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Editor Stuart Littleford MCIJ
Email: editor@gpsj.co.uk

News and Features Editor Stacy Clarke
Email: s.clarke@gpsj.co.uk

Business Development Manager Mike Lucas
Email: mike.lucas@gpsj.co.uk

Advertising Sales Lucy Hartman
Email: sales@gpsj.co.uk

Circulation Manager James Thomson
Email: info@gpsj.co.uk

Production Mike Farmer Associates
Email: mick@mffassociates.co.uk

Transport Correspondent Nick Melling
Email: transport@gpsj.co.uk

Business & Finance Manager Allan Roach
Email: accounts@gpsj.co.uk

Legal Advisor Cleland Thom
www.ctjt.biz



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Wates FM clinches major London MEP deal

Wates FM, the Wates Group's newly launched facilities management business, has secured a contract to provide MEP services at 110 Bishopsgate in London, becoming the first appointment since the business re-brand was launched last month.

The contract will see Wates FM deliver MEP services at the 46-storey commercial skyscraper, supporting existing and prospective tenants with operational management on

behalf of Heron International.

The appointment marks a significant step in the growth of Wates Facilities Management business and subsequent expansion of the Wates Group's nationwide FM capabilities in June 2019.

Formerly operating as Wates Smartspace, Wates FM has become part of Wates Property Services alongside the Group's Living Space business, a move that has seen the two businesses combine their expertise and resource.

James Gregg, Managing

Director of Wates FM, commented: "Our appointment to deliver MEP services at 110 Bishopsgate marks our largest FM appointment and is the first in our exciting new journey as Wates FM. The scale and quality of the services required for the contract reflect the high standards of delivery we are committed to providing.

"We have engaged closely with our client at 110 Bishopsgate to understand the challenges within this landmark building and this collaborative approach will be maintained throughout the

contract's duration to enable our team to build and deliver a building strategy of unrivalled standards."

Wates FM currently manages over 350 commercial properties, delivering services including statutory compliance, cleaning, security, catering, portage, front-of-house, help desks and computer-aided facilities management (CAFM), as well as critical systems, mechanical and electrical and building fabric maintenance through a mix of site based and mobile teams.

Councils introduce PSPOs to protect our moorland

Oldham and Tameside Councils have banned fires and barbecues on the moors above the local authorities.

Two Public Spaces Protections Orders (PSPOs) will be put in place from Friday to protect huge swathes of land – and wildlife – following a number of devastating fires over the last few years.

The orders come into force in time for the Bonfire period – traditionally one of the busiest times for the emergency services due to the number of fires and fireworks being set off.

We've introduced the orders following a consultation. We asked residents and interested parties and stakeholders, such as United Utilities (UU) and the RSPB, for their views on the PSPOs and a large majority supported the proposal.

From November 1 anyone found lighting a fire, barbecue, or other objects such as fireworks and sky lanterns, will be given a fixed penalty notice of £100, or face prosecution.

Failure to pay any fixed penalty amount could also lead to

prosecution.

There are exemptions for private residential areas but any land that has a public right of way or public access is included in the PSPOs.

Signage will now be put in place around the designated area to advertise the PSPOs, which are in place for three years.

Councillor Arooj Shah, Deputy Leader of Oldham Council and Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Communities, said: "Our moorland is some of the most beautiful countryside in England and must be protected.

"That is why we've worked with Tameside Council and our partners in the police, UU, RSPB and fire service to put these orders in place.

"Prohibiting barbecues and fires sends a clear and strong message and these orders are in place to stop damage to property and possibly life.

"We want residents and visitors to enjoy these areas but at the same time people need to be responsible and respect the moors."

Councillor Allison Gwynne,



Tameside Council's Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, added: "It's very apt that the PSPOs take effect close to 5 November.

"For reasons that are very obvious, it's at this time of year that the chance of fire is greatest, and the emergency services are stretched.

"Although last year's moorland blaze was especially bad, and drew worldwide attention, fires are a constant hazard during the dry, summer months. The new PSPOs will help us combat this problem and protect people, wildlife and property."

Area Manager Damian O'Rourke, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, said: "We are really pleased that

the Public Space Protection Orders have been enforced in public areas across Oldham and Tameside meaning that those found to be lighting fires and barbecues on our moors will be

landed with a fine.

"The PSPO coupled with our prevention and reassurance work around moorland fires will hopefully reduce the chance of this kind of fire breaking out and a repeat of last year's incident – which stretched our Service to its limits. Not only were our resources used, but those from neighbouring fire and rescue services and those across the UK, the Army, private sector as well as many volunteers.

"We continue to ask people to take care, especially when on the moors, and never light a barbecue or start any kind of fire. As well as see people receive a fine, these fires are devastating and the consequences so costly – to the community, the environment and to our service and resources.

"Finally, if you see a fire in the countryside please dial 999, providing as much information as possible about its location, and never put yourself in danger tackling a fire."

Six Degrees delivers secure, cloud-led services through the YPO's data centres, maintenance, cloud hosting and security framework

Managed services provider further reinforces its public sector credentials after being accepted onto the YPO's Data Centres, Maintenance, Cloud Hosting and Security framework. Built following close engagement with the YPO's members, Six Degrees' acceptance onto the framework demonstrates how its services are closely aligned to the challenges public sector organisations are looking to overcome.

UK-based managed services provider, Six Degrees, has today announced that it has been accepted onto the YPO's Data Centres, Maintenance, Cloud Hosting and Security framework. This expands the channels through which public sector organisations are able to procure transformative cloud, managed, colocation, data security and network connectivity services from Six Degrees. Six Degrees delivers large-scale, quality IT services that are aligned to the objectives of UK public sector organisations, enabling them to improve citizen services through the intelligent utilisation of transformational technology services.

Six Degrees' technology services meet the financial, operational and regulatory requirements of UK public sector organisations, enabling them to meet their business challenges head-on and improve the quality and effectiveness of the services they deliver to citizens. As an established technology provider to the UK public sector, Six Degrees has been delivering cloud services to the likes of Government Digital Service, Ministry of Justice, Crown

Prosecution Service, Cabinet Office, Home Office,

Local Authorities and blue light organisations. The new YPO framework is one of a number of frameworks through which public sector organisations can purchase services from Six Degrees; the other frameworks include G-Cloud 11, Network Services 2, and Scottish Government Cloud Services Framework. By joining YPO's new framework, Six Degrees has demonstrated that it recognises the different channels through which public sector organisations wish to procure services, and works hard to ensure that it can operate through the most appropriate channels for each engagement.

Thomas Konopka, Industry Director – Public Sector, Six Degrees, said: "At Six Degrees we continually invest in delivering the best possible services to UK public sector organisations, through the most appropriate channels. Not all organisations wish to procure services through large-scale frameworks like G-Cloud 11 and Network Services 2; the YPO's new framework is appropriate for organisations wishing to procure highly specific services in a straightforward manner, and we are proud to be one of the 29 suppliers that have been approved for the framework.

"YPO's new framework was built following close consultation with the organisation's members and reflects the needs of Local Authorities throughout the UK. Six Degrees has been accepted onto every lot that we bid for, demonstrating that our services are closely aligned to the challenges that Local

Authorities and other public sector organisations are looking to overcome."

Six Degrees has been accepted onto the following lots on the new YPO framework:

- **Lot 5 – Cloud, Cloud Services & Hosting.**

Compliant, secure and high-performing cloud and managed service solutions for public sector organisations that support the digital transformation of legacy systems.

- **Lot 7 – Managed Service.**

Tiered managed services for incident support or request fulfilment, providing ITIL-aligned process overlays to ensure that IT services continue to be delivered to the highest standards.

- **Lot 10 – Colocation/ Shared Hosting Services.**

Secure and flexible colocation solutions delivered from Tier III+ data centres, providing optimal uptime, availability and security whilst meeting public sector organisations' data sovereignty requirements.

- **Lot 11 – Data Security Solutions.**

Award winning security services that give public sector organisations valuable insights into the risks they face, and support the ongoing mitigation of security threats across all attack vectors.

- **Lot 12 – Network Connectivity Services.**

Robust network services that connect organisations, delivering access to key systems and internet services whilst improving security and reducing complexity.

Konopka concluded: "At Six Degrees we are passionate about enabling our public sector clients' brilliance.



SSCL signs new deal to extend government business services to 2023

Shared Services Connected Limited (SSCL) has announced that yesterday it signed a three-year contract extension worth over £100 million with seven government departments in collaboration with Government Shared Services (GSS), to continue to provide a range of critical business services.

As part of the agreement SSCL has renewed its partnership with GSS, part of the Cabinet Office, to ensure that SSCL services are fully aligned with the objectives within its Government Shared Services Strategy, which was refreshed in September 2019, and sets out an ambitious vision for transforming delivery of finance and HR

services over a 10 year period.

For the past six years, on behalf of the government, SSCL has been handling over £50bn of yearly payments, processing almost seven million annual transactions and ensuring more than a quarter of a million public servants every month get paid correctly and on time. SSCL is on track to deliver savings of up to £400m by end October 2023.

The deal to extend the relationship is focused around a renewed commitment to deliver efficient, innovative and user-focused shared services for the government. Enhanced user experience is at the forefront of new service developments – providing government employees with access to the very latest

digital technologies, which aligns to the current transformation agenda of government.

John Neilson, CEO Public Sector SSCL said: "Our vision is to help the UK public sector save money and enhance quality so that it can improve services, innovate to enhance the quality of life for us all, protect people and the environment and deliver better outcomes for UK citizens and businesses.

"We are delighted to confirm our contract extension that will continue to drive enhancements to services with government departments. The extension builds on the achievements we have made over the past six years bringing departments onto a single platform, enhancing

the end-user experience with investments in new technologies and platforms including robotics, intelligent automation and enhancing our self-serve portals, and ultimately continuing to enable the government's transformation to cloud."

Andy Helliwell, Executive Director, Government Shared Services said, "Our ambition is, above all, to create a future where civil servants' ability to support government priorities and deliver services to the citizen is enhanced by the shared services they use. Shared services need to be mobile, accessible, intelligent and automated, to increasingly anticipate what the user needs to deliver a seamless, secure and intuitive user experience."

Kathleen Kelly appointed Director of Collaboration to lead new place-based initiative LocalMotion

Kathleen Kelly has been appointed the Director of Collaboration for LocalMotion – an initiative which sees six funders work in partnership to develop new, radical and innovative ideas to boost communities.

Central to the initiative, and the role of the Director of Collaboration, is working with local partners to find solutions to social, environmental and economic issues on their doorstep. LocalMotion will also see funders use their collective resources, experience and strengths to help shape philanthropic practice.

Kathleen comes with a wealth of experience. She led the development of the National Lottery Community Fund's

partnership funding approach, establishing strategic partnerships across the charitable, public, private and funder sectors. More recently she was Assistant Director of Communities and Social Policy at Greater London Authority implementing the Mayor's strategies on Social Integration and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion. She was previously Assistant Director of Policy and Research at the National Housing Federation for nearly 10 years.

She said: "I'm excited to get started on a project which will give local communities a much-needed lift. Many communities are facing increasingly difficult circumstances, with the charities that support them having to pick up the pieces of a broken system

in the context of an increasing squeeze on their funding.

"The six funders supporting this project have been investing in and supporting charities to survive and adapt for years but they know they can do more to support and boost the potential of local people and communities and shake up the way we do things."

LocalMotion is locally driven and seeks to learn from the charities and communities it is working with. The six funders behind the project are:

- Lloyds Bank Foundation

- City Bridge Trust
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Lankelly Chase
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Tudor Trust

Kathleen will work with the six foundations to identify key issues facing charities and communities and help the foundations better understand existing local programmes. All six foundations have committed funding for the next 18 months to commence work and support the Director of Collaboration.



Kathleen Kelly

GMP welcomes 152 police officers in their biggest attestation ceremony to date

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) proudly welcomed 152 new officers in their largest attestation ceremony to date on the evening of Tuesday 22 October 2019, at Stockport Town Hall.

In front of family and friends, all officers partook in the Police Oath which is their promise to the Queen in front of a magistrate to uphold the office of constable with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality. The ceremony marks the official start of the Officers commencing their official duties, and is a milestone to be celebrated.

Chief Constable of GMP Ian Hopkins was in attendance to welcome each and every new recruit to the force, along with Greater Manchester's Deputy Mayor Baroness Beverley Hughes

and the Mayor of Stockport, Councillor Laura Booth.

Chief Constable Ian Hopkins said: "I am delighted to welcome the new officers to GMP. Attestations are a significant moment when undertaking a career in policing and a day to be proud of for all involved.

"As a force, we are committed to protecting the people of Greater Manchester and every day we have a chance to improve people's lives and I have every confidence our new recruits will be a great asset to us here at GMP.

"Police officers serve a very important purpose of protecting society and helping keep people safe. As a force we take pride in offering the best possible service and reassure the people of Greater Manchester that keeping communities safe is at the forefront of the work we do every

day."

The new officers bring a wealth of experience to GMP, from all different backgrounds, all with one shared passion; policing the communities across

Greater Manchester. With a more representative and diverse workforce, GMP will continue to work to ensure their officers are representative of the communities they serve.



Landmarc awarded contract extension with the Ministry of Defence

Landmarc Support Services (Landmarc) has been awarded an extension to its National Training Estate Prime (NTEP) Contract with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) until 31 October 2021.

The contract covers Landmarc's partnership with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to manage and operate military training facilities across the MOD's 190,000 hectares of built and rural UK Defence Training Estate, a position the company has held since 2003.

Supporting around 7 million training days per year, services include the management and operation of training areas and ranges, explosives safety, built and rural estate management, sustainability services including environmental and

conservation support, catering, information management, administration services, and project and commercial property management. There are around 120 sites, including nearly 9,000 buildings and almost 7,500 pieces of targetry issued worldwide.

Mark Neill, Managing Director at Landmarc said, "For more than 15 years, we have partnered with DIO to ensure that the UK Defence Training Estate delivers a safe and sustainable place to train for our armed forces. This extension will enable us to continue the great work we have been doing with our customer to drive innovation in the way services are delivered to ensure our military achieves its training mission."

For more information on Landmarc's services, please visit: landmarcsolutions.com/our-services





Kärcher closes the gap in sweeper portfolio, with launch of the new MC 250

Work freely, swiftly and for longer with the new MC 250 sweeper from Kärcher.

Combining speed with ultimate operator comfort and outstanding sweeping performance, Kärcher's latest addition to the municipal range is perfectly designed for the cityscape. Featuring a spacious and comfortable two person cab, all-wheel steering system for easy manoeuvrability and large waste container to keep you on the road for longer, this machine enables users to complete any municipal cleaning task with excellence and ease. These new user-friendly advancements complement the environmentally-friendly low-emission EURO Stage 6 or Stage V engines and reliability for which the Kärcher brand is recognised.

The development of the new MC 250 sweeper closes a gap in the Kärcher portfolio, with machines now available in all classes between 0.5 to 6 cubic metres.

Sweepers are an essential part of municipal cleaning in both the city centre and on the outskirts of cities, meaning that vehicles are often required to cover long distances between applications. Frequent journeys to and from work sites lead to 'lost' idle-time which is hugely inefficient. The MC 250 provides a remedy for this 'lost time' through the combination of a 60km/h transport speed and container volume of 2.2m³ which ensures users are fully set to clean wherever they need to go.

With the rise in low-emission zones in cities, Kärcher has

made sure that this new sweeper emits the lowest emissions possible. The MC 250 satisfies the requirements of the 2.5 PM class within engine category EURO 6/STAGE V in compliance with current environmental standards.

For this new sweeper, fine dust and sand particles pose no more of a problem than coarse dirt. The MC 250 delivers unparalleled cleaning results as a result of its optimised air-flow which further increases the effectiveness of the sweeper compared to other models. The sweeper's individually controlled brush system means dirt in different areas can be easily reached, while the use of the weed brush delivers a more precise cleaning result. A water recirculation system and a separate tank for the dirtied water are also integrated.

Everyday machine maintenance is made simple with all service components easy to reach via access points, with the engine also directly accessible thanks to the fold-out water tank.

