How we help St Albans City and District Council to enhance communications and provide a superior citizen experience.

"For St Albans City & District Council, Northgate Public Services and Content Guru were able to decommission the existing PBX infrastructure and eliminate line rental fees and expensive ongoing maintenance costs across multiple sites, improving inbound and outbound communications and citizen satisfaction levels. The Council needed to quickly consolidate its communications estate and upgrade its ageing PBX systems. We were able to achieve this through the cloud model of **storm**®. We were also able to quickly configure the service and replace the existing wires with IP connections, after which it was a simple case of connecting up the iPath® endpoints to **storm**. St Albans proved an excellent pathfinder project for the **storm** partnership between Northgate Public Services and Content Guru."

- Caroline Croft, Client Services Director, Northgate Public Services

Case Study

The Problem

St Albans City & District Council is the second-largest local authority in the UK county of Hertfordshire, delivering services to more than 140,000 citizens across 20 local wards.

Because of the region's range of attractions and tourist appeal, visitor volumes regularly spike during busy holiday seasons, resulting in variable increases in population and placing additional pressure on the council to maintain high citizen service levels.

These increases place large demands on the Council's citizen - facing communications estate, which is already tasked with handling the full range of council services from providing assistance with council tax through to dealing with enquiries about local events. These cover both inbound and outbound interactions and this demand increases further during peak times due to unforeseen circumstances.

However, the Council's existing telephony system was unable to effectively process peaks in demand, and was also rapidly reaching end-of-life. At the same time, the Council had commenced a widespread modernisation project while still facing pressures to reduce expenditure. This meant the high maintenance costs of the legacy PBX equipment needed to be substantially reduced, while still improving its capabilities as part of a virtualisation of communications.

Furthermore, as part of the modernisation project the Council was required to deliver flexible working solutions, which had not been possible with the on-premises legacy PBX system.

The Solution

Content Guru and Northgate Public Services provided a cloud-based solution for St Albans City & District Council, deploying a contact centre and unified communications solution on the **storm** Communications Integration™ platform.
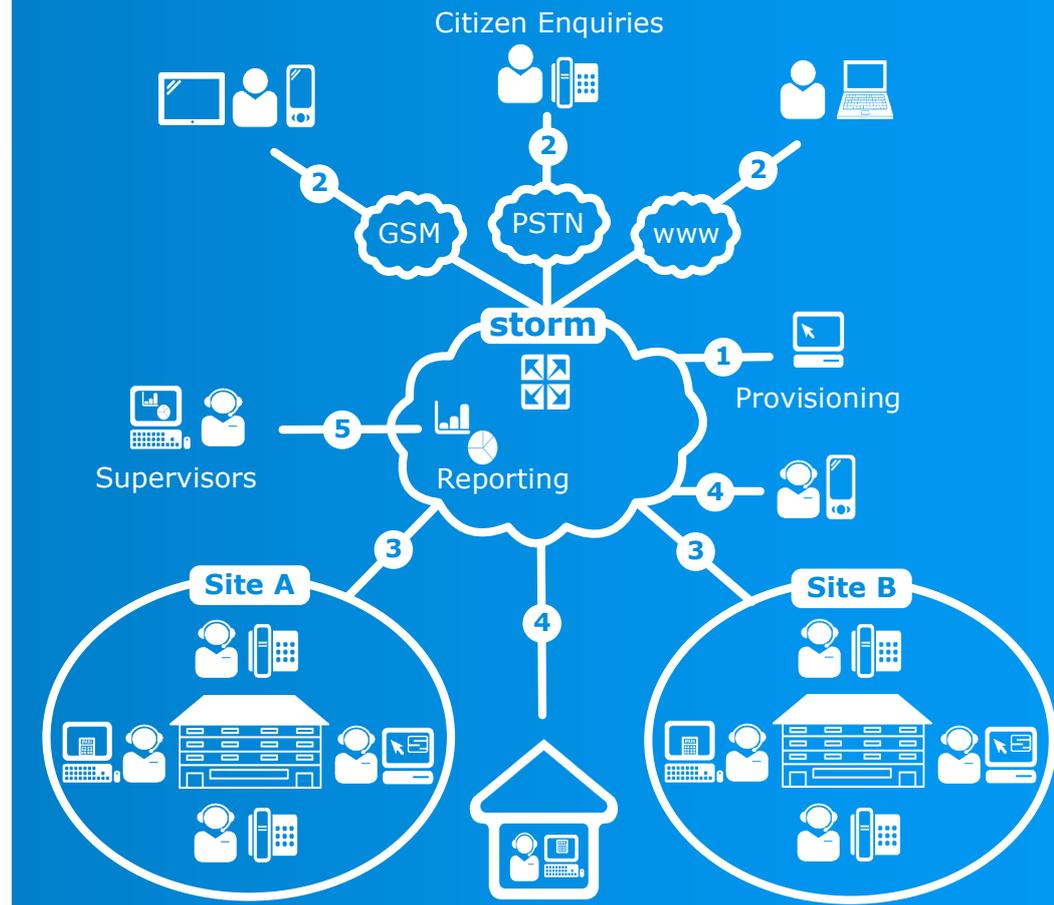
storm enabled St Albans to rapidly phase out its legacy PBX estate and connect all staff to the **storm** platform and contact centre agents directly to the cloud contact centre solution via IP. All existing handsets were replaced with a combination of Content Guru's iPath® hard and soft phones. This enabled the Council to eliminate the expensive maintenance fees on the on-premises hardware and pay only a minimal capital setup cost, with all services now charged on an affordable monthly basis.

