shape our ICT architecture and facilitated the achievement of our vision, and this will now allow us to provide reliable, agile and responsive ICT services, so that we can deliver better services for our citizens."*

Approach

A key element in Fujitsu's project delivery was a large element of knowledge transfer, including workshops, shadowing, training and extensive documentation, to enable the Council to fully exploit and effectively manage the new systems and architecture and maximise the long-term value of its investment.

Vic Falcus says, *"Throughout the project there has been an ongoing process of knowledge transfer and as we continue to use and learn about the new systems we will drive even more out of our investment."*

Expertise

With over 40 years experience of supporting the needs of customers, Fujitsu has a proven track record in providing complex systems integration and application development and management services that reduce costs, improve productivity and customer services and deliver a compelling return on investment. In particular, Fujitsu has over 4,000 SAP and Oracle specialists worldwide and privileged access to SAP's expertise and technology roadmap, which it can leverage to 'fill the knowledge gap' and future proof systems.

Vic Falcus comments, *"The project was ambitious with a number of critical milestones and dependencies; as with most new technologies issues evolved that had to be worked through. With Fujitsu's assistance we have achieved our strategic objectives and got to where we wanted to be."*

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Contact us on +44 (0) 870 242 7998 or
askfujitsu@uk.fujitsu.com or visit uk.fujitsu.com