When it comes to operator comfort the MC 250 features many upgrades including: LED lighting in the cab, a USB charging facility as well as a spacious storage area for the driver and passenger. The central display and ergonomic operating panel have been carefully selected after rigorous testing and the hydro-pneumatic suspension on both axles, plus single-wheel suspension on the front axle means any bumps or uneven ground are comfortably driven over.

Smart cities - from realisation to reality

Phil Beecher, President of Wi-SUN Alliance



UK cities face more and more complex issues as urban populations continue to grow, combined with all of the infrastructure challenges that come with that, such as the pressures placed on public transport systems, road congestion, parking, citizen safety and more. Cities will need to adapt to cope with the added population growth or suffer.

At the same time, we are seeing more of buzz around the development of smart cities: more deployments, more interconnectivity and more collaboration between local authorities, city developers, utilities companies and technology providers.

In a recent Wi-SUN Alliance poll on the growth of smart cities, over half of survey respondents believe that we will not see widespread smart city deployments for another 10 years or more, while a third believe it will be earlier, in five to 10 years.

The reality is that smart cities are already here. Forget the

distorted images of futuristic landscapes straight from the pages of a Philip K Dick novel; many of our cities are undergoing major developments as we speak and have all the hallmarks of a smart city in progress. With new innovations in technology, we will see this accelerate over the next few years.

Smart street lighting, for example, is already being deployed in many cities, including the City of London. Using canopy mesh networks, it is not only helping to improve public safety, but also to reduce operational costs. Such deployments can be used as the network infrastructure for additional city services, such as intelligent transport systems, smart signalling, parking and electric vehicle charging stations.

According to our poll, cost is seen as the biggest challenge currently holding back smart city development, with half of respondents citing lack of funds or investment in such projects, while around a quarter point to security and privacy issues. Collaboration, and a lack of interoperability are also seen as major factors when

progressing deployments.

Looking more closely at the security concerns, survey respondents point to data privacy as their biggest worry (37 per cent), while attacks on infrastructure (28 per cent) and network vulnerabilities (24 per cent) are also a cause for concern. As more and more Internet of Things (IoT) devices connect to the network, the opportunity for disruption through security vulnerabilities is increasing all the time, while greater IT/OT (operational technology) convergence in the utilities industry will increase the risk of cyber attacks on critical infrastructure.

Security and interoperability remain the fundamental building blocks of any smart city deployment, and public sector, municipalities and city developers will need to think carefully about a network infrastructure that is based on open standards to make their fulfilment of smart city growth cost effective, secure and scalable.

In addition, smart cities and utilities will need to ensure any

network is able to add devices, update software and grow as requirements dictate, while ensuring there are no outages that would risk security breaches. They must also ensure that all devices are interoperable, so they are not tied into a single supplier, thus avoiding vendor lock-in and helping to reduce costs.

We are seeing developers, utilities and governments increasingly specifying Wi-SUN-compatible technology as part of a robust, resilient and scalable wireless communications network to support smart city and smart utility deployments.

There are more than 95 million Wi-SUN capable devices (Navigant Research) awarded globally as service providers and city developers deploy new IoT applications and services for smart cities and utilities. Wi-SUN is the technology behind a number of major smart city projects around the world including City of London, Copenhagen, Paris, Miami and Glasgow.

For more information visit: www.wi-sun.org.

Welsh prison wins RHS gardening award



- HMP & YOI Parc awarded RHS Windlesham Trophy for the best kept prison garden
- Grounds used to grow food for the prison kitchen and are a haven for wildlife
- Award recognises the many benefits of gardening in prisons, from rehabilitation to wellbeing

HMP & YOI Parc in Bridgend, Wales has been named the best kept prison garden in England and Wales by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and awarded the Windlesham Trophy for its efforts.

Now in its 36th year, the annual award was devised by then Chairman of the Parole Board, Lord Windlesham, in recognition of the value of gardening within prison communities and in prisoners' rehabilitation.

The modern Category B prison, which houses 1,700 men and young offenders, fought off competition from 19 others to take the trophy for a second time, previously winning in 2017.

Its vast grounds burst with plants and green space with large areas given over to food production and wildlife. These play an important role in training and rehabilitation and are found to have positively impacted on prisoners' behaviour and staff morale.

A team of 15 prisoners learn horticultural skills, gain qualifications and grow huge hauls of crops such as potatoes,

cabbage and tomatoes that are served in the prison canteen. Wildflower borders, a new pond and bird boxes support wildlife and the prison's resident bee colony, as well as providing tranquil places to relax and reflect, while kitchen waste is composted and old pallets and plastic bottles are recycled into planters and propagation trays.

HMP & YOI Parc, run by G4S and the only privately managed prison in Wales competed alongside four other finalists - HMP Hull, HMP Littlehey in Cambridgeshire, HMP Warren Hill in Suffolk and HMP Whatton in Nottingham - which were visited by a trio of RHS judges in July, to assess their horticultural displays,



environmental efforts and impact on those living and working within the walls.

RHS judge Jon Wheatley said: "The quality of horticulture in prisons is ever improving and much of what we've seen this year is of RHS gold medal standard. However, what the team has achieved at HMP & YOI Parc is truly outstanding with far reaching benefits across the whole prison community, from superb training and learning opportunities to food production and improved health and wellbeing. This is Lord Windlesham's vision of prison gardening at its very best."

G4S director of HMP & YOI Parc, Janet Wallsgrove, said: "This win is testament to the dedication

and creativity of the prisoners and staff who work on the gardening team and will especially mean a lot to the men in our care who are working towards horticultural qualifications.

"As well as improving the environment within the prison, our gardens provide prisoners with the training, skills and confidence to pursue employment in this sector upon release."

The University of Central Lancashire found that a horticultural programme delivered in 12 prisons in the North West had a positive impact on prisoners' mental health and wellbeing. This included increased confidence, social interactions with staff and other prisoners and the gaining of skills, qualifications and work experience which increased the potential for post-release employment.¹

Staff and prisoners at HMP & YOI Parc will today be presented with the Windlesham Trophy by RHS President Sir Nicholas Bacon at an awards ceremony at the prison.

Living walls, green screens and green roofs: soft landscape options for visual impact, security and better air quality

Mobilane lead the way in exterior and interior ready-made green systems. That's natural, green foliage in outdoor and indoor environments, giving an extra vertical landscaping option to a forgotten wall, building or boundary.

Adding greenery where space is at a premium, Mobilane's products offer all the benefits of planting with added visual impact, often creating a privacy, pollution and security barrier. The original Mobilane Green Screen is grown and supplied directly from their UK nursery partner and can be seen installed in domestic, commercial, retail and educational environments across the UK. Their internationally-tested ready-made green systems also include: MobiRoof green roof cassette system, the WallPlanter and LivePanel living walls, and the NoiStop sound barrier. The LivePicture and LivePicture Go options offer homeowners or facilities managers a burst of planted artistry for aesthetic beauty at home or in the workspace, as does the equally impressive green backdrop, LiveDivider.

Mobilane have been the driving force over the last 10 years with a number of academic establishments, funding and supporting research into the air quality benefits of ivy green screens. Published research findings from Atkins and Staffordshire University showed that the Mobilane Ivy Green Screens, superior in plant density and construction than other green screen options, removes particulate pollution in the order of between 40-60% in some sample locations. Mobilane also have

continuing collaborations with The University of Greenwich in their "Activating Biophilic Cities" and The University of Glasgow for their "Air Quality Research". The research findings raised awareness and drew alarming conclusions. It has particular relevance for children in our city schools whose playground and schooltime bears the greatest brunt of high traffic volumes, exhaust fumes and noxious particulate matter. Mobilane's campaigning this year continues behind their Green My School message. Mobilane have been instrumental in providing their ivy screens to school projects, funded by charitable donations or supported because of their extremely poor air quality by government funding schemes, including the Mayor of London Air Quality Fund. Through their Green My School installers, Mobilane have already supplied over 4000 ivy green screens and the momentum continues to build.

A walk on the wild side in Woking - the town's first green wall
Residents, customers and visitors to Woking High Street will be enjoying a new natural walkway



from this May with the installation of a 75m living wall from Mobilane. The Mobilane Green Screens have been placed along the length of the Woking Train Station's exterior wall as part of the Council's green commitments.

Nature and history combined
Complementing other green initiatives in the transformation of the town's Albion Square, the ivy screens now form a naturally green frame for the town's iconic mural that depicts life along High Street in Edwardian times.

A blend of colour, foliage and wildlife interest
With a mix of species for interest and colour, the wall will not only attract insects and wildlife to an otherwise grey and urban part of town, but the screens will exercise their prowess in the improvement of air quality, as their foliage aids the trapping and capturing of harmful pollutants from passing and stationary traffic in the busy street.

Mobilane UK was appointed to install the ivy screens, which are watered by an innovative drip line irrigation system. The screens offer variety of foliage and floral interest, planted with

Hedera Helix Woerner, variegated and non-variegated, and the new Euonymus Darts Blanket.

Adapting to the lie of the land

Accommodating the natural slope of the road and walkway, the screens maintain a straight top edge using a mix of screen heights from 1 metre to 2.2 metre. Installed in fibreglass containers to allow for ease of placement by forklift and potential repositioning at a later date, the screens were cut to fit prior to the installation of irrigation by the Mobilane technical team. The screens ongoing maintenance will be managed by Woking Council.

The week-long installation took place at the end of April 2019 and has already attracted positive local and regional media and visitor interest.

To find out more about Mobilane Green Screens and other ready-made green products for indoor and outdoor landscaping, contact office@mobilane.co.uk, visit the website www.mobilane.com/en or call the UK office on **0203 741 8049**.

Integrated Hybrid Cloud Storage: The WAN Perspective

By David Trossell, CEO and CTO of Bridgeworks

There are no quick wins when it comes to cloud storage. It's always best to throw caution to the wind to ensure that you understand the requirements of your public sector organisation by auditing what you already have, to a certain what you may need. There is also a need to fully comprehend services such as AWS, Microsoft Azure, and Google.

However, Kurt Marko, writing for TechTarget, says organisations "often displace existing storage systems in need of a technology upgrade with an easily-understood service that provides a distributed, high-availability infrastructure; usage-based pricing; and built-in security inherent to all cloud services." Murko continues by arguing that the enterprise hybrid cloud next stage is to link cloud

services with existing applications to provide an extension to any existing on-premise infrastructure.

He explains: "This integrated hybrid cloud storage approach requires a seamless interface between the private systems and public services, with data continuously synchronized between the two. The goal is to make the cloud an extension of enterprise capacity and a staging area for applications to use more advanced cloud databases, data warehouses, analytics, and machine learning services."

Innovation

The trouble is that some organisations are quick to innovate, but slow to implement. In some sectors, such as banking and financial services, they have traditionally been slow to innovate and subsequently slow to implement new technologies

such as the public or hybrid cloud. Security concerns have largely dogged the implement of public and hybrid cloud in these sectors. Yet, nowadays the cloud-first mantra that first appeared in 2013 is swinging the pendulum towards a "let's move everything" policy.

It's a fact of life that data is never in the right place. There is often not enough space for it too, and there are also cost, location, regulatory, and data transfer speed concerns to address. As well as all of these issues, organisations often have too little data duplication. Over the years, there have been many attempts to resolve this through tiering, hierarchical storage and through information life management. At the end of the day, data storage is always a compromise.

Over the years, there has been an increase in CPU performance, memory system and in memory

storage. However, the problem of what to do with data, how to manage and store it equates to a conundrum that leaves organisations moving the issue down the line – like freeway. There will be at some point a need for more and more storage. Protecting data in flight and at rest, also costs, yet someone has to pay the penalty at a time when practically everything is cloud-based.

There is therefore a need to consider cloud security, how to expediently back-up data and ensure its availability, as some factors such as outages are no longer under your control. So, there is the potential risk of upsetting lots of people just a bit, or upsetting a small number of people a lot. This may occur by creating your own hyper-converged on premises cloud. Help to achieve this is available

from OEMs. Beyond this, everyone is still talking about it as new technology, when they should perhaps be talking more about the functionality of hybrid cloud storage.

This way or no way

There is a deep passion that accompanies new technology that it is "this way" or "no way" and if you don't, your competitors will leave you behind. The cloud is a prime example of this. After all the talking and hype, it took about 3-4 years for companies to start implementing solutions and to then find out which of the promises it did and did not fulfill.

Many organisations adopt a cloud-only strategy in which every aspect of their IT resides in the cloud. There are enterprises that have only put the customer-facing aspect in the cloud, and those that have kept everything in-house, but have created their own private cloud. Of course, there are many flavours. Yet, to moderate the all or nothing camp, and to overcome some of the limitations when using the cloud, the concept of the hybrid cloud storage has evolved. The whole concept of the hybrid cloud is that it acts as a seamless extension to your existing on-premises storage with no changes to the applications.

Latency and packet loss

One of the issues that many implementations face is the failure to take into account the effects of latency and packet loss on the performance of the application(s); be this from the user to the cloud or the data centre to the cloud. This is especially true when organisations look to use the cloud as storage facility in such applications as Disaster-recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS), Archive-as-a-Service (AaaS) or as storage tier

in an HSM scenario.

In the past, many organisations made use of the cloud gateway concept. The was a device that acted as a cache device with local storage that acted as a holding point whilst the data was de-duped. This was then trickle-fed into the cloud. The issue with these devices was, whilst they ingested data quickly, the transfer to and from the cloud was painfully slow – not what you want in a disaster recover situation.

Another major flaw in these products was working with compressed and encrypted files. These are notoriously very difficult to dedupe any further, so require transferring as is. The last and most critical issue with these devices was that they were very susceptible to latency and packet loss on the connection to the cloud, further hampering performance when you really need it during recovery of the data from the cloud.

Data transfer

Many of the applications include backup and archive products, as well as a number of storage devices, and it is now possible to transfer the data directly to the cloud in object form, bypassing the cloud gateways completely. I would like to say that all the problems were resolved, by removing the cloud gateways, but it is just like when they build a new motorway to bypass a bottleneck – you move the problem further down the line to another location. In similar fashion, when you implement a hybrid Cloud solution, it literally is "down the line" with our old performance thieves; packet loss, and latency.

The "go-to" industry standard in these occasions is WAN Optimisation either as a stand-alone product or as part of a

SD-WAN installation. However, as I have already alluded to these have serious limitations with rich file formats that use compression techniques, as well as encrypted data that we all want when we transfer data over the WAN. In fact, many companies are now insisting all data on the LAN and WAN is encrypted.

No devolution

However, using the cloud as part of a hybrid cloud storage strategy or any strategy that uses the cloud does not devolve you from the responsibility for ensuring its integrity or safety. The cloud providers provide the functionality and the capacity – the rest is still down to you. You still need to have multiple copies of your data in multiple places, either with the same cloud provider of a completely different one. It is always worth remembering that putting data into the cloud is relatively cheaper than the cost of getting it out!

Bandwidth costs

The last thing to address is the question of performance. Bandwidth costs are declining rapidly (faster would be nicer) and these are increasing their geographical reach. But unless we solve the problem of latency and packet loss, we are never going to get a real return on the WAN investment, no matter how much bandwidth we throw at the problem.

Go back to the idea of hybrid cloud strategy: it was to have a seamless extension of our infrastructure and performance, which has to be a key aspect of that seamlessness. But how can this be done when the current go-to tools only provide a part of the requirements? Well, there is a new way to transfer data across

the WAN. It's called WAN Data Acceleration.

It does not change nor manipulate the data by compressing it or deduping it, and it can handle encrypted and compressed data equally, as well as any other format. It accelerates these across the WAN, whilst mitigating latency and packet loss. This uses a mixture of massive parallelisation of the data stream coupled with AI to constantly tune network parameters, achieving in some cases 95% bandwidth utilisation.

