



THE CLIENT

North Somerset Council is a unitary authority which provides both county and district level services to nearly 217,000 residents.

As well as embracing towns such as Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, the council's geographic remit includes the year-round family destination of Weston-super-Mare.

Within the resort the council's Seafront team manages the parking needs of residents and millions of annual visitors to Weston's attraction-packed Seafront.



Business Needs

Avoira first engaged with North Somerset Council in 2020 when Seafront Operations needed to provide an alternative to cash payments during the pandemic.

Engineers from our Bristol office responded to that challenge by installing a Cambium Networks wireless backhaul solution at the department's office in the resort's landmark Tropicana building.

This 5GHz point to multi-point (PtMP) technology was connected to a two-sector network of outdoor access points to deliver a secure internet connection along the seafront.



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North Somerset Council Seaside
Operations' Duty Manager.

This enabled collection of parking revenue by card and contactless payment from ticket machines equipped with PDQ technology. That's vital because, as Jasmin notes “something we've seen over the past few years people are choosing card payments, especially contactless. You can insert a card into our machines, but people tend to want to use contactless”

Aside from offering the necessary expertise and experience in WiFi networking, the choice of Avoira came down to a factor as timeless as it is pertinent, not least in ever budget-conscious local government.

“Avoira offered the best value for money” succinctly sums up Jasmin Williams, Seaside Operations' Duty Manager. Sometimes things are that simple!

In 2024, with the Tropicana set to be redeveloped as part of a major regeneration scheme, Seafront Operations needed to relocate to a new office.

This meant that the department also needed to re-site and configure its WiFi network.



The Solution

“The challenge was not simply to move the backhaul into the new office and connect it to the council’s internet but determine where to install the two PtMP sectors whilst maintaining line-of-site to all the nodes,” explains Jack Minkler, the Avoira engineer tasked with scoping and delivering a successful solution.

“This was achieved by re-siting a number of the wireless links and reconfiguring the original installation.”

To secure line-of-site connectivity, Jack strategically deployed access points on lampposts along the promenade. This not only provided necessary elevation but access to the electricity supply. A simple but highly effective solution.



The building into which Seafront Parking has relocated presented a further challenge. “It’s quite an old, listed building which has been renovated,” explains Jasmin. Stone construction proved an effective block to WiFi signals. “We could only connect outside the building once our devices started hitting the repeaters, so Jack installed an internal access point inside so that we can stay on the same network inside and out.”

Implementation of the solution also involved liaison with other council teams, such as Highways, and Centregate, the council’s streetlighting contractor.

To minimise inconvenience, installation was also scheduled for the first weekdays of the new summer season. “We worked with Avoira to confirm a time that really wouldn’t impact us,” reports Jasmin. “The transition went really well. It was great. A shout out goes to Jack who is an excellent engineer, great to deal with. He made the whole process really smooth.”





The Benefits

A primary benefit is the ease of use of the new Microsoft Teams Direct Routing solution, particularly for reception staff charged with directing calls.

North Somerset Council enjoyed a seamless transition to a refreshed, closed and secure network which, given its use, is, naturally Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI) compliant.

It efficiently and effectively serves Seafront Operations network of parking ticket machines which serve a two-mile stretch of the coast-clinging Marine Parade road.

In addition, the network supports both WiFi and mobile connectivity, providing flexibility in capacity and greater resilience. This is important because parking demand is affected by day, time, seasonality and weather.

“We use WiFi and mobile for really, really busy times,” explains Jasmin. “If the WiFi capacity isn’t enough, or if it went down for any reason, we have mobile as a back up. We just flick it on and off as needed.”

For additional reassurance, Seafront Operations benefits from a specialist maintenance package which further supports the network’s resilience and reliability.



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Benefits Delivered

- ✓ Best value solution
- ✓ Seamless installation by “excellent engineer”
- ✓ Highly resilient
- ✓ Highly secure closed network
- ✓ WiFi and mobile enabled network
- ✓ Flexible capacity to meet fluctuating demand
- ✓ PCI compliant

