



Unitary Authority Set to Achieve 27 Per Cent Savings Target with IT Management Tools

Overview

Country or Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Government—Local government agencies

Customer Profile

Wiltshire Council delivers public services to 466,000 people in south-west England. The authority was created in 2009 from a merger of the county council and four district councils.

Business Situation

Having decided to bring its outsourced IT back in-house, Wiltshire Council needed a new infrastructure for its Workplace Transformation Programme, ensuring that all its systems could communicate effectively.

Solution

Wiltshire Council deployed Microsoft System Center Service Manager 2010 and related products to improve IT support to the wider organisation, partners, and customers.

Benefits

- Service desk functions improved
- Better support at a reduced cost
- Greater resilience
- New ways of working through automation
- Microsoft Select Licence agreement cuts costs



“We set ourselves a target of achieving 27 per cent savings in IT within year one. The implementation of Microsoft System Center Service Manager has played a big part in our approach to delivering this.”

Glen Holmes, Head of ICT Design and Delivery, Wiltshire Council

United Kingdom (U.K.) unitary authority Wiltshire Council faced the challenge of bringing its outsourced IT service back in-house against a tight schedule. The council was also engaging in a Workplace Transformation Programme aimed at reducing costs and improving performance with new ways of working. In partnership with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Silversands, it was among the first councils in the U.K. to deploy Microsoft System Center Service Manager 2010 to simplify IT service desk operations. With multiple sites, 5,000 client computers, and 500 servers, the council needed to bring IT in-house by the beginning of 2011. The council forecasts that System Center Service Manager, System Center Operations Manager, System Center Configuration Manager, and the ProVance IT Asset Management Pack, will help it work towards achieving the 27 per cent savings target set for the IT department.

“Customer support was perhaps the most critical factor. Without processes in place for customers to address at least some of their own support needs, the in-house service desk could struggle to provide an adequate service.”

Glen Holmes, Head of ICT Design and Delivery, Wiltshire Council

Situation

Wiltshire Council, a high performing council in south-west England, in the United Kingdom, became a unitary local authority in the second quarter of 2009, when four district councils merged with the former county council. It employs 5,460 staff, who deliver public services to 466,000 people. After the merger, IT proved a significant challenge for the authority. The main issues were the inability of systems used by the five previous authorities to communicate with each other, different working practices, and the need for budget reductions.

The authority embarked on a Workplace Transformation Programme aimed at reducing its property costs, and, in turn, helping its staff to work more flexibly. To do this, they needed to improve IT support to the wider organisation, statutory partners, elected members, and customers. This involved guaranteeing ease of use by staff and councillors, ensuring maximum flexibility for where and how people work, standardisation of equipment and applications, and better security, including continued compliance with government standards.

The Workplace Transformation Programme aims to reduce the number of council buildings across Wiltshire, reducing the number of larger offices to four main hubs, while saving the council £85 million (U.S.\$136 million) over 25 years. The transformation plans also recognise that a common IT system across the council is essential to realise the benefits of reorganisation.

In 2006, the former Wiltshire County Council outsourced its IT under a five-year contract due to expire in 2013. Faced with the large amount of IT change brought about by the flexible working aspects of the Workplace Transformation Programme, the

council would have needed to re-tender the support contract to meet the needs of a much more mobile workforce. But this wasn't possible within the timeframes, and, as a result, the council chose to move IT service delivery back to in-house provision for the first time in 17 years.

Moving to an in-house service by a specific date in the first quarter of 2011 proved a considerable challenge because many parts of the new support infrastructure had to be built from scratch. Glen Holmes, Head of ICT Design and Delivery, Wiltshire Council, says: “The issues we faced included operational monitoring, service desk processes, customer self service, and asset life-cycle management. Customer support was perhaps the most critical factor. Without processes in place for customers to address at least some of their own support needs, the in-house service desk could struggle to provide an adequate service.”

The Wiltshire Council service desk was expected to log around 4,000 incidents, changes, and service requests a month, but initial demand has far exceeded this to total around 9,000 requests a month. Holmes says: “Once the service returned in-house, our technicians would be required to monitor around 500 servers and provide a self-service capability for 5,000 customers to log service requests, incidents, and password resets.”

Solution

Wiltshire Council engaged with Microsoft for advice on how to achieve savings and simplify its IT operations. Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Silversands recommended Microsoft System Center Service Manager 2010 to manage the IT environment. The product aims to improve IT service desk operations and asset management processes.

“Opalis provides us with an easy way to remove repetitive, time-consuming, manual tasks from our busy IT staff by automating data-centre operations through an easy-to-manage user interface.”

Glen Holmes, Head of ICT Design and Delivery, Wiltshire Council

In addition to providing users with a support request tool and self-service features, the technology integrates with other Microsoft System Center products. The pillars of System Center Service Manager 2010, for which Wiltshire Council is one of the first deployments in the U.K., include:

- **User-centric support.** With its self-service portal and integration with other System Center products, System Center Service Manager can improve user productivity, while reducing costs.
- **Data-centre management efficiency.** System Center Service Manager ensures centralised incident, problem, change, and release management, helping to restore services quickly and reduce downtime, while improving the reliability.
- **Control of IT costs and increased service efficiency.** A uniform view of the council's IT assets ensures the optimised use of IT resources to help achieve savings. Access to IT asset detail and associated contract and warranty information will allow the council's IT service team to respond more rapidly to incidents and change requests, minimising service costs.
- **Business alignment.** By optimising the council's resources to align with its business objectives in the Workplace Transformation Programme, System Center Service Manager works to lower the costs of IT compliance and provide integrated knowledge and reporting.