Cloud win-win

So, to have a win-win, cloud storage can't sit on its own; it needs to have a network infrastructure behind it to operate efficiently and effectively – whether for BaaS, DRaaS, PaaS or simply for applications and data storage. Hybrid cloud storage therefore has to be integrated, allowing for more secure data transfer and storage, better accessibility by the mitigation of latency and the reduction in packet loss with a solution such as PORTrockIT. With a higher level of WAN performance behind it, hybrid cloud storage becomes more robust and more effective – particularly when disaster strikes, when there is a need to retrieve data to ensure that an organisation like you own can continue to operate. The focus should be on service continuity, requiring hybrid cloud storage to be located in at least three locations, beyond their own circles of disruption to ensure that business goes on no matter what happens. Data is the new gold, and so it's worth investing in technologies that make sure it's secure and readily available.



David Trossell, CEO and CTO of Bridgeworks



New solution from SWARCO Traffic to help Cambridgeshire County Council reduce congestion and improve air quality

SWARCO Traffic Ltd has signed a new agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council to replace existing traffic technology with an innovative new

SWARCO will install 17 full colour RGB Matrix signs at strategic locations across Cambridge and the surrounding areas, which can be programmed to display any image and provide traffic information and guidance for drivers, as well as any upcoming events.

The signs are fully UTMC compatible and will be managed via SWARCO's intelligent Zephyr solution, that enables messages to be set from anywhere at any time, remotely, and monitor the

sign LED's and luminance sensor, as well as checking for any power failure.

As part of the new solution, SWARCO will also install 11 count control cabinets at Cambridge's Park & Ride sites to advise drivers on availability. The counters slim design will also reduce on-street clutter.

Zaneta Adamczyk, Real Time Passenger Information Project Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council, says the new technology and traffic solution will provide a

traffic guidance and parking solution to reduce congestion and improve air quality in and around the city.

number of key benefits to both visitors and the local community:

"We needed to upgrade the systems in place with a more flexible and accurate solution with better functionality and communications," explains Zaneta. "The new signs will enable us to ensure that drivers can find car parking space availability with ease, reducing time spent on the road, which will help us to reduce congestion and consequently improve the air quality throughout the city and surrounding areas.

Derek Williamson, Head of Sales at SWARCO Traffic, says: "We pride ourselves on providing the highest quality traffic signs and intelligent solutions in the industry, as well as tailoring these to meet the needs of our customers. We are working closely with Cambridgeshire County Council to ensure this new installation and system creates minimum disruption for the public, with the works due to be completed by December."

apT ecology team grows after new business wins



Fran Lancaster



Mark Latham



Nicola Stone

An ecology team at a pioneering public sector planning and development consultancy is expanding to cope with growing demand.

Telford-based apT's team of ecological experts has trebled in two years, partly as a result of winning new consultancy work outside their home borough.

The team – made up of ecology and green infrastructure specialists Mark Latham, Fran Lancaster and Nicola Stone – will expand again later in the year as it continues to go from strength to strength.

Fran, who joined the Council in 2013, said the team's wide range of skills and the innovative way in which apT was set up to offer its skills commercially whilst being a part of Telford & Wrekin Council, were huge factors in its success.

"Having grown from being the only ecologist in the department two years ago, our team now has a mix of commercial survey experience, protected species

mitigation and licensing, statutory planning, specialist air pollution assessment and planning policy skills which allows us to take on complex projects and to provide our clients with the best possible service.

"The team has statutory roles within the planning system and in supporting other teams across the Council but also sits within apT and is able to engage in commercial work.

"We are successfully winning commercial survey work outside the borough and building capacity to continue to grow our local authority work and projects."

Last year the team secured a series of contracts with both private clients and neighbouring authority estates departments. These have seen the team undertake surveys for amphibians, reptiles, badgers and breeding birds to inform schemes ranging in size and complexity from single home owner developments, self-build schemes to large residential developments.

Fran said the team's local authority backgrounds meant they had specialist skills which other commercial consultancies could not always offer.

"We are particularly experienced in Habitat Regulation Assessment, both of plans and projects, and Nicola brings significant experience of assessing aerial emissions associated with livestock developments."

The team has been particularly successful in declaring new Local Nature Reserves with Telford & Wrekin Council and was now working to finish an ambitious programme which will declare 16 LNRs covering around 520 hectares in the borough – three times the recommended standard. Fran added: "We are actively involved in positively managing these sites with our colleagues in Neighbourhood Services, and alongside local communities, town and parish councils and friends groups.

"Our LNRs, alongside Sites of Special Scientific Interest and

Local Wildlife Sites represent the best quality and most biodiverse habitats in the borough and are intended to be accessible to local communities for recreation, education and enjoyment."

The team is also working on two grant funded projects with Shropshire Wildlife Trust to deliver wetland habitat works at Apley Woods and Dothill in Telford and habitat improvements and community engagement schemes along the Newport Canal SSSI.

"The council has also allocated a further £50,000 of funding to the 200 Green Guarantee sites across the borough – small local green spaces in Council ownership which are being protected for public use. The ecology team is looking at how we deliver that programme of works at the moment."

apT is the Midlands' first public sector commercial planning, development and environmental consultancy.

Visit: www.apTgroup.co.uk or follow @apTgroupuk on Twitter.

We're creating cleaner, healthier, more liveable towns and cities

How does your parking feature?



RingGo

The no.1 parking app
www.RingGo.co.uk/Operators

GDrive strategic change with integrated transport solutions to create more liveable cities

Peter O'Driscoll, Managing Director, RingGo

Local governments are now fully embracing digital services that benefit both their staff and constituents, slowly, but surely getting rid of paper and physical offerings. However, to see the scale of benefits that can be realised from digitising, local governments should be looking to develop new solutions that flow across departmental boundaries. This can take many shapes, but consider for a moment what this could look like with an often forgotten service like parking.

Parking is more than where constituents leave their car. Local governments initially developed smarter parking solutions to control and reduce congestion, but that was just the beginning. Parking has become a leader in the adoption of a cashless way of living and is now being used to drive strategic change in areas as diverse as improving air quality and integrating transport solutions.

Good for the city, good for the environment

As the climate change debate rages at a national and international level, local Councils

are often looking for ways to make an impact in their part of the world. There are multiple ways in which parking solutions can help to minimise the environmental impact of driving, with the obvious one being that identifying available parking spots reduces the amount of time spent circling around city centres in search of the elusive spot. This in turn minimises congestion, reduces emissions and improves the air quality.

However, there are much more advanced and impactful ways of reducing pollution. Solutions such as RingGo's Emissions Based Parking (EBP), which significantly helps local councils improve air quality, demonstrate environmental benefits and ultimately make UK towns and cities better places to live. As most city councils have already migrated the majority of their parking payment systems to digital, adding EBP is an easy and cost-effective implementation process.

The application that drivers are already using to locate a parking spot and pay for parking can easily be adapted to influence environmental impact. Using real-time data, combined with the vehicle's fuel type and year of manufacture, tariffs can be automatically varied to match

pre-defined emission brackets set by the council.

EBP parking schemes are already having an impact. Westminster City Council saw an immediate effect from introducing the solution, reporting a 16% reduction in the most polluting vehicles driving and parking in the city, without any obvious displacement to nearby parking zones.

Parking is also about offering the best ecosystem for encouraging use of vehicles that minimise environmental impact. Electric vehicles are key to the future of transport, and with increasing uptake RingGo allows drivers to view a map of over 5,500 EV charging points across the UK, find the closest charging point and be directed to the selected destination. Increasing awareness of charging points not only helps existing drivers of EVs but also normalises their usage, encouraging greater adoption amongst motorists who may be concerned about making the shift. It also makes the surrounding area more environmentally friendly.

More efficient transport

Along with the enhanced capabilities being built into unified parking solutions, all mobility systems are benefiting from technological advancements and when harnessed in the right way, this can create amazing results. Converged mobility systems provide data to better understand customers, improve transportation efficiency, recognise new trends in mobility and plan for the future.

PARK NOW, RingGo's parent company, has helped to implement an Urban Mobility Control Hub (UMCH) in Paris, a perfect example of how digital systems are bringing together not just parking, but data from

mobility across the city to increase efficiencies by, for example, reducing congestion. The UMCH connects and manages asset and access models, joining up information from zones, parking machines, pollution forecasts, enforcement data, permits and cashless options. It monitors behaviour in all aspects of mobility and provides ways to improve how people travel around the city.

The complete digitisation and integration of mobility services, including vehicle journeys and parking will increasingly be used to optimise and steer traffic flows. With quick and easy analysis, local governments can use this data to improve how constituents travel, transferring usage to underutilised areas or modes of transport, and ultimately ensuring cities are better places to live. Average parking duration times, high-density zones, price sensitivities, and on-street performance can all be analysed and used to better manage the parking ecosystem.

Consumers also benefit. As travel and parking information increasingly converge within vehicles, motorists are better informed about where to go and how to get there.

Liveable cities of the future

From improving air pollution to creating smart, economic ways to travel through cities, parking has a key role to play in helping local councils provide cleaner, healthier and more liveable cities. While it may be just one part of the overall picture, by understanding local parking needs based on intelligent data insights, governments can gain greater understanding and introduce further smart mobility services supporting a more sustainable future.

Peter O'Driscoll



Genmed identified in London Stock Exchange Group's '1000 Companies to Inspire Britain' 2019 report

Genmed announces today that it has been identified as one of London Stock Exchange Group's 1000 Companies to Inspire Britain for the second year running. Published annually, the report celebrates the UK's fastest-growing and most dynamic small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), with companies representing over 40 sectors and spanning every region of the country.

To be selected for the list, businesses had to demonstrate not only positive revenue growth over the last three years but also outperform their sector peers. The result is a unique and varied list of the UK's most innovative companies - SMEs which are the engine and future of the British economy. The report showcases the depth and breadth of high growth businesses in the UK.

Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP said, "SMEs in the UK have huge potential for growth, huge potential to provide high quality jobs and huge potential to provide a greater distribution of wealth and economic success across the length and breadth of our country. Speaking as chair of the treasury select committee, we have recently launched an inquiry into the regional economic imbalances that exist in the UK and so it fills me with great encouragement that 70% of the 1000 businesses featured in today's report are based outside London. The nation as a whole is going to be better served if every region in the UK has innovative, highly skilled workplaces around which vibrant and dynamic regional economies can be built."

With office locations in Wales and Weybridge, Genmed provides vendor neutral managed services in the NHS which help Trusts to reduce costs, rationalise pricing, improve efficiency, enhance clinical productivity, speed up purchasing, minimise administration and invoice

processing. Genmed's managed services are HMRC compliant for VAT recovery which means Trusts can reclaim the 20% VAT to re-invest in front line services and the treatment of patients.

Genmed has developed from initially delivering pathology contracts to now managing contracts which encompass surgery, pathology, flexible endoscopy, IT, radiology, electronic medical records management and renal. It is also able to provide building contracts including finance up to PFI level.

David Schwimmer, London Stock Exchange Group's CEO, said, "Congratulations to all the companies selected for inclusion in the sixth edition of London Stock Exchange Group's 1000 Companies to Inspire Britain report, which identifies the UK's most dynamic SMEs. SMEs drive growth, innovation and job creation and are the lifeblood of the British economy. We believe that supporting the growth of these businesses is critical to the UK and the creation of a society that works for everyone."

Genmed is not a managed equipment provider or a finance house. Providing a much wider and more central role, it is an integral partner working with Trusts to ascertain what clinical facilities or technology they need, their workload issues, finding and selecting suppliers, driving product costs down, putting together the finance, managing the contracts, paying

subcontractors and taking all the risk upfront itself. Importantly, Genmed is not tied to any third-party suppliers and selects consumables and equipment based on close collaboration and input from NHS managers and clinicians.

Genmed now works for 40 NHS Trusts throughout the UK including:

- London North West University Healthcare;
- Norfolk & Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- South West London Orthopaedic Elective Care;
- Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust;
- Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Robin Modak, Genmed's chief executive officer, says, "It's a real pleasure to be listed by the London Stock Exchange Group in its 1000 Companies to Inspire Britain report. When it was created in 1948, the NHS was inspirational, too. It solved major economic and social problems by providing free healthcare at the point of need irrespective of the size of one's bank balance. Through our work, we hope that the amazing work that the NHS does every day will be enhanced - crucial as the demand on the service is ever increasing with an ageing and growing population."



The Eastern Pathology Alliance to offer Hepatitis C testing services to the wider NHS capitalising on next generation sequencing technology

- **First and only laboratory in the UK to use equipment from Vela Diagnostics**
- **New testing process delivers huge patient benefits in terms of speed, accuracy and reliability yet with costs significantly reduced**

The Eastern Pathology Alliance (EPA) announces today that it is to offer Hepatitis C genotyping testing to the wider NHS nationally leveraging its investment in next generation sequencing assays.

Founded in 2012, the EPA has become a centre of excellence for pathology – particularly virology – providing centralised laboratory medicine for the Norfolk and Waveney region. It has selected state of the art equipment from Vela Diagnostics which incorporates Ion Torrent semiconductor sequencing to provide rapid turnaround of results for clinicians and their patients. It is currently the only laboratory in the UK to put this kind of a high tech solution into routine use.

Aimed at other acute NHS Trusts, CCGs and private healthcare providers, the new service will comprise a whole package involving fast testing, clinical interpretation along with guidance and advice about drug selection. Pricing will be based on a per test fee.

HCV infections a major public health threat in the UK Mainly affecting the liver, Hepatitis C is the only blood born virus which is a curable infection with success rates of between 92-95%. Although a national data set is unavailable, most

recent estimates by Public Health England (PHE) show that 160,000 people are living with chronic Hepatitis C virus infections in the UK.

The use of next generation sequencing assays enables detailed analysis of the genetic material of the Hepatitis C virus (HCV) to confirm its strain – predominantly genotypes 1 and 3 in the UK – and the determination of resistance mutations. This information is crucially important for clinicians so they can then prescribe the optimum mix of drugs to treat the virus.

Dr Samir Dervisevic, a Consultant Virologist and the Clinical Lead for Virology at the EPA's Microbiology Department explains, "In May 2016, the UK signed up to the World Health Organization strategy on viral hepatitis which commits participating countries to the elimination of Hepatitis C virus as a major public health threat by 2030. In England, HCV treatment is centrally funded and the NHS England direct acting antiviral (DAA) treatment programme continues to be rolled out with several medications authorised. Given this, ascertaining the genotype strain before treatment starts is recommended especially as the duration of treatment among other factors depends on the virus genotype."

Samples collected from patients in Norfolk used to be referred to a private laboratory for HCV genotyping. When drugs were prescribed but the treatment failed – which could be due to virus resistance to a particular directly acting antiviral drug – blood samples were then sent to the

Reference Laboratory in London for resistance profiling. Due to the turnaround time, some patients actually had to wait a prolonged period in order to receive the results and be re-treated.

This time consuming and long winded process – often taking months - slowed down the effective delivery of clinical services. Furthermore, samples were split, testing was overly costly and – most importantly – there was a significant distress for patients given the time involved.

Dr Dervisevic adds, "We've opted out of referring samples to these two external laboratories and instead invested in the latest cutting edge solution of our own which gives us automated workflow from sample to results within just two days so that patients get the right treatment fast. We're now happy to offer our clinical colleagues access to this modern technology so that they receive a quick, accurate and reliable diagnostic service combined with clinical backup and expertise."

New HCV testing enabled by vendor neutral managed services

With a small physical footprint, the compact Vela Diagnostics technology – a combination of a Sentosa SQ Genotyping Assay and Sentosa ST401 instrument unit - is perfect for use in a busy space constrained laboratory setting. The EPA has installed both working in close collaboration with its established vendor neutral managed services partner, Genmed.

The use of a managed services contract (MSC) has meant that the

EPA has been able to introduce the new test equipment rapidly and benefit from a pay-to-use approach.

Reenesh Prakash, EPA microbiology network manager explains, "The contract we've signed is an interesting one. We've agreed with Genmed and Vela Diagnostics the volume of work we'll deliver over time and adopted a tax efficient MSC where we're charged per reportable test."

In addition, a MSC provides the EPA with a host of other benefits. First, it is able to reclaim VAT to give the organisation a 20% budget boost. Second, Genmed provides all administrative support related to arranging equipment maintenance and the ordering of consumables. And third, it minimises operational risk as Genmed takes responsibility for equipment uptime with a SLA set at 90% availability.

