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Customer Success Story

Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce

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Chamber of
Commerce

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Overview

The Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce embarked on a strategic initiative to enhance its digital capabilities and future-proof its IT infrastructure. As part of this vision, they sought a trusted IT partner who could provide seamless support, drive innovation, and strengthen cybersecurity—while delivering better value for money.

Following a rigorous tender process, EBC Group was selected as the Chamber's new IT provider, ranking highest in key areas including technical expertise, compliance, and cost-effectiveness. The transition was executed smoothly, ensuring minimal disruption and immediate improvements in efficiency and security.

Now benefiting from a modern, secure, and scalable IT environment, the Chamber is well-positioned to achieve its ambition of becoming one of the most digitally enabled Chambers in the country. Through a true partnership approach, EBC Group continues to support their ongoing digital transformation journey.

> "*The tender process was rigorous and thorough. Every supplier was graded against the same benchmarks, and EBC Group came out on top across multiple disciplines.*"
>
> - **Clare Golby**, *Digital Transformation Manager (Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce)*

About Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce

The Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce is a leading business support organisation dedicated to championing local businesses and driving economic growth across the region. With a strong network of members spanning various industries, the Chamber provides essential services, including business advice, networking opportunities, policy representation, and international trade support.

Committed to fostering innovation and digital advancement, the Chamber plays a pivotal role in helping businesses navigate challenges, embrace new technologies, and achieve sustainable growth. By continuously evolving its own operations, the Chamber sets an example for the local business community, ensuring it remains a forward-thinking and digitally enabled organisation.

The Tender Process

Unlike an open tender, this was a carefully structured process that assessed potential partners across multiple disciplines, including:

- Technical capabilities
- Track record
- Value for money
- Compliance

EBC Group emerged as the top contender across all categories, demonstrating a strong technical outcome and a compelling proposition.

> "*Looking back at the tender process, EBC Group consistently ranked highest in key areas—value for money, technical capability, and compliance. Not only have we gained more from a technical perspective, but we are also saving money. Their support has been instrumental in moving towards our vision of becoming one of the most digitally enabled chambers in the country.*"
>
> - **Clare Golby**, *Digital Transformation Manager (Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce)*

Challenges at a Glance

Inefficient IT Infrastructure: Users were logging into a Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop environment, despite having no business applications requiring a hosted server setup. This resulted in excessive costs for an unnecessary service.

Redundant Hardware Costs: Staff were equipped with both Thin Clients for office use and laptops for remote work. This duplication increased hardware expenses without delivering additional value.

Lack of IT Strategy and Account Management: The existing IT support partner did not provide a dedicated Account Manager or Technical Account Manager. This resulted in a lack of proactive IT strategy, planning, and a go-to contact for business technology needs.

Disjointed IT Support and Procurement: Netmetix supported 36 users at the chamber of commerce office but had been acquired by a larger company, leading to uncertainties. PS4B also provided hardware to the chamber of commerce as well as IT support for the C&WCC Training division, further fragmenting IT management. Lack of integration between Netmetix and PS4B caused complications in new starter onboarding and IT management.

Suboptimal Telephony Solution: The existing Gamma Horizon telephony system was not meeting expectations. The Chamber needed a more integrated communication solution.

Limited Cybersecurity and Compliance Measures: The IT environment lacked modern security tools and endpoint management solutions, leaving the organisation exposed to potential cybersecurity threats.

Unmonitored Connectivity and Network Security: The existing BT Leased Line was unmanaged by C&WCC's IT partner, meaning external support was required for troubleshooting and monitoring. Additionally, no virtual firewall was in place, increasing security risks.

> "The transition was smooth, quick, and seamless. Our team expected major disruptions, but due to EBC Group's well-managed approach, the process was incredibly efficient."
>
> *- **Clare Golby**, Digital Transformation Manager (Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce)*

The Challenge

Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce faced several IT challenges that were impacting their day-to-day operations and long-term efficiency. One of the primary concerns was the age and performance of their existing IT infrastructure. Their outdated systems were struggling to keep up with the increasing demands of a modern business environment, causing disruptions and inefficiencies that affected productivity.

In addition to infrastructure issues, the Chamber faced difficulties in managing their cyber security. With cyber threats evolving rapidly, their existing security measures were no longer sufficient to protect their sensitive data and digital assets. The organisation needed a comprehensive and proactive security solution to safeguard against potential breaches, ensuring business continuity and data protection.

Another critical challenge was the management of multiple office locations. As a well-established Chamber supporting businesses across the region, they required a seamless and centralised IT setup that could efficiently connect their different sites. Their previous system lacked the flexibility and scalability needed to support their growing network, making it difficult for employees to collaborate effectively. Lastly, the Chamber needed a reliable and knowledgeable IT partner who could provide ongoing support and strategic guidance. They required a provider who could not only address immediate IT concerns but also help them future-proof their systems to accommodate growth and technological advancements.

50%

Solutions at a Glance

Eliminated Unnecessary Azure Virtual Desktop Environment: Transitioned users away from the expensive virtual desktop setup, as all business applications were already cloud-based (Ruby CRM, Xero, Opayo, and MS 365 Business Premium).

Simplified Hardware Setup & Reduced Costs: Standardised IT hardware by replacing Thin Clients with laptops as the single device for both office and remote work & introduced Port Replicators for seamless workstation connectivity, reducing overall hardware expenditure.

Comprehensive IT Management & Strategic Support: Provided a dedicated Account Manager to oversee IT strategy, proactive planning, and ongoing advisory support & ensured a single point of contact for all IT-related queries and future improvements.

