



Unified communications system helps North Ayrshire Council improve collaboration and reduce costs

Story Snapshot

Following a successful tender process, Insight was selected to upgrade the unified communications platform for North Ayrshire Council.

The solution was designed and delivered by Insight to improve the efficiency of the council’s telephone service, enhance the employee and citizen experience and create a future-fit infrastructure to take advantage of coming advances in technology.

The solution provided covered many areas, including:

- Voice calls services & infrastructure.
- Electronic billing services.
- Direct Dial-In (DDI).
- Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).
- A hosted or cloud-based telephony solution.
- Maintenance and support services.



Public Sector

Background

North Ayrshire Council wanted to upgrade to a Unified Communications platform to improve its resilience and flexibility. Its existing system was made up of multiple disparate PBX systems. As these weren’t part of a centralised corporate support package, costs were high, and the aging hardware was at risk of no longer being supported by the supplier.

As part of a broader modernisation programme, the council was also looking to improve communications for both staff and citizens. Simplifying the system for citizens was a priority.

Challenge

North Ayrshire wanted a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) trunking service to enable voice over IP (VoIP) connectivity with the public switched telephone network (PSTN). This would provide the council with the flexibility it needed to allow staff to work from anywhere, communicating via laptops and headsets, and also provide an easy forward step to cloud-based telephony in the future.

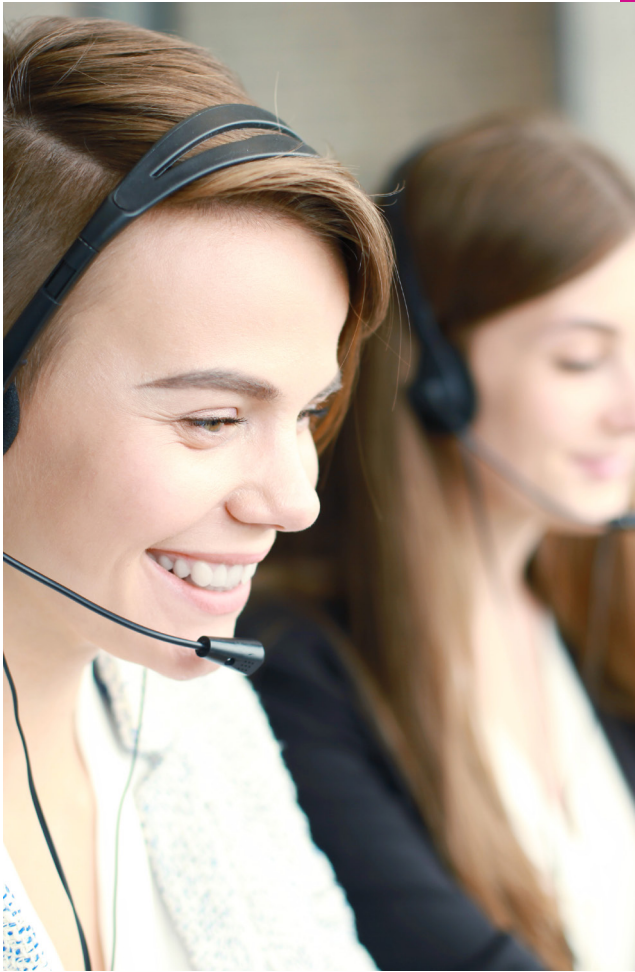
The project was put out to a mini competitive tender in 2019 through the Scottish government’s dynamic purchasing system (DPS). The council evaluated submissions from three providers, from which Insight was selected, scoring highly on the ratio of cost to quality.

“The technical skills that Insight brought to the project were highly valued. They built a deep understanding of our needs and configured a solution that not only upgraded our corporate telephony system and integrated it with existing systems, but also makes it easy to take the next onward step to cloud telephony and cloud-based SaaS.”

Iain Chisholm, Contracts & Assets Team Manager, North Ayrshire County Council.

“It had been a particularly challenging time with changes in staff, remote working and Covid – Insight helped us bring about a happy ending.”

Iain Chisholm, Contracts & Assets Team Manager, North Ayrshire County Council.



Solution and Outcome

As an accredited partner to over 2,100 top-tier manufacturers, Insight could offer a unified solution that would best meet the council’s needs without tying it into a specific vendor. North Ayrshire Council was assured that the solution would deliver both best fit and best value. Insight ensured that the new unified communications system would be compatible with the existing systems and meet the council’s future cloud-based telephony and cloud-based software-as-a-service roadmap.

While North Ayrshire Council was able to update and future-proof its voice platform with SIP trunks in many locations, some sites in rural areas lacked ethernet connectivity capabilities required for cloud-based communications solutions. Insight therefore advised that these locations were best served by retaining their PBX system. Insight’s technical teams configured the solution that combined a service developed by a leading international provider of Unified-Communications-as-a-Service (UCaaS) with PBX maintenance services from a local company based in Kilmarnock.

Insight developed a simplified billing approach for the solution. The council benefits from the fixed cost of SIP telephony, including a package of call minutes, and receives a single invoice for its telephony and communication services rather than having to process multiple invoices from several suppliers.

Why Insight?

Insight’s technical services team provided superior knowledge complementing the council’s expertise to deliver and transition to the new unified communications platform.

Moving from physical telephones to soft-phones and headsets means staff can make and receive calls from any location. This proved essential for remote working, but it also means that fewer calls are missed, making it easier for citizens to access the council.

FAST FACTS

Development

Insight delivered a new unified communications service that meets the council’s needs today and enables future development.

Upgraded

The upgraded corporate telephony system unifies a number of disparate systems and streamlines billing to a single invoice.

Collaboration

The VoIP and soft-phone capability offered by SIP telephony improves collaboration between teams and enabled remote working during Covid.

Value

Key technical skills supplied during the project allowed the council to configure a solution that matched quality with value.