Robin Modak, Genmed's chief executive officer, said, "We've been able to put in place the best, most modern laboratory equipment for the EPA with an innovative and flexible charging model. The EPA's primary duty is assay performance and the provision of care. But it is the patient who is the real winner from all this - as one would hope - as the time from test to accurate diagnosis has been radically reduced."

Your Housing specifies Intratone cloud fob system for large estate

Fob readers and the accompanying Cloud-based management system from Intratone have transformed the management of keys and access to properties for Your Housing Group, one of the UK's largest housing providers.

Your Housing Group manages more than 28,000 homes, ranging from affordable housing through to private rentals. Previously, facilities managers had to manage a physical set of keys and log who had taken them, at what time and for what purpose. Many keys were never returned.

The housing association upgraded a number of properties within its portfolio to fob access, but the original system wasn't properly managed: almost 100 fobs were issued to one block of six flats, for example, without being properly controlled and without being able to trace who had them.

To address the issue, Intratone proximity readers were installed during refurbishment works at the front and rear entrances of 34 apartment blocks in Liverpool and Manchester by Merseyside-based Maintec Ltd.

"One of the main objectives for installing the new system was to simplify key management, especially when granting access to contractors," says Trevor Hill, Senior Compliance Manager at Your Housing. "With our old system, one of our team had to escort any contractors on site which was very time consuming."

"The new system also benefits the residents. If a user loses their fob, the operator is able to immediately establish its identity and disable it for future use. A new fob is subsequently activated and then dispatched. Every time a fob is used, the data is sent back to the remote operating platform, giving operators an overview of that particular gate or secured

door's activity. Any unusual activity is therefore easily identified and monitored."

Contractors can also be granted access using their mobile phone. Authorised users with access to the management platform can add the phone number and specify a time limit; the number can be dialed into the entry panel to gain entry.

Steve Cranshaw, Director at Maintec Ltd, says if a resident loses a fob, the property manager or housing association is instantly able to establish the identity of the fob and disable it remotely from future use: "A new fob can be easily activated on the Intratone cloud-based management site and sent out to that individual. This saves time and money and enhances the security of each property."

"The Intratone system gives us complete control and visibility. It also means we don't have to approach a third party whenever



a resident has lost a fob, or someone moves out. We have been so impressed with the potential time and cost savings that we have started a gradual roll out across more of our sites," Trevor adds.

Intratone manufactures a range of cost-effective door-entry and access control solutions designed around the customer need. Its systems are installed across a range of housing association, social housing and private properties throughout the UK and Europe.

www.intratone.uk.com

Intratone appoints new UK country manager to lead the market

Intratone, one of Europe's largest access control specialists, has appointed Victor D'Allancé as its new UK Country Manager to spearhead the company's continued growth with the aim of becoming a market leader within four years.

Previously Victor headed up the UK subsidiary of Devialet, a technology startup manufacturing high-end speakers, for three years. Before that, he spent four years in the investment banking division of BNP Paribas in Moscow and London.

Victor has been instrumental in setting up the UK office in Chiswick, which will be officially

opened during a launch party on 17th October. He has also been recruiting for the sales, finance and marketing teams to ensure the UK subsidiary is fully functioning.

"We have huge ambitions for the UK market – we want to be a market leader within four years as the company is in France," he says. "Now that the team is nearly complete we are building an exclusive network of partner installers and distributors throughout the UK."

Cogelec, the parent company in France was established 20 years ago and is now market leader in the country. Following its IPO on the Euronext in July 2018 and the launch of the UK, German and



Dutch subsidiaries, the group aims at becoming a market leader across the whole of Europe.

"Some 95% of intercoms in the UK are wired systems which are expensive to install and maintain. Our GSM-based intercoms are between five to ten times cheaper than our competitors," Victor adds.

"Our approach is an innovation that some are not aware of yet. The market has responded very well to it so far. We look forward to a brilliant future in a fascinating market – we are in the UK for the long-term."

How much bandwidth do I need?



Whenever a network seems to operate too slowly the conversation soon turns to how much bandwidth the network connectivity and infrastructure offers, and then it moves on to how much faster the network could be if more money

were made available to 'resolve' the problem by buying higher bandwidth network connectivity. The trouble is that increasing your organisation's bandwidth won't necessarily equate to higher network performance.



David Trossell

WAN bandwidth is a little bit like the petrol mileage that motor manufacturers claim on their cars. It sounds good, but you never seem to get close to that figure you are expecting. In fact, you are more likely to get closer to the petrol mileage figure than you are to your WAN bandwidth.

Over the past few years organisations have seen a move from so-called small "transactional" type data transfers to the WAN to one that reflects the bulk data transfers that are associated with offsite data backup and cloud use. This can lead to a conflict between the network team and the data team where one blames the other for poor data throughput. I have been involved in so many conversations in which the data

guys respond with: "It's not our problem; you're not even using all the bandwidth allocated to your WAN – it must be your program", and so it goes on.

In the end the "Carrier" gets pulled in and "If you want to go faster, add more bandwidth. The contract is signed; more bandwidth is added the salesman gets his commission and...nothing changes! You achieve only the same throughput! More head scratching and embarrassing questions are being asked by accounts and the CFO why we signed up for more expensive connection with no improvement. Why? The clue is in the poor utilisation figures that the network team is reporting.

Long distances

When organisations transport data over long distances that

are typical for WANs, the TCP/IP latency effect rears its ugly head and kills the throughput while it waits for those all-important acknowledgements (ACKs) from the other end. So, throwing more bandwidth at the problem is not going to fix it.

Let me explain with an example: If we have a 1Gb/s WAN with 100ms of latency and we are transferring data in 4MB blocks. We send the block of data and then wait 100ms before we get the ACK back from the receiving end before we send the next block of 4MB. So, in 1 second we can send 10 blocks of 4MB = 40MB/s – not bad but a 1Gb WAN should be capable of transferring more than 100MB/s. That's only 40% utilisation.

So, what happens if we upgrade to 10Gb/s? Does it offer 10 times the performance? That is

the perceived wisdom, but don't forget we still have that 100ms of latency and 4MB blocks. So, we are still only going to transfer 10 x 4MB = 40MB/s. Exactly the same as the 1Gb connection. However, the capability of the 10Gb connection is around 1GB/s, so now we have a utilisation of only 4%!

I wish I could say that's the only problem, but there is yet another performance thief – Packet Loss. What if we lose a few packets along the way...that's not a great problem, or is it? TCP/IP will resend those that were lost. We may lose a little time, but all the data will get there.

Life is never simple

Unfortunately, life is never simple in the world of data comms and TCP/IP. When TCP/IP sees packet loss, it loses confidence

in the connection and shrinks the amount of data it places on the network until it gains confidence in the connection and starts to increase the block size again. Now let's apply some packet loss to our example, and assume we shrink the data block by 75%. With the 1Gb WAN our performance drops to 10MB/s (10%) and with the 10G we drop the same throughput but now the utilisation is only 1%. That's going to take some explaining!

So, what is the solution? Latency is governed by the speed of light and until someone finds another method of communication (perhaps quantum entanglement), then we are stuck with it. You can get low latency connections that take the shortest route, but at the end of the day the two end points are still the same distance apart. As for packet loss, you can order dedicated links which should have much lower packet loss, but both of these options add considerably to the costs.

Data optimisation products

SD-WANs are gaining popularity in many organisations and have many advantages in flexibility and cost over traditional WANs, but still suffer from the same latency and packet loss. The traditional workaround is to deploy WAN

Optimisation products. These are data optimisation products as they do not optimise the WAN.

These are very effective in improving the user experience with Office-based products and other data applications, where the data can be compressed or be deduped, but they add no benefit if the data is already compressed or encrypted. One of the effects of all the high workload involved in compressing or deduplicating the data restricts the overall throughput capability below many of the WAN bandwidths currently available.

Mitigate latency

To gain control of the WAN and return the performance to the full capability of the WAN we need to first, mitigate the effects of latency and secondly, minimise the effect of packet loss. But how? Firstly, to minimise the effect of latency we take the incoming stream of data and split it up into multiple parts to simultaneously send these over the WAN as separate TCP/IP streams.

By filling the "pipe" it's possible to drive the throughput up as well as the utilisation ratio. To mitigate the effects of packet loss we can manipulate the number of connections and the size of the data on the

WAN. Managing these factors is beyond a network engineer's ability to constantly tune these. The various other parameters make it impossible too, and that is why within PORTrockIT WAN Data Accelerator, AI is used to manage the whole process constantly by adjusting a myriad of parameters. Typical customers can realise up to 95% of the possible capability of the WAN bandwidth. The beauty of using agentless WAN Data Acceleration such as PORTrockIT is that it can be used in combination with SD-WAN products to give the user the ability to exploit both new technologies.

How does this work in the real world?

Bridgeworks was asked to see if we could help with NetApp SnapMirror replication of 85TB over approximately 2,000 miles across a 10Gb WAN connection. After all other options had failed, my team ran the replication back to back in the data centre and then ran the same replication over the WAN with the exactly same encrypted data set. As you can imagine the data centre replication was fast. However, over the WAN we were only 7MB/s slower.

5 best practice tips for managing bandwidth and network performance

So, here are my 5 top best practice tips for achieving WAN data acceleration, improved use of existing bandwidth and network performance:

1. Before blaming the WAN, run the transfer within the data centre and then check the performance and the utilisation of the WAN when transferring data. If it is not in the high 80's then consider WAN data Acceleration products. If the performance across the WAN is lower than the data centre, and the utilisation is high then consider upgrading the WAN.
2. Make sure the solution you use can handle multiple differing protocols and not just file transfer protocols. With the increasing use of the Cloud and remote data centres as part of the Backup and Disaster Recovery strategy.
3. Check with different data types to ensure you have the performance you need not only for backup but MORE importantly when you need to restore data. Many of the cloud transfer products use deduplication.

4. Consider deploying a WAN Data Acceleration solution such as PORTrockIT to mitigate the effects of latency and packet loss. Add this as a layer onto SD-WANs, too, to achieve greater WAN performance.

5. Think, you may not need to replace your existing infrastructure. You're existing network infrastructure may need a boost, but this doesn't mean that it should be replaced. However, you should plan for data growth, disaster recovery, etc.

The question of 'How much bandwidth do I need?' can often be the wrong question when more utilisation could be gained from an existing network infrastructure. However, data volumes are ever increasing, and the need for disaster recovery as well as service continuity is always something that requires constant attention and planning. One thing truism is that the big vendors are often happy to sell solutions that may not adequately mitigate latency, and so organisations should be wary and look to smaller vendors that are often more innovative – providing solutions that actually do the job.



Cyberattacks

How to keep fighting and stay on the digital transformation track

By Sascha Giese, Head Geek™, SolarWinds



Employee mobility, cloud technology, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are probably the three biggest factors driving digital transformation across all businesses, including U.K. public sector organisations. Some may be further along than others on this journey, but in general there's certainly a move by the public sector to migrate workloads to the cloud and leverage new technologies to improve service delivery standards. The trouble, however, is that

the more digitally transformed an organisation becomes, the more vulnerable it is to cyberattacks.

According to a recent SolarWinds® Freedom of Information (FOI) survey¹, while cyberattacks among U.K. public sector organisations became less widespread in 2018 (38 percent experienced none compared to 30 percent in 2017), more organisations were hit by a higher number of attacks. Some even experienced over 1,000 attempted

attacks, a four percent rise on the previous year.

This would certainly suggest cyberattacks seem to be a natural by-product of digital transformation, which isn't too surprising when one considers an expanded digital presence equates to an expanded attack surface. The more applications, information, and processes living in the digital environment, the more opportunities there are for black hats. Unfortunately, the enormous value placed on data today together with the increased

sophistication of attacks creates a double-edged sword, so when a data breach or hack inevitably occurs, the potential for damage is far greater than it's ever been.

Maintaining traditional defence systems

Traditional cybersecurity defences such as firewalls, antivirus, and malware protection are in place to guard against the most predominant cyberattacks, which were found to be phishing (95 percent) and malware (86 percent)

according to the SolarWinds FOI request findings. These are, of course, necessary defence measures, but they're simply not sophisticated enough to prevent equally sophisticated attacks. While data loss prevention (DLP) solutions are available, the majority of these are very expensive and not 100 percent reliable. To keep the public sector secure, IT teams need to be confident their security strategy will hold firm, so the public can have confidence in them.

It may feel as though for

they come with an intelligence feed covering zero-day threats—these are threats exploiting an unknown computer security vulnerability, i.e., there is no known security fix because developers aren't aware of the vulnerability.

Incorporating automation into security processes can help organisations to continuously monitor for threats and expand cyber protections, even with limited personnel and resources. Good examples are tools that scan web applications from the outside to look for security



every few steps taken towards digital transformation, a few steps are taken back every time a cyberattack occurs. As it becomes the everyday norm, what changes can be made to keep this journey on track and reduce targeted attacks?

Cybersecurity solutions for digital transformation

Integrating security systems helps increase visibility into a network and helps in managing a wider attack surface. By using applications and devices with built-in security or, if developing an application, making robust security settings the default option, organisations can trust their users will be kept safe from malicious threats.

Teams should also undertake regular penetration testing to identify potential vulnerabilities and opportunities to improve security. Currently, less than 75 percent of all organisations surveyed through the FOI are using log management and inspection, but even at 100 percent, an attack can easily occur undetected. When using these kinds of solutions, ensure

vulnerabilities such as cross-site scripting, SQL injection, command injection, path traversal, and insecure server configuration. However, it's not just the tools that are crucial, but the people too, and the communication between them. If information about a possible threat is detected, share it across the organisation so everyone can take steps to minimise risk.

Upskilling and training to keep everyone in the know

Skills gaps related to digital technologies and cybersecurity can render organisations vulnerable to threats. Training and creating awareness are considerably more useful and probably more cost-effective than the latest technology, which is attractive considering most public sector organisations operate on limited budgets. A simple exercise like training staff how to recognise emails from scammers can go a long way in avoiding the potential data exposure to threats.

At a higher level, technology professionals continue to pursue upskilling to maintain good

cybersecurity postures and keep digital transformation on track. SolarWinds' recent *IT Trends Report 2019: Skills for Tech Pros of Tomorrow*², a survey of tech pros, showed the top three technologies to achieve this over the next three to five years are:

1. Cloud and/or hybrid IT (66%)
2. Automation and/or orchestration (52%)
3. SIEM and/or threat intelligence (56%)

In addition, it's important the country's public sector tech pros start to add a new

cybersecurity, as the benefits that are gained through this often outweigh the costs. With a third party involved, organisations have access to the latest technologies and software available to tackle the ever-increasing threats. Along with this comes the experts themselves—people who live and breathe security day in, day out. Teams of experts are typically available 24/7, allowing for a rapid response to any security lapse or vulnerability that may arise, regardless of the time of day or night.

Alternatively, for those either lacking the budget for outsourcing or who'd feel more comfortable relying on their own teams, managed software solutions could be the safest option. These types of software will vary between vendors, but most should deliver intelligence to proactively identify threats, take automated action to mitigate damage, and analyse data to prevent future attacks from occurring. Though the best solutions on the market will be very expensive, the different packages on offer may be more affordable than outsourcing—though the onus will be on the organisation purchasing the software to manage it and act on the information it produces.

Security should be a priority—it's that simple. Being ready for worst-case scenarios is crucial in maintaining an impenetrable defence. And what the SolarWinds FOI research revealed is, while in general preparation is high throughout the public sector, it's important to find and implement easy-to-use, affordable, and scalable security solutions to work across the varied IT environments like those in the NHS and central government. Because when you're keeping a country running, having security top of mind while driving digital transformation will build a future that benefits us all.

organisational language to their realm of expertise—the language of business. In seeking a seat at the executive table, tech pros have the opportunity to put cybersecurity and digital transformation higher on the business agenda. Of course, given the time and resources pressure on training, tech pros should consider approaching skills development strategically and prioritise necessary learning based around the needs of daily operations and IT environments, along with skills that support organisational growth.