Unified IT Procurement & Support: Consolidated IT support under EBC Group, simplifying new starter processes and eliminating inefficiencies caused by multiple IT vendors & offered a streamlined migration plan, enabling C&WCC to transition smoothly from existing contracts with minimal disruption.

Integrated Telephony with Microsoft Teams Phone: Replaced the underperforming Gamma Horizon telephony system with Microsoft Teams Phone, fully integrating communications within the MS 365 Suite.

Enhanced Security & Endpoint Management: Deployed Microsoft 365 Business Premium's security features, including: Microsoft Defender for Office 365 for advanced email protection, Microsoft InTune for endpoint management and security policy enforcement and Microsoft Entra Multi-Factor Authentication and Conditional Access for improved identity protection.

Improved Connectivity & Network Security: Implemented a new BT Leased Line with Cisco networking equipment, fully monitored and managed by EBC Group & installed a Virtual Firewall hosted in EBC Group's ISO27001-certified Birmingham Data Centre, enhancing network security and performance.

Cost Savings & Future-Proofing: The proposed IT solution delivered a 41% cost reduction compared to C&WCC's previous setup, while improving efficiency and security. Future-proofed C&WCC's IT environment with scalable Microsoft cloud solutions, ensuring long-term adaptability and growth.

The Solution

To address these challenges, EBC Group implemented a tailored IT solution designed to modernise Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce's infrastructure and enhance their operational efficiency. The first step was upgrading their existing IT systems with the latest hardware and software solutions. This ensured faster performance, improved reliability, and a more stable IT environment, allowing employees to work more efficiently without system slowdowns or interruptions. In response to the Chamber's cyber security concerns, EBC Group introduced a robust, multi-layered security strategy. This included implementing advanced threat detection systems, regular security monitoring, and proactive measures to protect against cyber risks. By strengthening their security posture, the Chamber could confidently operate knowing their data and systems were protected against potential threats.

To streamline operations across multiple locations, EBC Group provided a fully managed IT service that centralised their network and communications. This not only improved connectivity between offices but also ensured that staff could collaborate seamlessly, whether working on-site or remotely. With a reliable IT infrastructure in place, the Chamber could focus on its core mission—supporting businesses across Coventry and Warwickshire.

EBC Group became the Chamber's dedicated IT partner, offering ongoing support and expert guidance. With a team of experienced professionals managing their IT needs, the Chamber gained peace of mind knowing they had a trusted provider to assist with any technical issues and future IT requirements. This partnership allowed them to remain agile and prepared for future growth while maintaining a cost-effective and efficient IT operation.

Seamless Transition to EBC Group

The transition to EBC Group's services was described as smooth, quick, and efficient, with minimal disruption to operations. Key highlights of the process included:

- A well-structured migration plan, ensuring minimal impact on day-to-day operations.

- Proactive handling of all transition-related challenges, including liaising with the previous IT provider.

- A hands-on, collaborative approach, making EBC Group feel like an extension of the Chamber's team.

Clare [Chamber representative] noted how previous IT issues created significant barriers to productivity. With EBC Group, these obstacles were removed, allowing staff to focus on their work without technical frustrations.

EBC Group's commitment to ongoing support has also been a key factor in the Chamber's satisfaction. Beyond the initial transition, the responsive helpdesk and proactive monitoring have ensured that any potential issues are swiftly identified and resolved before they can escalate into major disruptions. With dedicated account management and regular system health checks, EBC Group continues to optimise the Chamber's IT infrastructure, ensuring it remains secure, efficient, and aligned with their evolving business needs.

Delivering Greater Value and Cybersecurity

One of the most significant benefits EBC Group provided was the enhanced technical capability at a reduced cost. Previously, the Chamber faced ongoing IT challenges while paying a premium for services that did not fully meet their needs. With EBC Group as their new IT partner, they now receive superior support, enhanced cybersecurity, and a more streamlined infrastructure—all while lowering their overall IT expenditure.

Cybersecurity was a top priority in the Chamber's tender process, as they sought a provider that could safeguard their data and systems against evolving threats. EBC Group addressed this need by implementing a comprehensive security-first approach, ensuring that the Chamber's IT environment is not only more efficient but also highly secure. Key improvements included:

- Transitioning from Azure Virtual Desktop to Microsoft 365 Business Premium, providing a more flexible, cost-effective, and user-friendly experience.

- Strengthening cybersecurity with Microsoft Defender and Intune, offering advanced threat protection, endpoint security, and device management.

- Enhancing collaboration through SharePoint Online, enabling secure file sharing, streamlined workflows, and improved remote access for staff.

A Strong Partnership for Digital Growth

The partnership between Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and EBC Group is more than a supplier relationship—it is a strategic collaboration focused on long-term success. By modernising their IT infrastructure and strengthening cybersecurity, EBC Group has provided the Chamber with a robust, scalable, and future-ready foundation. This has improved efficiency, enhanced security, and removed previous barriers to productivity.
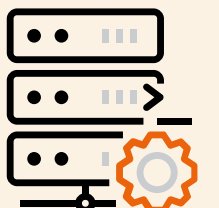
With the right technology in place, the Chamber can now focus on expanding its services and supporting its members without IT limitations. As a trusted technology advisor, EBC Group continues to ensure their IT infrastructure evolves with the latest innovations, helping the Chamber achieve its goal of becoming one of the most digitally enabled chambers in the country.