



Saving the London Borough of Islington £300,000 over 12 months

The enforcement officers working in the London Borough of Islington use mobile devices to record traffic offences and issue fixed penalty notices. Information about each offence is wirelessly sent to the council's back office via the mobile network. Since moving to Mobius Networks the council has been able to cut its budget for transferring this data by £300,000 over 12 months, leading to an additional £3 million consequential savings.

More than 180,000 people live and work in Islington. Parking restrictions and traffic management schemes help to keep traffic flowing freely along the busy streets. The council's enforcement officers patrol the borough and record any parking contraventions using state-of-the-art handheld devices that issue fixed penalty notices, record details of the offence and automatically send them to the council's portal which is similar to Google Maps. The devices contain a SIM card which enables data to be transferred, via the Vodafone mobile network.

When the parking ticket is issued the time of the offence is recorded, the GPRS location is plotted and a photograph of the vehicle is taken. Appeals against offences can be easily dealt with because the council possesses evidence that the contravention took place. If offenders claim there were no signs or markings indicating parking restrictions, the council can use the GPRS reference to pinpoint the location and verify, using Google Maps images, that signs and markings are in place.

This system was a success for the council from inception but the running costs were much higher than anticipated. The council had entered into a contract with OGC (Office of Government Commerce) believing this would result in the best value service and make economic sense. Shocked at the high data transfer costs, that were significantly over budget, the council sought advice from Vodafone who suggested a consultation with their preferred partner for M2M applications, Mobius Networks.

Mobius studied the council's billing history and its level of data usage. It was clear that the current supplier had been offering a voice-centric service. What Islington Council needed was purely a data transfer service over the mobile network. Mobius specialise in M2M. They understand how the network handles data, so can use the wireless network more efficiently and can serve more applications than other providers. They placed the council on an appropriate 'data-only' tariff that would meet their monthly usage and provide a buffer if that was ever exceeded. The lower data costs allow them to enable 'by the second' updates which allows for accurate monitoring of the contract. The cost of monitoring the contract for parking enforcement has been dramatically reduced from 20% of the contract value to 5%.

For Islington Council the transition from the existing supplier to Mobius was seamless. There was no interruption to service or switching out of SIMs. Mobius simply took over the contract and calculated a data-bundle that was fit for the council's purpose.

After the first month with Mobius Networks the network billing costs dropped so dramatically that the council actually thought there must be a problem with the connection and were delighted to be reassured that the huge cost reduction was genuine. In addition, Mobius offers a unique level of service on M2M where reliability, security and quality connections are assured.

THE CHALLENGE

Islington Council was concerned about the high running costs of the electronic systems used by its parking enforcement officers. The fees for wirelessly transferring bundles of data over the mobile network were far higher than they had budgeted for.

THE SOLUTION

Vodafone introduced the council to Mobius Networks, specialists in machine to machine (M2M) communication. When Mobius studied the council's billing history it was clear that the tariff set by the existing network provider was not suitable. It was aimed at voice calls rather than data transfer and this had led to penalties being incurred each month for usage beyond the contracted data bundle. By placing the council on a tariff that would meet anticipated usage Mobius reduced monthly bills significantly.

- Moved to Mobius Private Mobile Network – for greater security
- Tariff for data usage only
- Aggregation to smooth out costs
- No 'fair usage policy', filters or data compression

THE BENEFITS

The partnership with Vodafone and Mobius is allowing Islington Council to make substantial cost reductions on its parking enforcement system and set an accurate budget.

- Lower revenue cost for communication to devices - saving £300,000 in 12 months and project savings of an estimated £1.8 million over the life of the contract.
- Reduction in consequential costs – £3 million saving during the life of the contract.
- Fixed IP over mobile for flexibility and control.
- Private Mobile Network offering greater security and reducing the risk of unauthorised misuse.
- Better targeted resources allowing the number of parking attendants to be reduced.



THE PROCESS

A fixed penalty notice is generated by the officer and the relevant data, with GPRS location, is sent in real time to the council offices. This data is transmitted via the Vodafone network by Mobius using a carefully calculated M2M tariff – saving Islington Council £300,000.

Vodafone and Mobius worked in partnership to ensure that the transition was seamless and did not interrupt the flow of data through Islington's APN.

If the vehicle owner challenges the fixed penalty notice, claiming no markings or signs were in place, the council can verify the signage by matching the GPRS location of the offence with photos on Google Maps.

- Data can be used to track parking enforcement officers and the issuing of tickets in real time.
- Islington Council's bespoke software can plot and monitor when, where and by whom the parking infringement tickets are issued.
- The council can identify trends and potential hotspots that may need additional resources, improved signage or more support for staff.
- Allows Islington Parking Services to operate a quality management system (ISO 9001:2008). This ensures Islington remain accredited to the Government's Customer Service Excellence scheme.

For more information about how Vodafone and Mobius can cut costs and improve services

www.mobiusnetworks.co.uk

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