Outsourcing vs. insourcing for top security

Maintaining a solid cybersecurity posture is hugely important for every organisation, but in the public sector, where budgets and resources can present barriers to progress, another option to consider is outsourcing the cybersecurity function to an expert, or deploy a managed software solution.

Many organisations are now opting to outsource their

¹<https://www.solarwinds.com/company/press-releases/2019-q2/nearly-a-fifth-of-uk-public-sector-organisations-reported-over-1000-cyberattacks-in-2018>

²https://it-trends.solarwinds.com/study_downloads/solarwinds-it-trends-report-data-2019-united-kingdom-nat-gov.ppt

Christchurch Group appoints Ruth Smith, Chief Operations Officer

Winner of Health Investor's Best Complex Care Award 2018 Christchurch Group - the UK's leading provider of award-winning clinically-led neurorehabilitation¹ services designed to improve the function, reduce symptoms, and enhance the well-being of patients with acquired brain injury (ABI), spinal injury and other neurological conditions - has promoted Ruth Smith to Chief Operating Officer.

Ruth - who demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities in her former role as Director of Operations - will be responsible for further improving the company's post-acute neurorehabilitation services at its 10 centres located across the UK, 100 % of which are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. She will also lead her team to further improve the company's already outstanding outcomes for patients, 86% of whom return home after a period of rehabilitation.

Other tasks that fall within her remit include overseeing marketing initiatives, implementing effective business practices, delegating responsibilities to ensure staff members grow as capable

participants of the team and spearheading coaching initiatives to optimise employee capabilities. She will also be responsible for controlling company costs and preparing timely and accurate reports on financial performance.

Commenting on her promotion Richard McKenzie, CEO, said, "As Director of Operations Ruth delivered outstanding results and lasting improvements. Under her leadership Christchurch became the 'only' UK healthcare specialist to have achieved Headway Approved Provider status for 'all' its services. The value of accreditation goes beyond a competitive distinction from other service providers - it demonstrates commitment to continuous service improvement and ensuring a

workforce trained and skilled in working with individuals with brain injury.

"Ruth is an individual of proven integrity, who employs role-models-values-based leadership to command the confidence and trust of all stakeholders. She has a clear understanding of our Group's core values and culture, possesses significant business acumen and a sound understanding of our business strategies. Her promotion to the position of Chief Operating Officer is very well deserved."

Concluding, Ruth Smith said, "Having spent 18 years in the NHS and independent healthcare sector as a qualified Nurse and Health Care Manager responsible for regulatory compliance and

quality assurance, I am thrilled to have been promoted to Chief Operating Officer for Christchurch Group. In the future I plan to continue to grow and develop effective services for all our patients, to build further strategic partnerships with the NHS to provide effective solutions to meet the rehabilitation needs of the UK's population and drive forward the vision of the Group and core values, building on its outstanding reputation."

1. Neurorehabilitation is a complex medical process which aims to aid recovery from a nervous system injury, and to minimise and/or compensate for any functional alterations resulting from it.



Ruth Smith,
Chief Operations Officer,
Christchurch Group

Squeaky levels energy purchasing playing field

Entech business Squeaky Clean Energy limited, the peer-to-peer clean energy purchasing platform, has closed a deal to provide £50M of clean energy to a consortium of 20 UK universities through a 10 year Power Purchasing Agreement.

This PPA between public sector energy users is the first of its kind in the UK. All energy will be sourced from wind farms across Scotland and Wales, provided by Statkraft, Europe's largest generator of renewable energy. Universities included in the PPA are Newcastle, Aberystwyth, Exeter, and Anglia Ruskin.

Traditionally the preserve of multi-nationals and large organisations, smaller standardised PPAs are being introduced to the market by Squeaky through its PPA platform. A PPA is a written understanding between a generator and a buyer which includes the amount or volume of energy, the period of the contract or term, and source of power to be provided. In the past PPAs have meant protracted, complicated commitments and lengthy contracts running to hundreds of pages. Now Squeaky is providing businesses and organisations of all sizes with straightforward, standardised PPAs to supply clean energy

at competitive prices in under agreements that can run from 5 years to 20 years. Purchasing through a PPA can work out cheaper than fossil fuel and allows for accurate forecasting and budgeting and a safety net from the volatile energy market.

With the UK government setting a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and increasing numbers of grassroots organisations demanding action on climate change, transparency and accountability, businesses and the public sector are increasingly feeling pressured to do better business and take bold actions to improve their footprint and legacy.

In September 2019, Google revealed plans to purchase 1,600MW of electricity equating to \$2bn worth of renewable energy from wind and solar sources, making it the biggest renewable energy deal in corporate history. Similarly Ikea announced in September that by year's end it will exceed its 2020 target to

produce as much renewable energy as the energy it consumes, due to its investment of 2.5 billion euros (£2.2 billion) over the past decade on wind farms, rooftop solar panels and off-site solar parks.

Squeaky's managing director, Chris Bowden has a 30 year pedigree in the energy industry and previously founded and sold energy broker, Utilyx.

On the recent deal, Chris said: "This recent PPA between the universities demonstrates the strength of feeling on transparency and sustainability and business can no longer hide their dirty secrets. Consumers demand that organisations live by their claims, and rightly so. Credentials and commitments to be a good business citizen have never been more important."

"Small businesses see the buying power and influence of big businesses and want that for their own organisation. We are giving smaller businesses and the public sector the ability to do

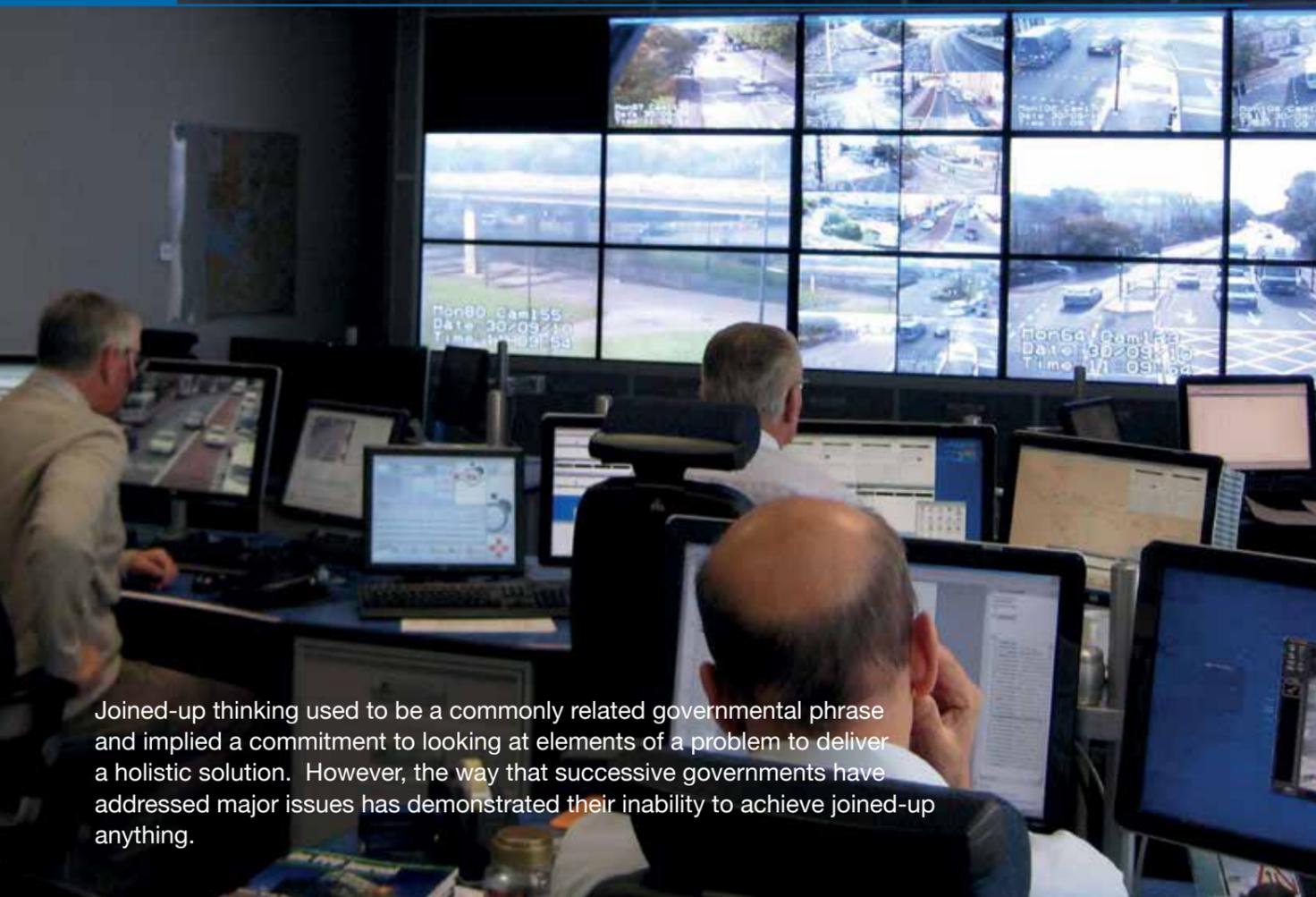
that while making a contribution to combatting climate change and conduct business with a clear conscience. The energy market is unpredictable. Prices fluctuate wildly. Our generators energy is sustainable and non-polluting and we can offer fixed prices, down to less than a megawatt, by entering into a Squeaky Clean PPA."

"The price of fossil fuels is predicted to rise while clean energy prices are falling. It makes perfect business sense to switch." James Rolfe, the chief operating officer at Anglia Ruskin University said the university has joined others in declaring a climate emergency, and plans to be climate neutral by 2030.

James said: "To support this commitment we aim to source all of our electricity from zero carbon sources by 2025, and this power purchase agreement makes a significant contribution towards this goal whilst delivering financial savings and budget stability".

Squeaky has been disrupting the energy market - through extensive data and technology - and supplying 100% clean energy to businesses since 2017 from UK solar, wind and hydro sources. The Squeaky platform has a significant volume of clean energy from UK wind assets ready to go in standardised PPAs. To set up a PPA, simply decide how much of your energy you want to commit, and pick the source, location, price and term you need. For more information about Squeaky Clean Energy PPAs contact sales@squeaky.energy or visit <https://www.squeaky.energy/>





Joined-up thinking used to be a commonly related governmental phrase and implied a commitment to looking at elements of a problem to deliver a holistic solution. However, the way that successive governments have addressed major issues has demonstrated their inability to achieve joined-up anything.

Councils achieving greater value with multi-purpose traffic enforcement and management platforms

Tim Daniels, Sales and Marketing Director, Videalert Limited

The challenge appears to be in determining the level at which these issues need to be tackled and the order in which they should be fixed. Unfortunately, governments have a chequered track history of project failures that have resulted in confusion regarding departmental responsibilities and increased costs.

The way that the enforcement of clean air zones, low emission zones and moving traffic contraventions are managed is a case in point. There are three different government departments involved in parking, traffic, road safety and air pollution, all of which operate independently with no apparent sharing of data or philosophy.

The siloed approach adopted by these departments has resulted in different pieces of legislation being drawn up relating to the way that CCTV cameras can be used. They include:

- Clean Air Act
- Transport Management Act
- Road User Charging Act

Surely it would have been better

to have a single piece of legislation about how cameras can be used instead of the government's COAD legislation (Certification of Approved Device) which imposes different certification requirements for the use of cameras based on type of scheme such as CAZ, ULEZ, road user congestion charging, parking and traffic enforcement. As well as being

costly to manage, this legislation has resulted in inconsistency and confusion for both the vehicle drivers and the councils that are being asked to implement these schemes.

In addition, this legislation discriminates against councils outside London regarding the enforcement of traffic and parking contraventions. Whilst London councils can deploy cameras to enforce air pollution, congestion and road safety, it is shackling the powers of councils across the rest of the country to deliver similar outcomes. For example, regional councils are restricted to enforcing bus lanes and four types of parking including school keep clears and red routes but stopping in yellow boxes, which is preventing traffic flowing and is one of the root causes of air pollution, remains unenforceable.

This is also causing massive waste as multiple certificates legislate against using cameras to enforce more than one application. As a result, local authorities are having to deal with higher costs for procurement and ongoing maintenance as well as increased street furniture clutter. It really makes no sense to force councils to procure and install separate cameras to enforce different contraventions particularly when they are trying to streamline their services and reduce costs in the face of extreme budgetary pressures.

Successive governments have demonstrated no apparent will to change despite the clear links between traffic congestion, road safety, parking and air pollution. This disjointed approach is making the situation more complex than it needs to be. It is time that the government had a major rethink as to what outcomes it needs to deliver over what period in order to start addressing the priorities and demonstrate it is serious about tackling these issues or just playing lip service to them.

The recent case of Ella Kissi-Debrah, the nine year old girl who developed asthma at six years of age when walking to school and died three years later should be a stark reminder to everyone in government that this is not the time to be complacent. Should

Ella's mum be successful in her challenge to have her daughters cause of death changed from asthma to air pollution this will set a precedent for subsequent challenges and no doubt result in massive compensation lawsuits being filed against the government.

Multi-tasking technology

The technology to resolve these issues is already available and Videalert was one of the first to develop and deliver a single multi-tasking digital video platform that can support multiple applications simultaneously. Platforms such as this have led to single point solutions, which were traditionally the norm, becoming extinct.

An example of this multi-tasking can be seen in the City of Bath, one of the UK's leading tourist destinations and a UNESCO World Heritage Site which draws over 3.3 million visitors and 70,000 vehicles every day. Bath and North East Somerset Council has used bus gates to reduce cross city movements during the peak hours to assist the free flow of buses and other public service vehicles. It also used ANPR cameras to monitor bus lanes on key routes. In conjunction with a single mobile enforcement vehicle the cameras were generating around 30,000 PCNs annually.

Since installing Videalert's digital video platform, which integrated with Bath's city-wide fibre network, the council has been able to achieve much more with the installation of ONVIF-compliant HD IP cameras. As well as replacing legacy camera assets in bus lanes and bus gates, new cameras have been installed in the Charlotte Street car park and Park & Ride locations to monitor usage and dwell times, data that now feeds into the council's UTMIC to help guide drivers to the most appropriate parking locations.

The hosted digital video platform is enabling the council to achieve more by integrating it with other applications, such as permit parking, to drive further efficiencies. Linking mobile ANPR vehicles, including the latest ULEP mopeds, to the online permit database allows real-time checks of permits issued by the hour

reducing the time taken to patrol resident parking zones.

Bath and North East Somerset Council is also installing additional cameras for its approved class C clean air zone (CAZ) that gives exemptions to private cars but charges higher polluting buses, coaches, HGVs, LGVs/vans, private hire vehicles and taxis. The cameras will be installed at key road junctions across the designated boundary and the hosted Videalert platform will automate the management and enforcement of this new zone, providing real-time identification including vehicle make, model,

a large fixed site ANPR camera infrastructure that enabled data to be shared between all stakeholders, each with significantly different requirements.

This was the chosen solution as it seamlessly integrated with existing CCTV infrastructures and the city-wide B-Net, a fibre optic network used for running traffic signals and other traffic management applications. The platform now handles and processes video from over 155 cameras and the VRM data is used for a variety of applications including:

- Real-time data to Urban Traffic



colour and euro standard rating for pre-filtering and updating the whitelist of compliant vehicles held at the edge to minimise transmission costs.

Information on non-compliant vehicles will then interface with the UK government's new national clean air zone database for vehicle validation and payment. The system will also provide detailed analytics and impact analysis highlighting the reduction in non-compliant vehicles entering the zone over time.

Smart City Solution

The Videalert platform is also being used in Bristol, the seventh largest city in the UK and 2018 Global Mobile Awards (The GLOMOs) winner of the Smart City category. This is an example of how 'joined up' thinking and the efficient sharing of data sharing can deliver an improved service at lower cost. An innovative partnership formed between Bristol City Council, Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) and the Safer Bristol Partnership (SBP) provided sufficient funding for

Management Control (UTMC) database

- Near real-time aggregate data to UTMIC
- Real-time police ANPR data to BOFIL
- CSV data to SCOOT/Paramics traffic modelling systems
- CSV data to car park operators
- online data access and review

In conclusion despite the lack of leadership and joined up thinking from Central Government, councils such as Bath and North East Somerset and Bristol are making use of innovative technology to deliver improved outcomes for their citizens. By using multi-purpose systems based on open architecture with vendors with a proven track record of breaking down data silos, they have both demonstrated that significant benefits can still be achieved in the face of paralysis in Government.

