

# Delivering refreshing changes in Lincolnshire's IT infrastructure

Public sector organisations need to meet the principles of openness, accountability and transparency which are the cornerstones of the government's strategy on public sector reform and improvement. In many cases, the relationship between customer and supplier can be complex and involve a number of parties. In these circumstances, choosing a partner who is able to demonstrate transparency and integrity gains added importance.



### Groundbreaking public private partnership

In line with government strategy for public sector reform, culminating in the Local Government Act 2000, Lincolnshire County Council formed a major public private partnership to outsource back-office business services. These activities employed more than 1,000 IT, finance, HR, property services, catering and payroll personnel. The £300m contract, awarded to Hyder Business Services (now HBS Business Services), represented a groundbreaking ten-year deal and was regarded as the formative strategic service delivery partnership in local government, redefining the shape of public private partnerships.

The contract would reduce costs and maximise the value-for-money return to the Council, which covers the third largest geographical area in England, by £50 million over its ten-year life. In order to ensure its IT infrastructure was capable of meeting the operational requirements associated with the contract and government modernisation objectives, HBS initiated a schedule of programmes.

### PC refresh programme

Maintaining an up-to-date IT estate is vital for productivity in any organisation, particularly in the face of challenging e-Government goals. As a result, Lincolnshire County Council established a four-year PC refresh programme under a hardware and services framework contract co-ordinated by Leicester based, Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO). A local authority purchasing and distribution consortium with a turnover in excess of £400 million, ESPO was formed in 1981 by Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire County Councils. DTP had been a supplier to ESPO for over ten years.

Selected by Lincolnshire County Council and HBS to provide Hewlett Packard hardware and services for the refresh programme, DTP won more than £2m worth of business in the first half of 2005 alone - evidence of their ability to both perform on price and provide comprehensive configuration and logistics services. In addition to procurement, DTP also provided a bonded warehouse facility, asset tagging according to PC type -

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capital or refresh, and desktop imaging which could take the form of one of five variations according to which Council department the PC was destined for. To allow HBS to monitor progress, DTP provided a weekly report for importing into the asset register.

A key strength was DTP’s flexibility to respond to any adjustments HBS might need to make to the programme, for example where the delivery schedule required adjustment, or where extra hardware such as CD writers and modems were called for. To ensure that the programme, and any adaptations, were implemented smoothly, DTP technical division worked closely with the relevant HBS project team.

### Schools programme

DTP also secured the first phase of a separate £5.5 million, four-year project to standardise IT equipment in 381 schools in the Lincolnshire Local Education Authority area. The LEA wanted to renew the school administration systems in use and create a single, joined-up network of school admin and curriculum users. By carrying out this implementation, schools would achieve an interoperable network and meet DfES guidelines.

Under phase 1 of the project, 200 schools each received a bundle of equipment including one HP server, a minimum of two HP workstations with TFT monitors, and one HP Colour LaserJet printer; other components such as external tape drives or USB floppy drives were included according to requirements.

This first phase of the programme, worth £1.2m, took the form of a staged roll-out from February to July 2005 and called for a number of configuration and imaging services. This included stripping down and rebuilding the servers with customer-specific components, changing the BIOS to Council specifications and, finally, installing a large 15Gb image. Workstations, similarly, were imaged and, along with the tape drives and printers, asset tagged. A specially tailored report was produced weekly and despatched to HBS for import into their asset register.

Delivering to individual schools over such a wide geographical area brought added logistical challenges. Through close cooperation with the project teams, HBS was able to rely upon DTP to respond swiftly to changes in schedule and, on the rare occasion of a fault, to promptly organise repair or replacement.

“This is one of the Council’s largest ICT projects and is critical to service delivery,” said Nick Sharpe, ICT Co-ordinator at Lincolnshire County Council. “Its current success, both in terms of delivery and user satisfaction, is a result of selecting dependable, first-class partners in the form of HBS, DTP and Hewlett Packard.”

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