

Hornbill's Supportworks exceeds expectations for Waveney District Council

Waveney District Council (WDC) is a Local Authority for the County of Suffolk. The Council is responsible for environment and urban regeneration, housing, leisure, administration of council tax and business in the area. In total, the Council is responsible for providing services to over 110,000 citizens in the district.

With such a wide remit, the council's 600 employees and 48 elected members rely upon its IT systems - desktop and purchasing, databases and email - to operate effectively. To support its nine main offices, satellite offices and home workers with communications and business systems, the central IT department has invested in Hornbill's Supportworks helpdesk management system.

The IT team initially chose Hornbill's solution to replace its existing helpdesk system, Sunrise.



Business Benefits:

- Increased functionality reduces time spent logging calls and improves analyst productivity
- Greatly increased customer communication through automatic and integrated email functionality
- Improved service levels using the bespoke 'traffic light' system
- Customisable reporting and forms helps to manage call trends and track performance
- Published API enables customisation and configuration at lowest database level
- Integral database provides asset-tracking feature
- Faster resolution of queries from stored asset details

Meeting the Criteria

Hornbill's Supportworks was selected following an evaluation and demonstration of seven competitive vendor solutions. According to Waveney's Help Desk Manager, Dave Cutting, "We had a very detailed list of requirements that we wished the new system to meet. At the first presentation Hornbill's solution impressed us - it met our expectations and delivered against all of our criteria.

"We assumed that it would be prohibitively expensive, however, looking further into the initial outlay and ongoing maintenance costs against the competitors, we were delighted to find that Hornbill offered the highest level of functionality for least cost and the best value for money."

A Single Point of Contact

The Council's ICT helpdesk is the single point of contact for Council employees, located at the Town Hall and off-site. The team provide all IT related support, whether software upgrade requests, PC-related queries or communications issues.

Currently there are 17 users of Supportworks in the IT team. The frontline helpdesk staff, log all support calls using Supportworks. In addition to the frontline operators at any one time there are two technical service officers assigned to concentrate on incidents that can be resolved remotely or on-site at the town hall campus and off-site.

The software is used to log, prioritise, route and track all incoming calls. Using Supportworks the IT team logs between 450-600 support calls per month and over 100 requests for change. It also monitors adherence to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for its IT service management processes.

Essential Requirements

When initially identifying a solution the IT team drew up a list of essential requirements. These included the ability to log, time track and categorise calls, workflow controls to assign tasks to individuals and automated email integration advising users of their call status. Also important was the ability to support and fulfil the change management cycle from request through to authorisation.

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Dave Cutting
Help Desk Manager
Waveney District Council

The helpdesk uses the asset functionality in Supportworks to store key details of printers and computers that can be referred to during support calls. A knowledgebase is being developed, storing common problems and solutions that are easily accessed by straightforward searches. Waveney Council also uses the reporting function to identify common faults and plan pro-actively.

"The ability to record assets in Supportworks meets our current needs. We have a thin-client based network, which means that unlike for PCs we do not have a huge amount of information for each separate asset because individual workstations have only minimal software installed."

A Stepping Stone to ITIL

The IT department within Waveney DC have adopted some of the best practice principles of ITIL and many of the staff have completed the ITIL foundation qualification. David Cutting commented, "The built in flexibility of Supportworks means we have been able to use the standard version to support our first ITIL initiatives, providing a cost-effective stepping stone as we move down the ITIL path."

Professional Service Team

The IT team was particularly impressed with the changeover from the old system. Hornbill provided advice to ensure that no data was lost and how best to ensure a smooth transition.

"The professional services team was brilliant," said Cutting. "I couldn't fault them; they are always consistently excellent to deal with - very honest and personable."

Since implementing Supportworks, the IT team has been delighted with the results. "Supportworks has met my expectations 100%," said Cutting. "Our customer service delivery has improved and we have the statistics to prove it. We now spend a lot less time logging incidents and more time resolving them."

One of the key reasons for the improved customer service is the ability for every support analyst to have an overview of the call status. The 'traffic light' system that colour codes calls according to priority enables the analysts to quickly identify which calls take precedence. From the customer point of view it ensures that call waiting is managed effectively and smoothly.

Many customers of the IT helpdesk at the council like to speak with support personnel directly. However, for those that like to log calls remotely, the IT Team will be deploying a simple form on the intranet to enable calls to be logged.

Easily Customisable

Cutting is impressed with the configurability of Supportworks. With a strong programming background himself, Cutting has been able to create user forms and provide links across fields within the database that enable forms to 'self-populate' with data. This also helps the support analysts when logging calls and entering data.

"Supportworks is a well designed, robust and customisable product. What's more, Hornbill's published API approach works very well for us," explained Cutting. "As a company they are very open and supportive of clients wanting to customise the software. Many vendors prefer to carry out configurations themselves, but Hornbill's attitude is great - they just say 'tell us more about what you are doing'."

The success of Supportworks in the helpdesk function means that it is well placed to be extended to provide support solutions for other departments to meet the business needs of Waveney District Council. Many Councils have already effectively extended the use of Supportworks to support their HR and facilities management departments.

"Supportworks has helped us to meet our business objectives. As a council we always strive to embrace technological changes that benefit our staff and the wider community. Replacing our helpdesk with Supportworks has enabled us to do just that - increase our level of internal support to officers so that they in turn can better serve the community." concluded Cutting.

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Assetworks

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