For more information please visit www.videlert.com

First installation of SDS Aqua-Xchange on the M56

THE FIRST installation of SDS Aqua-Xchange™, the sustainable drainage innovation which turns roadside filter drains into treatment devices that protect the water environment from toxic metals pollution, has been successfully completed on a busy stretch of the M56 motorway.

Contractors BDB Special Projects installed the new granular treatment media into an existing filter drain along the M56 to prevent pollution of a vulnerable Cheshire stream, which receives runoff from a 1km stretch of the motorway via a single outfall.

SDS Aqua-Xchange™ has been developed by SDS, the leading manufacturer of surface water infrastructure systems, to capture and retain copper and zinc, poisonous metals released through the abrasion of vehicle tyres and brake pads, which dissolve in surface water during heavy rain.

SDS Aqua-Xchange™ could now be installed into many hundreds of kilometres of existing filter drains that flank motorways and trunk roads across the country. Highways England has

identified 2,500 high-risk pollution locations as part of its ongoing Priority Outfall Programme and is looking for practical and affordable treatment solutions.

As part of the continuous improvement programme for the Highways England Area 10, a study was completed of the Mag Brook outfall, a small tributary that runs through farmland to the south of Lymm. Water from Mag Brook flows via another stream, Bradley Brook, into a small lake known as Lymm Dam, a popular local beauty spot and nature reserve.

Jo Bradley, Market Development Manager and water quality specialist for SDS, worked closely on the M56 project from its earliest stages, through its first successful installation. She said:

"The risk assessment revealed the stream was vulnerable to pollution because of the high traffic volumes travelling to and from Manchester and the airport. There was very little water flow in the brook to dilute the runoff from the motorway. It confirmed a treatment scheme was needed to clean the water significantly, reducing both the soluble copper and zinc levels to bring them within permitted levels.

"There was no space to build SuDS ponds or other vegetative features behind the carriageway to treat the metals, or to install a manufactured stormwater filter to capture the pollutants. So, it would have been extremely problematic to mitigate the pollution risk otherwise. Using SDS Aqua-Xchange™ also meant less excavation and less disruption. There will also be no need for maintenance during the 12 to 15 years design life."

Filter drains are stone-filled trenches that provide a highly-effective and sustainable way of capturing suspended solids as they run off to the sides of the carriageway. However, they are not capable of capturing soluble pollutants. When added to the filter drain, a layer of SDS Aqua-Xchange™ uses the processes of adsorption and ionic exchange to capture the metals dissolved in the runoff as they filter through the material. The chemical process forms unbreakable bonds, so the pollutants are retained even in heavy storms and during winter road-salt applications.

Contractors BDB Special Projects Ltd completed the installation. A total of 184 one cubic metre bags of Aqua-Xchange™ were delivered to site by SDS, which BDB set out at seven metre intervals along each side of the carriageway so that the correct volume of material could be applied evenly.

As there were cabled services in the existing filter drain, a vacuum excavator was used to remove the existing stone to the desired 400mm depth. A team followed directly behind to line the trench with a geotextile membrane, then a grab wagon was used to lift and discharge each cubic metre bag of Aqua-Xchange™ material into the trench and it was raked level. The old stone was taken away for cleaning and reuse.

The 250mm layer of Aqua-Xchange™ was covered with a geosynthetic grid for surface stabilisation, then with a final layer of clean stone, designed to capture initial suspended solids and gross pollutants before the water is treated by the Aqua-Xchange™ beneath. The water then continues to percolate through the non-woven geotextile wrap and filters through a further layer of stone before entering the perforated pipe at the bottom of the trench. The cleaned water is discharged into Mag Brook.

Ben Dobson, Director of BDB said: "We were able to complete the works during ten overnight closures, with minimal disruption to the travelling public.

"Through our experience in filter drain refurbishment works, we understand that detailed planning of the logistics is key to successful and safe delivery. By making a few small changes, introducing Aqua-Xchange™ into the process became seamless, leading to efficient outputs not dissimilar to traditional filter drain replacement methods.

"It was very refreshing to work closely with the SDS team and to experience their real commitment to seeing the environmental benefits of this product being realised.

BDB Special Projects Ltd are pleased to have been involved with the scheme and are happy to see such innovative products making a positive impact on the Environment".

There are many hundreds of kilometres of filter drains throughout the UK, close to areas known to be at risk of metals pollution from runoff. Further installations of SDS Aqua-Xchange™ are already in the design stages for locations across the UK.

www.sdslimited.com



Don't get tripped up by grounds maintenance risks

For the public sector organisations responsible for properties that include outdoor spaces, the maintenance and upkeep of pathways, car parks and landscapes isn't just a matter of aesthetics but also of managing risk. Yet according to grounds

According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) around five million days are lost each year through workplace injuries, with slips, trips and falls making up more than half of all reported major/specified injuries and almost 29 per cent of over-seven-day injuries. This costs the UK economy billions of pounds. In the public administration category alone, accidents of this type account for 28% of employee injuries. The risks are not only of physical harm to employees, visitors and members of the public, but also to an organisation's reputation and finances – especially through legal action: fuelled by "no win no fee" legal services there is a flourishing compensation culture and accidents from trips and falls has the greatest potential for high value claims and compensation.

Public sector bodies are increasingly feeling the mounting cost of such cases: For example, after a slip on playground ice, one West Midlands pupil was awarded £35,000. Elsewhere, poor maintenance of surfaces in car parks cost councils in England and Wales £7.3m in personal claims – 82% of which were the result of potholes.

It's not just an organisational risk either – action can be taken against individuals within an organisation whose actions – or inaction – result in health and safety lapses. Furthermore, breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act fall under criminal rather than civil law, which means that liable individuals may end up facing far tougher financial sanctions and even end up with a

criminal record.

Despite the scale of risks and consequences, many organisations still leave far too much to chance in how they manage outdoor spaces. While more than 50 per cent of slips and trips occur in the autumn/winter months and a huge number are caused by snow and ice, many organisations fail to plan for adverse weather accordingly. Research by the IWFM* found that almost a quarter of facilities managers said that they don't have a winter maintenance plan in place to ensure that the right procedures, training and equipment are in place to effectively anticipate and clear snow and ice. Of the organisations that do have a plan of this type, 26 per cent fail to review the plan annually to ensure that it's fit for purpose.

At other points on the calendar, a lack of effective planning and risk assessment in grounds maintenance can expose an organisation to other environmental dangers. For example, according to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), falling trees or branches kill between 5-6 people a year. While this is a relatively rare occurrence, the HSE notes that "the low level of overall risk may not be perceived in this way by the public, particularly following an incident", and recommends that management of trees on sites has to be demonstrably proportionate to the level of risk in that location. Organisations with wooded areas on site must therefore have in place an appropriate inspection regime that takes into account

and winter maintenance experts at GRITIT, too many organisations are failing to adequately plan to mitigate hazards in the outdoor environment that can impact employees and the public alike.



factors such as the level of access by employees or members of the public or whether foliage is obstructing sightlines to adjacent roads. Any inspection process should also seek to identify risks such as tripping hazards from tree roots.

It's all about the process and the plan

Risks and liabilities in outdoor spaces can be effectively mitigated and success is ultimately a matter of having the right plans and processes in place. Indeed, whether it's a robust winter maintenance plan or a schedule for inspecting car parks for potholes, organisations need to take care to develop systems that can be embedded into their health and safety policies and procedures. In the event of an accident, the existence – or non-existence of such systems for identifying, reporting, recording and managing risks will be a key focus of any investigations. Conversely, the ability to evidence

the steps taken to reasonably mitigate risks can be the key to avoiding the worst legal consequences.

Professionalising outdoor facilities management is therefore the key to ensuring that an organisation is able to meet its Duty of Care, manages risk, and meets the expectations of its insurers. However, doing so can involve a degree of upfront investment in processes and skills that, as public sector budgets face ever-greater pressure, is often difficult to meet. As a result, engaging with specialist contractors can prove a cost effective way of delivering a high standard of maintenance.

For more information on how to help mitigate risk in your organisation call GRITIT on **0800 0432911** or visit www.gritit.com.

*IWFM winter preparedness survey 2015 and 'Winter Maintenance Best Practice Guide' in association with GRITIT. Updated edition September 2017.

Mitie Document Management

capitalises on IBML ImageTrac scanner performance to expand services for facilities management customers



1 million invoices worth £1 billion processed annually with the goal to double this in 12 months...

IBML announces today that Mitie Document Management, part of the UK's leading facilities management group, is capitalising on the performance of its ImageTrac scanners to expand the services it offers. In addition to digital mailroom and traditional back scanning projects, it will focus on delivering a broader portfolio of solutions to include invoice processing and HR document digitisation.

Supplied by Spigraph, which also provides ongoing maintenance and support, Mitie Document Management uses two IBML ImageTrac scanners along with SoftTrac Capture Suite (SCS) software at its purpose built centre in Birmingham.

Invoice processing for both private and public sector clients has become a growth service area for the company and a future focus in terms of new business generation. In-house processes can be people intensive and costly, therefore, outsourcing to

a specialist such as Mitie, which has invested in technology to automate this crucial back office function, makes real commercial sense for many businesses.

Mitie Document Management has an established track record in this area and currently processes around one million invoices a year for clients worth £1 billion in value. A class above normal desktop scanners, ImageTrac scanners are set to handle a shift average of 190 images per minute, delivering ultra-high volume combined with intelligent features to maximise image quality and minimise operator involvement.

Mitie uses ImageTrac machines due to their speed and efficiency which radically shortens the turnaround time from the point at which an invoice is received to the moment it's paid. The invoice process is fully digitised, with the IBML scanners assigning each invoice a unique ID number for full audit trail purposes. Images are then imported into eFlow – a

capture and workflow platform – which OCRs each document and extracts data such as supplier name, net and gross values and VAT amount. This information is then exported – using XML data – and integrated with individual ERP systems for payment.

In addition, Mitie Document Management will also offer HR related services where staff employment files are scanned, contents indexed, and information made available quickly and securely for review. This has also become a key area of work for companies to meet the requirements of GDPR.

The investment in IBML scanning technology enables Mitie Document Management to offer fast and cost competitive services to all clients as well as provide headroom for growth. The company expects to double the number of invoices it processes this year – to total over two million – some received on paper which will be scanned, others coming in

via email for direct integration into eFlow.

Ian Stevenson, head of offsite operations, Mitie Document Management commented, "All large organisations struggle with paper. Our model is to help customers by taking laborious back office processes off site. We use best in class scanning equipment to quickly digitise documents, automatically capture information and send this back to clients as useful actionable data which makes their lives easier."

Ashley Keil, IBML's sales director, Northern & Western Europe, Africa & India, said, "Broadly speaking, the market rate for document digitisation is pretty similar. Our ImageTrac scanners allows Mitie Document Management to process paperwork much faster and more accurately than competitors who use desktop devices creating a faster turnaround and improved accuracy of capture."

AMI Conversational
Artificial Intelligence
Solution Transforms
Services for Citizens

New story
here

Stockport Council reduces cost of customer response in the contact centre by 95% with Britannic Technologies

Britannic Technologies, specialists in voice communications, systems integration and managed services, has deployed AMI, a conversational AI solution into Stockport Council's contact centre to improve customer experience. AMI has enabled the council to reduce the cost of customer response in the contact centre by 95%, compared to other communication methods such as telephone calls, emails and live web chat. For a council that receives thousands of enquiries a week the potential savings are huge.

However, it is not just about the cost-savings for Stockport Council. Their priority is about improving the customer experience. Stockport Council is modernising the way people access council services, using digital technologies to meet 21st century expectations of customer service and deliver routine services more efficiently. They are committed to human centred design, putting the needs of the people who will be using the service first, rather than the business goals or technical solutions.

Councillor Kate Butler, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus and Engagement says, "We are redesigning the way we deliver our

services, based on the needs of the people who will be using them. We are significantly improving the customer experience by embracing all the opportunities digital solutions bring, including online self-service."

For the past few years Stockport Council had been offering Contact Centre operated web chat for users who are online and need help, but they were looking for an Artificial Intelligence (AI) solution that could operate on a 24/7 basis and handle as many contacts from citizens as possible. The aim was to transfer low level enquiries to an AI solution and focus their contact centre agent support on customers who are vulnerable or have complex circumstances.

Britannic worked closely with Stockport Council through Discovery workshops to understand their needs in depth and what technology they had in place ensuring that it could be integrated into existing operations and infrastructure. They reviewed the areas where AMI could be used, where it could automate interactions and how it could help improve customer service. To assist the learning process Ami was initially focussed on environment, council tax, bins and recycling, roads and footpaths.

"In each area we studied the customers' journeys, looking at ways that we could make it easier for them to use. The chat is so simple; they ask AMI what they are looking for and it will present them with the information they require or guide them to a relevant page or the correct form on our website. If the enquiry is too complex, then it will hand over to a contact centre agent," says Alison Blount, Head of Revenues, Benefits and IAG.

Jonathan Sharp, Director, Britannic Technologies states, "Stockport Council has used digital transformation strategies to re-engineer business processes and modernise the workplace. They engage with customers to examine the journey they take, looking at every touchpoint with the aim to make it as seamless as possible for the users. They also look at how the processes work and flow together as an entirety rather than an isolated project.

"Through analysing the conversations with AMI, they can continue to learn about and identify improvements to the customer journeys for each service – any gaps in her learning indicate there's a need to revisit the web content."

As well as extending the hours when online support is available,

there are no limits on how many chats Ami can handle at one time, so citizens are no longer having to wait for their queries to be answered. Now with the AMI solution 61% of enquiries are being resolved, while just 19% of chats are being routed to an agent because they are too complex for AMI to deal with.

"We selected Britannic as they understand the requirements of digital transformation solutions for the public sector, and they are accredited by the procurement frameworks. The fact that AMI can automatically update with any changes in our website, can handle unlimited conversations and we can also analyse the chats to make improvements definitely make it stand out from the competition," says Blount.

If you are free on the 14th November then please join us at our annual summit for business leaders, at Mercedes Benz World, in Weybridge, to see AMI in action and find out about Workplace Modernisation.

<https://www.btnet.co.uk/events/convergence-summit-2019>

<https://www.btnet.co.uk/solutions/contact-centre/contextual-apps-and-ai>

Sword GRC Hosts Audit Workshop for Local Government

Local Government Audit Workshop: For Internal Auditors by Internal Auditors
Thursday 7th November 2019, Manchester Art Gallery

Sword GRC, a supplier of specialist risk, compliance and governance solutions, is to host a workshop for Local Government employees entitled: "Local Government Audit Workshop: For Internal Auditors by Internal Auditors" on Thursday 7th November 2019, at the Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street, Manchester. Designed specifically for Auditors or those working in compliance, the event will bring together internal auditors and thought leaders in a half-day business networking event. Delegates attending the event will see presentations from Manchester City Council, existing users of the Sword Audit Manager solution, as well as be able to participate in group discussions and network with Local Government peers.

Panel presentations and interactive discussion will inform and educate on the topic of audit and compliance, to provide insights and ideas that delegates can take back and apply in their own organisation. Sword GRC has many clients in Local Government that are established users of its audit, compliance and governance solution, Sword Audit Manager (Galileo); including Birmingham

City Council, Wigan Council and Milton Keynes.

Keith Ricketts, Vice President of Global Marketing at Sword GRC said; "We are delighted to be hosting this event specifically for a Local Government audience. Increasingly local authorities are reviewing their internal audit provision and looking for support to assist their processes, which has stimulated demand for audit and compliance solutions. This, along with the desire to introduce additional levels of oversight and monitoring for internal audits and controls, makes our workshop very relevant.

"The presentations and discussions will focus on hot topics and best practice that will inspire debate, encourage engagement and ultimately broaden expertise such that delegates will be able to add real value and insight back into their organisations."

