

19TH JUNE 2014

ATOMWIDE/OPENHIVE MIGRATION PROJECT UPDATE

REPORT BY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Executive Summary:

This report provides a further update on the migration from Atomwide to Capita Openhive. West Sussex County Council regrets the unforeseen impact and issues that arose from changing service provider from Atomwide to Capita Openhive on schools that continue to purchase its broadband or other IT SLA support. The report proposes further engagement with schools and the Schools Forum for improvements to future procurement of contracted services.

Recommendation:

To note the issues that arose from the migration from Atomwide to Capita Openhive and the actions taken to address them.

To note the apology from the Chief Operating Officer on behalf of WSCC and Capita for the disruption caused during the transition and that this will be cascaded to the schools community.

To comment on the proposals for future engagement of schools and the Schools Forum on the procurement of contracted services.

1. Background

- 1.1 Due to concerns with aging products and the current contractor's deteriorating service performance, the decision was made by WSCC, which was endorsed by the RCG and Schools Forum in November 2013, to terminate the contract with the current supplier due to expire at the end of March 2014. It was agreed to replace the contract with products provided and managed by Capita Openhive, which provide similar and enhanced IT Services for schools signing up to the Capita Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2014/15.
- 1.2 A key requirement to minimise disruptions to schools was to keep the same email addresses already in use and retain email history, which would require data migration from the incumbent supplier to the new supplier. This was a complex activity and needed to be closely managed to avoid massive disruptions to schools.
- 1.3 As part of the improvements WSCC and Capita have made to the provision of Schools Broadband and Hosted Services, we have jointly migrated the services provided by Atomwide to Openhive in April 2014 for 137 Schools. There was no opportunity to extend this time period as the incumbent supplier insisted that WSCC would have had to pay for a full year support, even if we only wanted to extend for a short period or for a limited number of Schools.
- 1.4 This report only covers the issues faced by schools that remain within the corporate IT SLA and were migrated to Capita Openhive. This report does not cover any issues that may have been faced by a number of schools that migrated to other suppliers.

1.5 During the lead up to the go live date of 1st April and immediately after, there were a number of issues which severely impacted a number of schools to different degrees. These caused disruptions to critical services and stress to a number of headteachers, staff, students and parents. WSCC and Capita recognise the disruption caused to all those affected and a letter of apology for those schools most affected is currently being written for subsequent distribution.

2. Summary of the Key Issues

2.1 There were several reasons why the transition between suppliers did not go as smoothly as planned.

2.2 Timescales were extremely tight to migrate a large amount of sensitive data from a hostile and uncooperative supplier which had provided services for over 12 years.

2.3 The contractual position with the current supplier was complex as the original contract had been novated from a separate 3rd party and the full impact of this only became known during the preceding months.

2.4 Communications, responses and data quality from schools migrating were challenging plus a number of mistakes were made by the project team which we will learn from for similar exercises in future.

2.5 Pre-migration issues:

- Due to data protection reasons we had to follow a protracted and bureaucratic process to extract the data we required, starting with all migrating schools' headteachers having to visit the Atomwide support site to sign an online declaration and hand sign a legal agreement before any data would be released. All Data release protocols were completed however, there were significant delays with returns by a number of schools, with some forms having to be collected by hand. One form was not signed until the final day of service, however the school was still successfully migrated.
- Despite agreeing a release strategy for data with Atomwide, data was not released directly to Capita Openhive and local technical resources needed to be engaged to 'pull' the data and store locally prior to sending over to Capita Openhive. This method of data collection, which was not our preference, added considerable time and cost to migrate and stand up the new services.
- An issue occurred when the first batch of 66 schools was migrated which affected email and other services over a weekend and Monday morning without notice to schools which caused significant disruption. The issues were resolved within 2 hours of being highlighted.
- An issue which affected the majority of schools already outside the Capita IT SLA (approx. 25) related to a 'tidy up' exercise that Atomwide undertook in preparation for the main data migrations whereby any WSGfL email accounts were disabled at these schools. This exercise was not agreed by WSCC or Capita in advance nor did we receive any communications surrounding Atomwide's intentions. Capita have provided a solution to allow schools not buying the Capita SLA to continue to access the WSGFL.

- A change freeze was required to be in place for the majority of March for some schools (key moodle users) due to the issues we had with the release of data process. This meant that schools under change freeze could not make amendments to their current services during this period, otherwise changes would be lost.
- The day before the email service was due to migrate, Atomwide disconnected a server which affected live emails to schools which stopped. This affected the final synchronisation of emails planned over the weekend resulting in some emails being delayed or potentially lost. When the problem was identified WSCC senior management escalated immediate intervention to switch this back on.
- There was a lack of knowledge regarding the number of schools running their own internal services (internal Domain Name Services), VPN remote working and smart technology IPADs or WIFI. Each case has required a unique solution to be identified and implemented.
- Although briefing days were made available they had to be held on the last few days of the migration timetable.

