

4C Strategies pull out all the stops for Melton Council

Melton Borough Council administers services for around 49,000 local residents in the rural market town of Melton Mowbray and the surrounding villages in north east Leicestershire. Following a serious fire at the Council's headquarters in Melton Mowbray in May 2008, which destroyed the Civic Suite and over half of the Council's offices, the telephony system was rendered unusable due to water damage. This disruption in communications had serious implications for the management of the huge range of services administered by the Council, many of them essential to the community.



When a fire resulted in water damage to Melton Council's telephony system, 4C assisted to help restore services as quickly as possible

The need for speed

Whilst the Council had access to a full disaster recovery facility based in Nottingham specifically designed for such a scenario which enabled them to function, the facility was available for a limited time only. This meant that time was a significant factor in issuing an invitation to tender to ensure that the Council was able to select, procure and implement their new communication systems as soon as possible. Despite the need to act quickly, it was also important to ensure that the new telephony solution was the right one, able to meet the diverse needs of the Council. The key drivers for the project were:

- The total loss of all telecommunications systems.
- The new systems needed to enable staff to communicate from a number of temporary locations across the area.
- The new systems needed to be procured and implemented at speed to ensure continuation of services as usual.

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With extensive experience of working with numerous local authorities across the UK, and the skills and knowledge necessary to complete the process quickly, 4C Strategies was retained by the Council after the fire to assist with a fast track procurement process.

"We felt that 4C was the most proactive consultancy with the most relevant experience in unified communications systems procurement for the public sector," comments Chris Stone, Head of IT at Melton Borough Council. "We needed to get up and running as quickly as possible – and the fact that 4C was a local company was an added bonus."

Working within a shortened time frame

Once appointed, 4C acted quickly. Lead Consultant Dave Mailer worked with the Council to identify their specific business requirements. These were then incorporated into a detailed specification for suppliers - all within just one week of appointment. With 4C's high profile and reputation for excellence within the public sector, many suppliers responded to the specification, which was out for just three weeks. 4C then continued to play a pivotal role in ensuring that the tender process was completed within a shortened time frame, including:

- Liaising with the suppliers who responded to the tender and
- Evaluating the incoming tenders to assist in devising a final shortlist of prospective suppliers.

This meant that the whole process – from the fire to the placing of the contract – took just five weeks to complete; a procedure which would normally be expected to take around three to five months. But, the input from an independent consultancy also ensured that no corners were cut.

In addition to working on the tender process, staff at 4C also assisted the Council in negotiating the final contract which enabled the relevant equipment to be installed and ready for use for when the staff moved into their temporary accommodation at different sites across the borough. This minimised the disruption for Council personnel and their clients at a difficult time, ensuring that services could run as normal and that the Council's clients were unaffected.

A 'can do' attitude

Staff at Melton Borough Council were delighted with 4C's 'can do' attitude, combined with their knowledge of the unified communications market which enabled the whole process to be pushed through much more quickly than would usually be possible. "4C provided a professional and highly efficient service which enabled the Council to quickly procure a new communications system, ensuring that a high level of service was delivered to the public whilst the Council recovered from its disaster," comments Chris Stone, Head of ICT at Melton Borough Council.

To find out how you can make more of your communications by having a clear strategy in place, contact 4C to arrange for an initial no-obligation fact finding consultation. **Visit our website www.4c.co.uk, call 01858 438 938 or email office@4c.co.uk.**

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