Silversands also recommended Microsoft System Center Operations Manager 2007 R2, Microsoft Forefront Identity Manager 2010 for security, and Microsoft System Center Opalis to integrate with the existing System Center Configuration Manager 2007 R2. Opalis is an automation programme for orchestrating and integrating IT tools to cut the cost of data

centre operations. It helps IT organisations automate best practices such as those found in the Microsoft Operations Framework and Information Technology Infrastructure Library. This is achieved through workflow processes that co-ordinate System Center and other management tools to automate incident response, change and compliance, and service life-cycle management processes. Holmes says: “Opalis provides us with an easy way to remove repetitive, time-consuming, manual tasks from our busy IT staff by automating data-centre operations through an easy-to-manage user interface.”

The solution also includes two Microsoft partner products. The Provance IT Asset Management Pack for System Center Service Manager 2010 was selected to manage financial, contractual, and organisational information—and support hardware and software asset management. The Service Manager pack solution from Cased Dimensions was also chosen, for service level agreement management. These tools were easy to install and configure and both run as management packs within the System Center Service Manager 2010 console.

As the council's implementation partner, Silversands has driven the deployment of System Center Service Manager and the Microsoft partner solutions. It has provided architectural guidance, design, and deployment services to achieve a defined set of business-critical goals related to the Workplace Transformation Programme. Steve Grieshaber, ICT Design and Change Manager, Wiltshire Council, says: “As the council's implementation partner, Silversands has been excellent. Its knowledge of System Center Service Manager, considering it's a relatively new product, has been exceptional.” Silversands will deliver an on-going support service for

“Microsoft System Center Service Manager supports end-to-end compliance management and automation for desktop and data-centre computers.”

Mark Newton, System Center Lead,
Silversands

System Center Service Manager to provide the council with peace of mind.

Benefits

In preparation for bringing its IT support function in-house, Wiltshire Council built an operations management infrastructure for its desktop and server estate based on System Center Service Manager 2010. This was the only way to achieve a seamless transition, while at the same time delivering savings in line with the council's budget.

The automation features of System Center Service Manager 2010 will avoid the need for multiple manual procedures and operations, thereby saving money. Holmes says: “We set ourselves a target of achieving 27 per cent savings in IT within year one. The implementation of Microsoft System Center Service Manager has played a big part in our approach to delivering this.”

Support for Users Improves Without Increasing Operating Costs

The automation of IT operations and enhanced self-service tools with System Center Service Manager 2010 mean that users benefit while the IT department achieves its cost reduction target. The integration between System Center products removes the requirement for a manual ticket process.

Mark Newton, System Center Lead at Silversands, says: “The service desk can log around 9,000 incidents, changes, and service requests a month, but we now have self-service capabilities for 5,000 users to log service requests, incidents, and password resets. We've aligned System Center Service Manager to business requirements by customising aspects of incident, change, and problem forms—as well as providing a customised user portal to deliver service request functionality.”

Council IT Becomes More Resilient and Compliant with Government Standards

The operations management infrastructure using System Center Service Manager 2010 and related products ensures greater resilience and compliance with the government Code of Connection (CoCo). CoCo is a set of official IT security baseline standards, which must be met for local authorities to have access to the Government Connect Secure Extranet.

Newton says: “Microsoft System Center Service Manager supports end-to-end compliance management and automation for desktop and data-centre computers. No single software product can make an authority CoCo-compliant, but System Center Service Manager is playing an essential role in helping manage internal controls.”

Service Desk Automation Supports New Ways of Working

The Workplace Transformation Programme at Wiltshire Council focuses on hot-desking, mobile working, and other flexible employee arrangements. Through connectors, System Center Service Manager 2010 can import data from other System Center products and Active Directory identity management software, helping ensure it becomes a centralised repository of information. The automation means that any request by a user generates an activity log. Newton says: “This helps prevent tasks from disappearing from the system—in addition, tracking all jobs helps IT managers assess workloads and make informed decisions about budgets and staff levels.”

Low-Cost Software Licensing Through the Microsoft Select Licence Agreement

The existing Wiltshire Council Microsoft Select Licence agreement for low-cost volume licensing of software ensured that

For More Information

For further information about Microsoft products and services, please visit:

www.microsoft.com/uk

or call 0870 60 10 100*

For hearing impaired customers with a Minicom, contact: 0870 50 30 400*

*Lines are open 8am–6pm, Monday to Friday. Please note, numbers prefixed 0870 will be charged at national call rates. For details of national call rate charges, please contact your telecommunications provider.

For more information about Silversands products and services, call or visit the website at:

www.silversands.co.uk

For more information about Wiltshire Council products and services, call or visit the website at:

www.wiltshire.gov.uk

the switch from the outsourced support service to the in-house arrangement was highly cost effective. Grieshaber says: “We acquired System Center Service Manager 2010 and related System Center products under the umbrella of our existing Select Licence agreement, while also benefiting from the support of Silversands.”

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to:

www.microsoft.com/servers/default.mspix

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Microsoft System Center Service Manager 2010
 - Microsoft System Center Operations Manager 2007 R2
 - Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007 R2
 - Microsoft Forefront Identity Manager 2010
 - Microsoft System Center Opalis

This case study is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY.

Document published March 2011

Microsoft®