Free to attend, the half-day event includes lunch for delegates.

For more information and/or to register for the Sword GRC please visit: <https://www.sword-grc.com/local-government-workshop/>



Secure I.T. Environments completes data centre build for Thurrock County Council

A range of works and 234m2 modular data centre design and build completed for Thurrock County Council, which will serve its 170,000 thousand residents.

Secure I.T. Environments Ltd, one of the UK's leading design and build companies of modular and containerised data centres including refurbishment of existing data centres, has announced today the handover its latest data centre project to Thurrock County Council. The new 234m2 data centre, will provide a new energy and space efficient home for an IT infrastructure serving 170,000 residents across over 160km2.

The data centre was required as the operational location and IT systems had reached end of life. This led to a critical timeline to ensure handover for the new facility was achieved on time and within budget. The project was split into two phases, the first comprising the design, build and testing (including acceptance testing) of the new data centre, the evaluation of existing critical and essential power, and decommissioning of the existing ICT infrastructure. Phase two is an on-going five-year programme of planned preventative and reactive

maintenance, including emergency call-out services.

The new data centre room includes Resilient Data Centre energy efficient air-conditioning in N+1 configuration, Riello MPW UPS, a built-in 65KVA generator, 840U of server space, raised access flooring, environmental monitoring, biometric access control, CCTV and Novac fire suppression. The project also included all ground works and connection to existing electricity supplies and back-up generators located on other parts of the site.

Chris Wellfair, Projects Director at Secure I.T. Environments, added "We have worked hard for over a decade to ensure that customers can trust our name when it comes to the delivery

and maintenance of their data centres. For the public sector in particular, where people rely hourly on access to council services, we take great pride in being a part of councils achieving their digital vision."

About Secure I.T. Environments Ltd

Secure I.T. Environments Ltd is a UK company specialising in the design and build of energy efficient internal/external secure modular data centres, containerised data centres and its infrastructure. The company has established an enviable relationship with its clients based on trust and mutual respect by working as a team with the client and its project team.

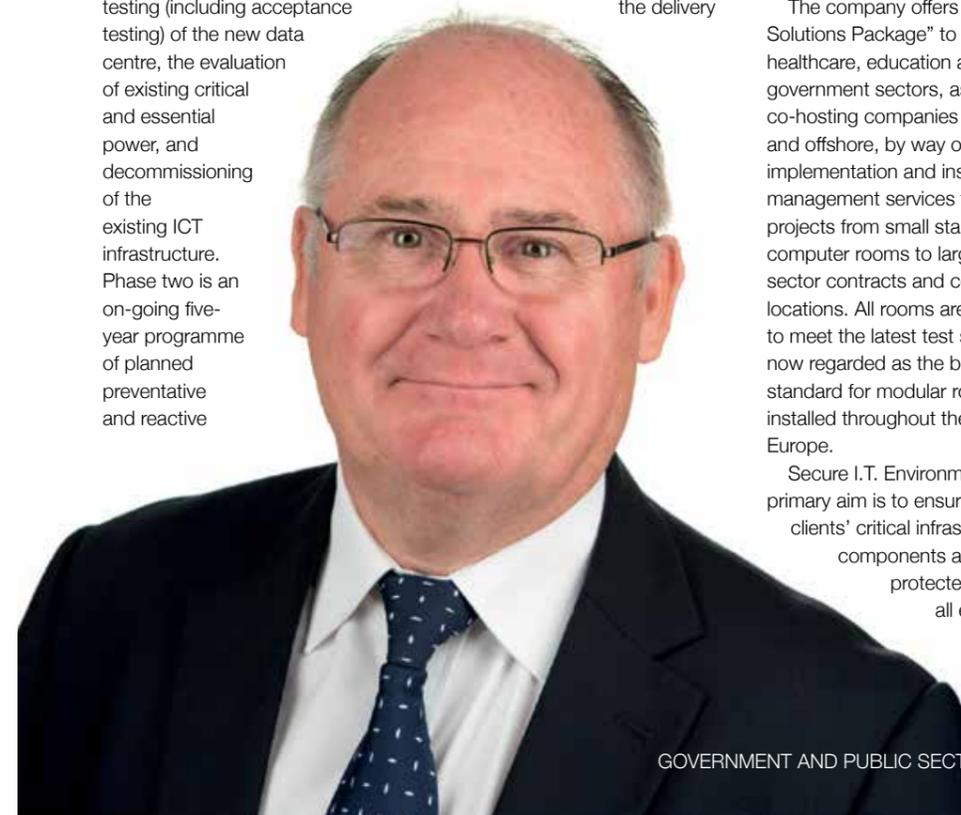
The company offers a "Total Solutions Package" to the private, healthcare, education and government sectors, as well as co-hosting companies in the UK and offshore, by way of design, implementation and installation management services for projects from small stand-alone computer rooms to large public sector contracts and co-hosting locations. All rooms are designed to meet the latest test standards, now regarded as the benchmark standard for modular rooms being installed throughout the UK and Europe.

Secure I.T. Environments' primary aim is to ensure that clients' critical infrastructure components are protected against all external threats in a suitably

protected modular room or Modcel containerised environment. To this end the company has established long-standing partnerships with its manufacturers, who are at the forefront of R&D, to ensure the highest level of physical protection and energy efficiency is maintained.



Left: Chris Wellfair, Projects Director at Secure I.T. Environments.



Genmed makes senior leadership team changes to build its international healthcare business and focus on NHS growth opportunities

Genmed announced in October that its current chairman, Jonathan Wedgbury, and chief executive, Robin Modak are swapping roles to capitalise on their respective skill sets, expertise and commercial experience to drive the business forward. This is in light of significant UK and international market growth opportunities and the size and complexity of Genmed's managed service contracts given the ever increasing demands on the NHS.

Jonathan Wedgbury - who joined Genmed's board in October 2018 as chairman - will take over position as chief executive officer effective immediately, with Robin Modak - the founder of the company and current CEO - becoming director of new models and markets and the new chairman.

Since the company was founded in 2007, the business has grown exponentially with Genmed now the market leader in the provision of managed services contracts related to surgery and pathology. Over the past six years, Genmed's turnover has increased 513%, with year on year revenue growth rising from £38.6 million (2017/18) to £63.2 million. (2018/19).

The business now partners with 42 Trusts around the country and has 250 managed service contracts (MSCs) some of which are substantial totalling £180 million over their contractual term. Genmed works with Trusts such as Countess of Chester Hospital, London Northwest University Healthcare, Norfolk & Norwich University Hospitals, Nottingham University Hospitals, South West London Elective Orthopaedic Centre and Wirral University Teaching Hospital among others.

Managed services shift costs from CAPEX to OPEX and means finance directors avoid having to find additional capital they just don't have available.

With sales conversations now very much held at a c-suite level, Jonathan Wedgbury will take over the role of chief executive capitalising on his 35 years commercial and procurement experience in the NHS. A former commercial director for the West Midlands Regional Health Authority, he became chief executive of the NHS Healthcare Purchasing Consortium (HPC) in 2001. With an annual non-pay spend of £3.8 billion, HPC was responsible for all procurement and supply chain expenditure for the West Midlands and the North Central London Strategic Health Authority. It was rebranded Health Trust Europe LLP in 2011 after the organisation was sold to Hospital Corporation of America.

Jonathan Wedgbury says, "Given the lack of capital in the NHS, we are fulfilling huge demand from Trusts as they work to improve the effectiveness of their back office services to support the STP[1] agenda and deliver integrated care pathways. This is putting the horsepower behind Genmed's growth as

Trusts turn to us to help fund new estate and equipment - thereby boosting efficiency - and we take out additional cost for them by managing all the administrative, invoicing and supplier relationships that this entails."

Robin Modak will focus on developing Genmed's strategy and commercial reach by launching new businesses and creating additional MSC models to expand its service offerings for both the public and private healthcare sectors. A new company, Genmed Managed Services, has already incorporated in Dublin and partnerships developed with large medical equipment OEMs in Europe so that Genmed can enter international healthcare markets.

Furthermore, he will be looking at how to collate data from all the buying Genmed does on behalf of its customers to provide real-time and quality analytics about NHS purchasing with the objective to then build a consultancy business around this to assist Trusts to further improve efficiency savings.

Robin Modak says, "The board has ambitious goals. Jonathan will focus on growth; I will be responsible for reach. Our strategy is to take the business to £500 million in sales in three

years and reach £1 billion in five. Whilst we are providing managed services in all clinical and non-clinical areas, our focus is wider today as we have the know-how, the resources and the partners to continue to not only support public hospitals but target the private healthcare sector in the UK and internationally, too."

id verde signs contract with the Toro Company

Three-year agreement names Toro as preferred supplier to idVerde locations across Europe.

Europe's largest provider of grounds maintenance and landscape construction services, id verde, has signed a contract with The Toro Company today. The contract establishes a three-year partnership with Toro as a preferred supplier to idVerde's network of locations throughout France, the UK and the Netherlands.

Through this contract, all idVerde branches will have access to the full range of Toro products, including reel mowers, rotary mowers, flail mowers, and small-area and wide-area mowers, as well as landscape contractor equipment. Toro's extensive product portfolio also includes irrigation and snow removal products, and its equipment is widely used at notable sports venues and historic sites around the world.

The decision to work with Toro complements id verde's ongoing strategic expansion plans, aimed at adding to the company's capabilities and geographical coverage. "We were looking for a reliable partner with a strong presence, both at the local level and throughout Europe as we continue to expand," said Pascal Amico, director of purchasing at id verde. "With Toro's distributor network, we will have full coverage in terms of product, service and support. It's exactly what we need to ensure consistency in quality and performance across all of our branches."

"Toro is an ideal partner for id verde, not only because of our presence throughout Europe, but also because of our shared values," said Andy Brown, corporate accounts manager at The Toro Company. "Both companies have a long history of being committed to quality, environmental responsibility, customer relationships, and putting safety first. We're looking

forward to supplying id verde with the products and support they need to build on that legacy moving forward."

According to Anthony Nadalin, senior marketing manager at The Toro Company, id verde will also benefit from Toro's current focus on developing new products for the landscape contractor market. "Toro is investing heavily in new products so we can offer a total solution for contractors of any size, whether it's a small independent business or a large group like id verde," Nadalin said. "From clearing and preparing the site to landscaping and maintaining it, Toro has equipment solutions for virtually every aspect of grounds' care. Our partnership with id verde is a real proof that Toro has the broad product portfolio that contractors can count on to get the job done right From Start to Finish."

Beyond access to Toro's wide portfolio of product, the partnership also relies on the network of support that Toro offers

in France, Holland and the UK through its dedicated and long-term distributors in each country.

"We have processes in place throughout France to handle best-in-class parts delivery, local training and technical support" says Jean-François Larvor, commercial director at Solvert, Toro's distributor in France. "We are here to ensure that the Toro equipment always delivers peak performance and optimal productivity to all id verde customers." Toro's distributors Jean Heybroeck in Holland and Reesink Turfcare UK, echo the same best in class support in their local markets

Toro's strong commitment to developing innovative and safe products that yield performance, productivity as well as Toro's relentless pursuit of eco-friendly and sustainable practices are a perfect match with id verde's values around eco-responsibility and passion for delivering landscape beautification and maintenance.



Hervé Lançon, CEO, id verde group, left, with Andy Brown, corporate accounts manager at The Toro Company

Social renters benefit from payment flexibility

Luke Jones, Market Intelligence Executive, allpay Ltd



Luke Jones

Payments Specialist, allpay Ltd recently surveyed more than 2000 people across the UK to gain an insight into current payment methods for several household bills. Almost 300 people sampled were social renters (292) with housing provided via their local housing association or council. Here we share some of the trends and most thought-provoking findings of the survey compared with last years' statistics.

Confidence

Fewer social renters are now confident in paying their regular bills: 64.7% in 2019 compared with 65.1% in 2018. This fall in confidence reflects in the increase in social renters who described themselves as "not confident in managing money and I regularly can't afford to pay household bills" 5.5% in 2019 compared with 4.6% in 2018.

If we compare the figures relating to private renters of a similar sample size (291) who perhaps sit higher on a socio-economic scale, the trend is reversed, indicating a growing gap between the available means of social and private renters. In 2019, 71.1% of private renters stated they were 'confident' in paying their regular bills, again higher than in 2018 (69.1%). A factor for consideration may be that many social renters are faced with the ongoing roll out of Universal Credit payments which has disrupted their paying schedules and available expenditure, thereby hampering their budgeting efforts and eroding confidence.

For the entire sample (2009 respondents) which included social and private renters and home owners (home owners accounting for the vast majority of the sample, 67.2%) there were

some regional variations relating to 'confidence' in paying household bills. Residents in Wales were the most confident in paying regular bills (82%) with Northern Ireland the least confident (73.9%).

81.3% of respondents from Scotland were confident in paying regular bills and those from the South East and South West 78% and 78.9% respectively.

For social renters this regional variation was different. Social renters in Scotland were the most confident (73.2%) with Central England the least confident (58%). Residents in Wales were still very confident at 72.2% with Northern Ireland having fairly low confidence again (60%). Northern England, South East & South West were 60.5%, 67.1% and 65.2% respectively.

Cash

Some councils are looking at phasing-out cash. However, the statistics relating to social renters demonstrate an ongoing reliance on cash with 11.07% preferring to pay rent by cash and 11.1% paying for their Council tax with cash. This remains a high percentage. To put these figures into context, the most popular payment type for rent is Direct Debit (35.97%) with a similar proportion (34.39%) preferring to pay by Debit Card and cash

in third (11.07%). The statistics actually demonstrate an increase in social renters preferring to use cash for rental payments compared with last year's survey: in 2018, 10.49% used cash.

Similarly, the preferred payment method for Council Tax is Direct Debit (43.5%) and second Debit Cards (31.68%) with cash the third most popular of the eight payment methods we surveyed. Respondents cited "Ease of Use, Security and Trust" as the most common reason when choosing their payment method.

The use of Debit Cards for rental payments has also increased in 2019 (debit card rent payments were 29.9% in 2018) and this could be due to residents' confidence in manual payments – paying when they know funds are available - compared with automatic payments which are taken regardless. In addition, failed Debit Card payments don't attract bank charges, so this may also point to a reason for their increased popularity.

Bank Accounts

Related perhaps to the increase in cash payments for rent, is also the increase in social renters which don't have bank accounts. In 2019, 2.1% or six of the 292 people who responded stated they 'don't have a bank account',

higher than in 2018 (1.6%). We also know from another report – the UK Payment Report - that 1.3 million people in the UK don't have a bank account and so for a comprehensive approach to financial inclusion, cash still needs to be recognised as an important option for many.

Payment Frequency

Social renters preferred payment frequency for regular household bills is monthly, 57.8% in 2019 – with the highest proportion of favoured monthly payments being for Internet and Phone services followed by Council Tax. However, the variation between respondents also points to the need to employ flexibility on payment frequencies for social renters. This year, the majority preferred to pay rent on a weekly basis (22.1%) with 9.9% on a fortnightly basis and 7.6% four-weekly.

Collecting automated rental payments on any working day of the month does offer the opportunity for Housing Associations to improve the flexibility of rent collection for the benefit of residents. Collecting rental payments much closer to pay day, or the day Universal Credit is paid for example, can help service users with budgeting and means people are far less

likely to fall into arrears and therefore their right to remain in their own homes is protected.

Future Preferences

We also asked social renters about the features that could make paying household bills easier. A significant proportion (45%) stated text and email reminders would be helpful, highlighting the important role modern communication plays in today's society. Budgeting tools (22.9%) and instalment plans (24.7%) may also point to a future role in technology to help tenants.

Conclusion

We have highlighted just a few of the key findings from the survey here. Overall, the findings point to the need to maintain flexibility on payment methods and frequencies to ensure financial inclusion and support social renters who are becoming increasingly 'less confident' in being able to pay their regular household bills.

