A VERY ROYAL APPOINTMENT: ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA CROWNED SMART COUNCIL

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) has undergone a smart transformation. This transformation didn't just involve upgrading its wireless network however: it supported flexible working initiatives for a multitude of users, including visitors and neighbouring boroughs – all while achieving full PSN compliance.

Historically, RBKC's office space followed a conventional plan with fixed work stations and a silo environment– but now, with the investment into Aruba Networks WiFi, it is an open-plan, modern layout fit with anywhere, anytime working. "The office is a great example of how a flexible, public sector workplace should look and function," says Russell Hookway, Network and Telecommunications Manager, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, who was responsible for the delivering the wireless network project.

The transition presented many challenges along the way. The first was that the project needed to meet the objectives of the Space Programme which, Russell explains, tasked the Borough to find better ways of using IT to allow the flexible use of desks, mobile working and hot-desking for the council's 2,500 employees.

"In order to achieve the Space Programme goals, we approached Khipu Networks as one of our long-term suppliers to extend the implementation of an Aruba Wi-Fi

A STATE-OF-THE-ART SYSTEM

While the programme has been fully functioning for three years, Khipu continue to support the borough, and ensure its network is still performing well.

"Several years on after the initial Wi-Fi network was rolled out, Khipu are now updating specific products to give us a faster and better network," explains Russell. "With the tri-borough set-up, scalability has always been on our wish list to support the increase of users, and these upgrades afford us with more functionality, and capacity for growth."

Originally, the borough had the Aruba 3600 Series controllers, but they have now invested in the state-of-the-art 7200 Series controllers, capable of 40GB throughput, boosting application delivery and improving the user experience. The primary aim of this upgrade was enabling Wi-Fi to be the first choice for connectivity, opposed to cable. The second was permitting the council to support the inevitable switch in technologies to mobile devices (i.e. CYOD (Choose Your Own Device)).

"The access points have moved to the latest standard too: from 802.11N to 802.11AC. The new access points are fitted with Integrated Aruba ClientMatch™ technology, which ensures consistently high performance across the WLAN infrastructure.

Moving to the brand-new controllers and access points, it was crucial there was full access security with the tri-borough shared services being retrieved through the network.

"Aruba's WiFi technology has policy management, guest access and a self-service web portal. We can now be sure our Wi-Fi network has the scalability and security we rely on," adds Russell.

solution. A key part of this was ensuring that using the Wi-Fi was seamless and secure," reveals Russell.

"Our move to a flexible workplace here at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is part of a much bigger picture. We are currently combining our services with Hammersmith & Fulham and Westminster City Council under the tri-

borough project. This joint venture requires that staff from the three councils can work within the same developing environment. Naturally, as a shared services provision this makes our ability to work together using shared resources crucial."

RBKC's very traditional, static network infrastructure meant that connecting to the internet required users to plug into one of three cables into their machine – specific to whom they were employed. Consequently, the Borough needed to ensure its new Wi-Fi solution offered sufficient coverage – initially for its "in-house" users and then to deliver for additional users including visiting boroughs and visitors.

Russell continues: "The Aruba solution has seamlessly transitioned the council's workforce from a fixed cable desktop environment to a PSN-accredited mobile-enabled one, whilst maintaining connectivity to the Borough's in-house applications."

A UK government programme, PSN aims to unify the network infrastructure across UK public sector organisations, and create a more open and competitive ICT marketplace in the public sector.

Meeting Public Services Network (PSN) compliance is a top priority for councils, yet many are finding it challenging to meet the rigid security requirements. "With six PSN Standards Configuration Controls to meet, compliance was no easy feat. But working in partnership with Khipu on the Aruba system implementations, ensured we met PSN compliance, making the project a great success," says Russell.

Teamed with PSN compliance, security was a top priority for the Borough as it transitioned from a fixed network to a wireless one; especially with several user groups connecting to the network.

To complement the wireless solution, RBKC needed a secure guest service for the public, but a service like this presents several challenges. One is admin – the council need an audit

trail which requires accounts and credentials, so someone has to create accounts and passwords – but it must also be web filtered too.

To create a secure guest experience, Khipu deployed Aruba's Clearpass Guest Access solution. If visiting users – such as members of the public and consultants – are in the building or nearby, they can connect as a guest, and the system automatically emails and texts them their login credentials.

"Our Wi-Fi is enjoyed by many people today and by facilitating effective mobile working, it ensures IT does not get in the way of people doing their day jobs. The new smarter office, fitted with Wi-Fi, ensures that IT is no longer an inconvenience or hassle to employees, but instead is an enabler across our workforce," explains Russell.

SOLUTION

- Aruba 7220 series controllers in HA configuration
- Aruba AP225 access points in council buildings
- Aruba RAP3 remote access points for remote working
- Aruba ClearPass Policy Manager™ in HA configuration
- Aruba ClearPass Guest Solution
- AirWave Wireless Management Suite™

BENEFITS

- Full wireless coverage in all offices
- Network extended to neighbouring councils and home offices
- Secure guest access without IT or administrative intervention