2.6 Post Migration issues:

- Only (approximately) 360 email inboxes did not migrate effectively out of (approximately) 58,000 accounts, primarily due to poor records management by the schools with outdated SIMs information. These inboxes have now all been fully restored.
- The service desk was not resourced to cope with the incoming number of calls in the first week. The number of calls was significantly higher than predicted. This was further compounded by Capita releasing a new fault reporting system in the same week. All schools that required a visit during the first two weeks of term after Easter were visited by an engineer. Some schools were visited over the Easter break where access could be obtained.
- The Webfiltering functionality provided was not initially compatible with the WSCC Schools IP addresses. A solution has been identified and supplied to schools. A number of schools are still to submit the information required to start using this service effectively.
- Throughout the project the project team held twice daily calls. The project is just coming out of Hypercare which has included regular conference calls with all parties to progress any remaining outstanding migration issues, and discuss any new issues being reported.
- The service performance of Openhive will continue to be monitored by WSCC and the Schools Account Manager for Capita. The performance of other suppliers will not be monitored by WSCC in this process although this may be advantageous for schools in the future.
- The WSCC Service Assurance Team and Capita representatives will continue to attend school meetings providing support and reports on the Capita performance as required.

3 Future Procurement and Quality Assurance of Contracts

- 3.1 Headteacher representatives have raised concerns over the contract that West Sussex had with Atomwide which contributed to the implementation problems referred to above. They commented that the Local Authority should have more robust arrangements in place to ensure that its contracts are fit for purpose and minimise reputation or financial risks. In the light of two other procurement decisions during 2013/14 that have had adverse impact on school staff or affected relationships with schools, headteachers sought reassurance about the quality assurance of future procurement and the client side management of contracts affecting schools.
- 3.2 Legally, schools can undertake their own procurement for services providing that they comply with legislation, Standing Orders for Schools, and safeguard the interests of the Local Authority in its statutory role as accountable body for all maintained schools, employer and landlord for all community and controlled schools. If a school enters into a contract with a third party it may be asked to provide evidence of compliance with legislation and statutory functions to the Local Authority but unless something in the contract goes awry that creates risk to it the Local Authority will have no further role. Schools are responsible for quality assurance and any financial or other liabilities that might arise from contracts that they enter into directly.
- 3.3 However, the Local Authority undertakes large scale procurements for a wide range of services, many of which are of benefit to schools on a call-off basis, and which provide value for money through economy of scale and are compliant with legislation. There are also some contracts that are specifically negotiated for schools only e.g. free school meal catering, and which can be purchased from West Sussex by schools from delegated budgets. In the client role for its contracted services the Local Authority is responsible for quality assurance and compliance with key performance indicators within the contract. The Local Authority is accountable for its contracted services purchased by schools through service level agreements. There is no LA accountability in place for services that are contracted by schools directly. In addition and specifically to the provision of broadband services, there is no evidence that the benefits of economy of scale were leveraged by individual schools or that there are robust contracts with other suppliers.
- 3.4 We understand that governors and headteachers would like to have confidence in future contracts for services affecting schools procured by West Sussex County Council. The following points were discussed at the meeting of the Resources Consultative Group on 5th June:
- school representatives must be engaged at an early stage in service specifications prior to tender and in proposals to extend contracts beyond the initial period or renegotiate terms;
 - there should be a designated West Sussex client side manager responsible for the relationship with schools;
 - the responsibilities of schools and West Sussex County Council or its partners should be clearly set out in any SLA for purchased services;
 - there should be simple minimum level service specifications for services that affect the Authority's statutory functions for maintained schools so that governing bodies are clear about their responsibilities if they purchase elsewhere.

- 3.5 These points will be taken into account in preparing a protocol and plan for future procurement of contracted services and SLAs to ensure that there is clarity about roles, responsibilities and processes and improved engagement with schools and the Schools Forum.

4 Conclusion

This was a highly complex project, with incredibly short timescales and a high risk of major impact. There was a real risk that data would not be transferred in time or would be lost (email, moodles, websites) or that there could be a large financial penalty by having to renew services with the legacy supplier. A plan was devised by the project team if this scenario could not be avoided. West Sussex was in a weak contractual and commercial position due to legacy contract management decisions.

Poor data quality, limited access to Schools IT technicians and poor information from Atomwide on individual IT system set ups in schools contributed to the issues. In some instances these shortcomings were compounded by ineffective communication and poor engagement in the changes by some schools.

There were significant issues which caused inconvenience and disruption, some which could have been avoided and some mistakes were made. Where possible these were minimised by a dedicated project team that worked extremely hard in a challenging situation. A detailed Lessons Learnt session has occurred which will be used to improve future migrations and procurement affecting schools.

All parties, Atomwide, WSCC, Capita ITS and Capita Openhive, other suppliers and schools themselves bear some responsibility for the problems that arose.

We are confident, now the service is starting to settle down after this significant change, that schools will start to see the benefits of the new provider and the enhanced and improved products like MS Office 365, including increased functionality, stronger security, control and better communication with further improvements and enhancements planned for next year's IT SLAs.

As Chief Operating Officer I apologise to schools and their communities for the service disruption and additional work arising from the migration from Atomwide to Openhive. The lessons learned from this experience will inform the engagement of schools in the future procurement of services commissioned by West Sussex County Council.

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