For further information on implementing a full range of payment services please visit: www.allpay.net

We asked what social renters wanted:

"Paying small amounts that I can actually afford"
Cardiff, Wales

"Direct Debit out of an account that has enough in to pay for everything"
Birmingham, Central England

"My own spread sheets" (Potentially a budgeting tool)
Nottingham, Central England

"Being able to sort things out with a real person over the phone instead of relying on internet contact"
Cardiff, Wales

"Utility companies producing bills quicker"
Norwich, South East England



Falkirk Council introduces VDI and IGEL to deliver workplace flexibility and mobility for over 2,000 staff

£250,000 per annum saved as a rolling desktop PC replacement programme isn't required

IGEL, a world leader in software-defined endpoint optimization and control solutions for the secure enterprise, today announced that Falkirk Council has implemented virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) to provide workplace flexibility and mobility for over 2,000 staff and to enable it to assess and rationalize its whole office estate to make better use of its building assets.

In addition, VDI is allowing the Council to meet its Public Service Network (PSN)¹ compliance obligations and shift away from a continuous desktop replacement programme which was costing around £250,000 every year.

Located in central Scotland within half an hour of Glasgow and Edinburgh, Falkirk Council provides a diverse and wide range of services to over 160,000 residents including bin collection, education, home care, planning application services, social housing, fostering and adoption services and roads maintenance. The council serves the largest towns in the area such as Falkirk, Bo'ness, Denny, Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Grangemouth - Scotland's premier port and home to its only major oil refinery.

Falkirk Council has deployed Citrix Workspace as its VDI,

mobile device and application management solution, along with 600 IGEL multimedia UD3 and 100 powerful quad core UD6 endpoints in addition to 1,000 IGEL Universal Desktop Converter (UDC) software licences. Supplied by I-KONIC, an IT solutions provider and IGEL partner based in Glasgow, this has put in place a flexible, easy-to-manage and cost-effective solution to support the future development of the organization.

Tommy Evans, Falkirk Council's project lead for mobile and flexible working, explains, "Although it might sound cliché, moving from traditional PCs to thin client technology has genuinely been a paradigm shift for us. Along with mobile devices and iPads, staff aren't now tied to a particular desk. They just login from any IGEL device and are presented with Microsoft Office and applications tailored to their specific job role. We're trying to change the mindset of employees to make work an activity, not just somewhere you go from 9-5. We're empowering our staff to work anytime anywhere, even from home so they benefit from a good work-life balance."

This is a huge cultural change for the Council and is allowing it to introduce flexible and remote working whilst ensuring availability of services to residents. Evans

adds, "Even if there's a snowstorm and people can't get to an office, they can still login in and work as normal. VDI is also allowing us to review the buildings we currently have and exit old properties to lower our operational expenditure – helping towards making savings, which we hope will contribute to the approximately £60 million worth of savings which have to be made by 2023."

Re-using existing IT infrastructure 'sweats' assets longer and saves precious budget

After a series of proof of concept tests with all well-known thin client vendors, IGEL was selected. This was for a variety of reasons:

1. IGEL was the only supplier offering a software approach to managing desktops as opposed to selling hardware. IGEL's UDC software was particularly attractive as it has allowed Falkirk Council to turn its existing Windows-based HP PC desktops into IGEL Linux endpoints to not only facilitate easy management of them, but to extend the life of the actual hardware as well. Clearly this saves a huge amount of money given the hundreds of PCs involved.
2. IGEL's Universal Management Suite (UMS) means that the

whole UD3, UD6 and UDC environment can be centrally managed with IT staff able to shadow desktops to offer fast helpdesk support.

3. Compared to PCs, the IGEL UD3 and UD6 endpoints are quiet, produce less heat and are energy efficient. They come with an auto shut down feature too and turn off when not in use.
4. Security has been maximized. The IGEL terminals are controlled by the UMS with the IGEL Linux OS 'read only'. This means staff themselves cannot make changes to the endpoints locally or introduce security vulnerabilities as the desktop environment is 'locked down.'

VDI simplifies desktop management across multiple locations

The use of Citrix Workspace means that the challenges and overhead of managing thousands of PCs across various buildings has been removed. Software updates are easily made as data and applications are all held centrally such that IT staff don't have to traipse around machines updating things individually. Changes made in the datacenter automatically populate the connected IGEL desktops



This is key as PSN compliance requires councils to carefully manage the release dates of all key applications in use such as Microsoft Office and only be two versions behind the latest.

In addition, startup is now super-fast and takes seconds rather than minutes as was the case when PCs were used. Clearly this boosts staff productivity and avoids people wasting time as they wait for their desktops to 'boot up.'

Furthermore, hardware maintenance has been drastically simplified as IGEL terminals have no moving parts such as hard drives and fans.

The Citrix Workspace solution is powered by HPE server infrastructure. The Citrix control

layer is hosted on two HPE hyperconverged clusters for availability, each consisting of four HP ProLiant DL360 servers with the Citrix XenServer hypervisor. All virtual desktop workloads run from HPE Enterprise Moonshot System which is populated with 90 server cartridges across two chassis to deliver optimised performance. In total the council has invested around £1.8 million to completely transition away from PCs and put in place a much more modern, flexible and easy to manage desktop solution which – in the long term – is more cost effective.

Sean Russell, I-KONIC's managing director, says, "As a Scottish-based IGEL partner and Citrix Gold Solution Advisor, it's tremendously exciting to support

Falkirk Council as they embrace virtual desktop and workspace technologies to boost efficiency and increase productivity.

Our longstanding partnership with Falkirk Council, IGEL and Citrix goes from strength to strength with this transformation project. The never-ending rolling replacement of PCs has become a thing of the past, and users are able to access their applications and information from virtually anywhere."

Moving forward, Falkirk Council is reviewing its office requirements. Evans concludes, "One thing that is particularly pleasing about the project is how the council has used technology to save money whilst giving staff tools to work more efficiently and effectively.

We're looking very carefully now at how we can release building assets through the use of Citrix and IGEL."

Andrew Gee, IGEL's VP Sales Northern Europe, says, "With all UK councils hit by budgets cuts, UDC is a smart way for them to save money and extend the life of any x86-based PC or laptop by converting them into an IGEL endpoint. It avoids perfectly good technology being thrown away. And it's quick and simple to do with the device then easy to manage using our UMS software."

For more information on IGEL, visit www.igel.com

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/public-services-network>

David Hancock elected vendor co-chair at INTEROPen

The healthcare executive advisor at founder-member InterSystems wants the standards organisation to persist with collaboration and focus on adoption

David Hancock has been elected to the new role of vendor co-chair at INTEROPen, the collaborative set up to accelerate the development of open standards to enable health and care systems to interoperate with each other.

The election of Hancock, healthcare executive advisor at InterSystems, comes at a critical time for INTEROPen, which has grown rapidly from eight founders three years ago to around 350 members today.

The organisation has played an important role in shifting the attention of policy makers and informaticians from developing programmes and deploying systems to making sure that they can share information with each other.

INTEROpen is now looking at evolving its membership model to support a stronger focus on the

take-up and use of standards to support patient care and service transformation. "It is not enough to be able to define standards," Hancock says. "But to move to the next level, the organisation needs to become vendor-driven, because the best way to make standards stick is to get them incorporated into vendor products. That is why INTEROPen made the decision to create a vendor co-chair and, for me, the role is all about driving adoption."

Don Woodlock, vice president of HealthShare for InterSystems said: "We are proud of our continued association with this important collaboration and we are delighted that David Hancock will be taking it forward for the benefit of the NHS, the health tech community, and everybody who believes in effective, integrated care as the foundation for a

system fit for the 21st century."

Hancock has more than twenty years' experience of working in the health tech industry, having held senior roles at Oracle Corporation and Orion Health before moving to InterSystems in July 2015. He has been a member of the techUK health and social care council for two years and represented the trade body on the INTEROPen board until it decided to create the vendor co-chair position.



David Hancock

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Reduce Footprint
and gain portability with a
compact desktop design

Automate Audit Trails
and improve compliance
via intelligent imprinting

Simple-minded scanners burden you with costly pre-and-post scan labor.

Instead of always playing catch-up with the chaos, why not command and profit from your mailroom with a highly intelligent desktop scanner that does the tedious work for you?



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A SIMPLE STEP TOWARDS GDPR COMPLIANCE

Keeping your public sector data private

There is a lot of scaremongering surrounding GDPR, yet it is really all about the implementation of best practices for securing data – which can only be a good thing.

If you feel unprepared or can't see a way forward, you are not alone – a recent Apricorn survey revealed that 24% of the surveyed organisations were not aware of GDPR and its implications and of those who were, 17% didn't have a plan for ensuring compliance.

GDPR doesn't prescribe technologies and the implementation of processes, policies and procedures is left to each business. However, there are some quick wins that can address your biggest liability, a potential fine for breach.

Article 32 requires 'the pseudonymisation and encryption of personal data'. Article 34 notes that, in the event of a breach, if the data involved is encrypted, there isn't a requirement to contact each individual affected, thereby avoiding the resultant administrative costs.

To help organisations on the path to compliance, Apricorn is offering a no-cost, no-obligation evaluation of a device from its Aegis portfolio of hardware encrypted and software free USB and portable HDD that will secure your data on the move and at rest.

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What have you got to lose, except for your data!

It's time the public sector got “back to basics” with cybersecurity

By Jon Fielding, Managing Director, EMEA Apricorn

Government and public sector bodies hold some of the most confidential data in the UK, be it passport numbers, names, addresses, NHS numbers and much more – and keeping it secure should be top priority. Whilst these departments recognise the need to have a robust cybersecurity posture and policies in place, it continues to be an uphill struggle.

The digitalisation of government services, and the NHS especially, has made it easier for people to access their data online and via their mobile phone. Many GP services for example, are becoming readily available online, and driving licenses can be applied for and created online rather than the traditional postal methods of the past. These services however, are often secured with only a password and username that can be easily bypassed. If hackers were to obtain even snippets of this data, they could piece together a citizen's identity or go as far as to create a new one to commit fraud.

2019 saw the public sector at the receiving end of numerous cybersecurity incidents with government department staff reported to have lost more than 500 mobile and laptop devices between January and April 2019. These devices likely had reams of data and potential access to servers, emails and confidential documents. Furthermore, research by SolarWinds also found that a fifth of public sector organisations in the UK had reported 1,000 cyberattacks in 2018, which included government departments and NHS Trusts.

These examples show that slip-ups do not require complex or high-tech methods, but more often than not, simple technology targeting well-known weaknesses. In the case of the 500 devices lost by government department staff, only 10% of those were found, demonstrating the threat from

human error alone and ease at which data can be compromised through simply misplacing a device.

There are of course other means by which systems can be infiltrated; software patches not being regularly applied or employees who haven't been sufficiently educated in good cyber security hygiene and are therefore susceptible to phishing scams for example.

The NHS is extremely vulnerable to cyberattacks, even after the aftermath of the ransomware attacks in May 2018 which left Trusts inoperational for days. That said, NHS Digital and NHS England have created a Cyber Associates Network (CAN) to bring together people with an interest in and responsibility for cybersecurity. 85% of current members say they joined so they could receive training and updates on cybersecurity, with over 70% saying they want to find out about new products. This network of like-minded people is helping the NHS become more cyber-aware and, in turn, can influence a change for the better, encouraging NHS Trusts to review and update processes and procedures on an ongoing basis. This is a positive step when taking into account the recent findings from a whitepaper by Imperial College London's Institute of Global Health Innovation which was presented to the House of Lords in July 2019. The paper showcased that the health service 2018 attacks were a result of a combination of



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outdated computer systems, lack of investment and a deficit of skills and awareness in cybersecurity.

So what can be done to rectify these issues?

Protecting data from loss or theft is everyone's responsibility – and senior teams need to lead by example, building a culture of accountability and compliance across the whole organisation. Everyone who works within government and public sector departments and organisations must understand their security processes and procedures.

In addition to being trained in good cybersecurity practice, this means educating employees in the specific risks and legislation that apply to the business, how to be a responsible information owner, and the consequences of failing to follow procedure. IT teams also need to be on top of updating software and patching any vulnerabilities.

There's endless numbers of high-tech security solutions and tools on the market, and these should certainly be investigated, but there's also merit in taking a leaf out of the cyber-criminals'

book; reverting back to basics and taking a straightforward approach to safeguarding the organisation's data.

End-to-end encryption means that third parties are unable to read the contents of a document, email or message without an encryption key. To obtain such a key, if you're not the sender and the intended reader, is difficult. Using this technology makes an attacker's job a lot harder and potentially not worth the investment in resources unless they know what they're looking for. It also means that if a cybercriminal was to gain access to a device or several devices remotely, they would be unable to decipher confidential information.

Of course, there is always a chance that even with the best processes in place that something, or someone, could cause data to become compromised, but following these basic steps can ensure that government and public sector departments are protected against potential cyberattacks. Without them, data that belongs to the public could be at risk and can cause outage and distress.

Over £100m invested in carbon reduction across NHS

Energy efficiency projects to save NHS £24m a year

Salix Finance is celebrating a significant milestone after achieving £100m worth of committed funding within the NHS to enable savings of over £24m annually.

Salix, a government-funded organisation which provides interest-free loans to the public sector to improve energy efficiency, has now contributed more than £100.8m by supporting over 600 energy reduction projects across 70 English NHS trusts in the last decade, with future savings of up to £391m over the lifetime of the energy efficient technologies.

The work undertaken by the Salix NHS programme aligns with the landmark 2016 Lord Carter report¹, which investigates how operational performance and efficiency could be improved in English NHS acute hospitals. The report revealed that the sector spends more than £500m a year on energy bills, highlighting the

huge potential for significant cost and energy savings to be made through the strategic management of estates.

Following the findings of the Carter report, a recommended annual target of £36m of savings was set through reduced energy consumption every year up until 2020. The energy efficiency projects enabled through Salix funding will contribute to this target, with nearly £25m of annual energy savings already estimated and with further opportunities to expand upon this achievement. In addition to addressing the potential energy savings within the NHS, Salix are taking widespread action to reduce carbon emissions across the UK public sector as a whole.

The Sustainable Development Unit's Strategy for the Health and Social Care System 2014 – 2020 outlines ambitious aspirations to achieve a 34% reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent

emissions from building energy use, transport and procurement of goods and services by 2020², with the NHS already demonstrating a carbon emissions reduction of 18.5% between 2007 and 2017³. Salix's contribution to this strategy has also been noteworthy and has allowed the NHS to lower carbon emissions by more than 108,000 tonnes annually.

Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust were able to utilise Salix funding to develop their estate and to support their carbon management plans in line with these targets and the influential 2008 Climate Change Act⁴. Clare Topping, Energy and Sustainability Manager at the Trust said: "The loans from Salix have allowed us to access energy efficiency measures sooner than would otherwise be the case. Not only has this helped to keep us on track to achieving our 2020 Carbon Target but we have also improved the environment for

staff".

Sameen Khan, NHS Programme Manager at Salix Finance said: "We're very pleased to have helped the NHS to achieve these remarkable energy and carbon savings. The £100m we have funded in the sector to date has reached a third of the NHS Trusts and there is still considerable potential.

Simple measures such as upgrading inefficient heating, lighting and ventilation equipment can provide significant long-term financial and maintenance savings for organisations and help to mitigate against the effects of climate change. We are striving to continue this success and to engage with more NHS Trusts. The opportunities in the NHS are expansive and we're very excited to be able to play our part in taking action towards the reduction of the NHS's carbon footprint."



1. Operational productivity and performance in English NHS acute hospitals: Unwarranted variations An independent report for the Department of Health by Lord Carter of Coles, February 2016. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/499229/Operational_productivity_A.pdf

2. Sustainable, Resilient, Healthy People & Places: A Sustainable Development Strategy for the NHS, Public Health and Social Care system. Produced by the Sustainable Development Unit, for Public Health England and NHS England, in January 2014. <https://www.sduhealth.org.uk/policy-strategy/engagement-resources.aspx>

3. Reducing the Use of Natural Resources in Health and Social Care: 2018 Report. Produced by the Sustainable Development Unit, for Public Health England and NHS England, in 2018. <https://www.sduhealth.org.uk/policy-strategy/reporting/natural-resource-footprint-2018.aspx>

4. Climate Change Act 2008. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

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