The enormous capacity of **storm** enables the platform to handle any concurrent volume of inbound and outbound interactions, even during unexpected peaks in demand, enabling St Albans to optimise resources without the risk of dropping calls. Citizen interactions are routed via **storm** to the best available contact in the office or remote location, with agents able to homework by connecting via VPN to the **storm** platform.

Recording and reporting features allow supervisors to monitor agent performance, helping to enhance the efficiency of the contact centre and provide a superior citizen experience. The council was also able to utilise the flexibility of **storm** when setting up an Advice Hub to provision important communications services for third parties, including Citizens Advice.

Content Guru - the communications integration provider™

How it Works

1. Services are provisioned using web-based interfaces.

2. Citizens make enquiries across a range of channels including voice, SMS and email.

3. **storm** routes the enquiries to the optimal agent across multiple Council sites; agents and back-end users also make outbound communications.

4. Homeworkers make inbound and outbound communications through their iPath softphones, creating the impression of a single contact centre in the same building.

5. Real time and historical reporting can be accessed by supervisors through **storm** VIEW.

Citizen Enquiries

2

GSM   PSTN   www

2   2   2

storm

1

Provisioning

5

Supervisors   Reporting

4

3   3

Site A   Site B

4

Before

- St Albans operated a legacy telephony service which was rapidly approaching end-of-life. The Council needed to quickly install a more powerful and flexible system.

- Peaks in enquiries triggered by events such as Council Tax billing, and unforeseen events such as snow strained on-site capacity, with dissatisfied citizens left waiting in long queues.

- The PBX did not intelligently route calls or enable flexible working. Citizens were often unable to speak to the most appropriate member of staff to enable the best service to be delivered.

- The previous systems had limited provision for reporting on interactions thereby restricting the Council's ability to effectively manage the quality of enquiry handling.

After

- The **storm** service is live in the cloud, with Council agents and staff simply connecting via iPath phones, enabling St Albans to rapidly phase out its PBXs while reducing maintenance fees.

- **storm** fields any volume of contacts in the cloud before routing to agents, with the ability to self-service enabling more citizens to be serviced more efficiently.

- Staff can be reached on the same number whether in the office or at home via a **storm** iPath soft phone, enabling flexible working and saving the council money on mobile charges.

- **storm** VIEW allows supervisors and administrators to monitor agent behaviour and contact centre performance in real time. Enquiry logging enables interactions to be assessed and enhances Quality Management (QM).