

The modern council: cloud benefits for UK local governments



Who should read this eBook?

This eBook is for UK local council leaders and IT decision-makers seeking to ease budget pressures, become more agile and responsive, enhance services, empower citizens, and strengthen operations while subsequently reducing costs. These goals take on new urgency in a climate where protecting public health, promoting inclusive economic recovery, and ensuring business continuity are more important than ever. At the same time, it is critical to ensure systems are highly secure and resilient even during rapid change.



“The way we work, live and depend on public services in the UK has dramatically changed in the past few months. Local councils had to pivot overnight to allow remote work for the safety of their employees and citizens they serve while maintaining service levels, security standards, and managing budget pressures the post-pandemic economy brings. RingCentral is committed to helping our local community leaders get the tools they need to overcome today’s unprecedented challenges. We are also committed to helping the UK stay connected, secure, and productive through the crisis and beyond.”

Steven Rafferty, UK Country Leader, RingCentral EMEA

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Local authorities are caught in a tricky situation, in respect of public expectations for 21st-century digital service delivery. More and more public service organisations are gravitating towards information and communications technology (ICT) modernisation as it is difficult to avoid comparisons between themselves and the private sector, where customer expectations around service delivery are sky-

high. Local councils and schools are the pillars of our communities that provide continuous support and education for all people, yet struggle to access up-to-date platforms to better serve the public. As IT budgets shrink from year to year, the government IT leader's unique dilemma becomes managing the balance of innovation and modernisation with frugality.

UK LOCAL COUNCILS AND BUDGET PRESSURES

COVID-19 brought on a new landscape for local authorities. Lost business rates, reduction in other revenue streams, council tax holidays, and emergency payments for families whose incomes have disappeared have all hit councils' incomes at the same time as rising costs of social care and providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for carers.

Some of those councils would also typically depend on tourism for large chunks of income, such as dividends from airports they own or parking fees from visitors. Read "[Coronavirus: UK Council Fear Bankruptcy Amid COVID-19 Costs.](#)"

Local authorities face increased demand and cost pressures, but no reduction in their obligations to provide services. In these current unprecedented times, relying on modern cloud suppliers who focus on reducing legacy system

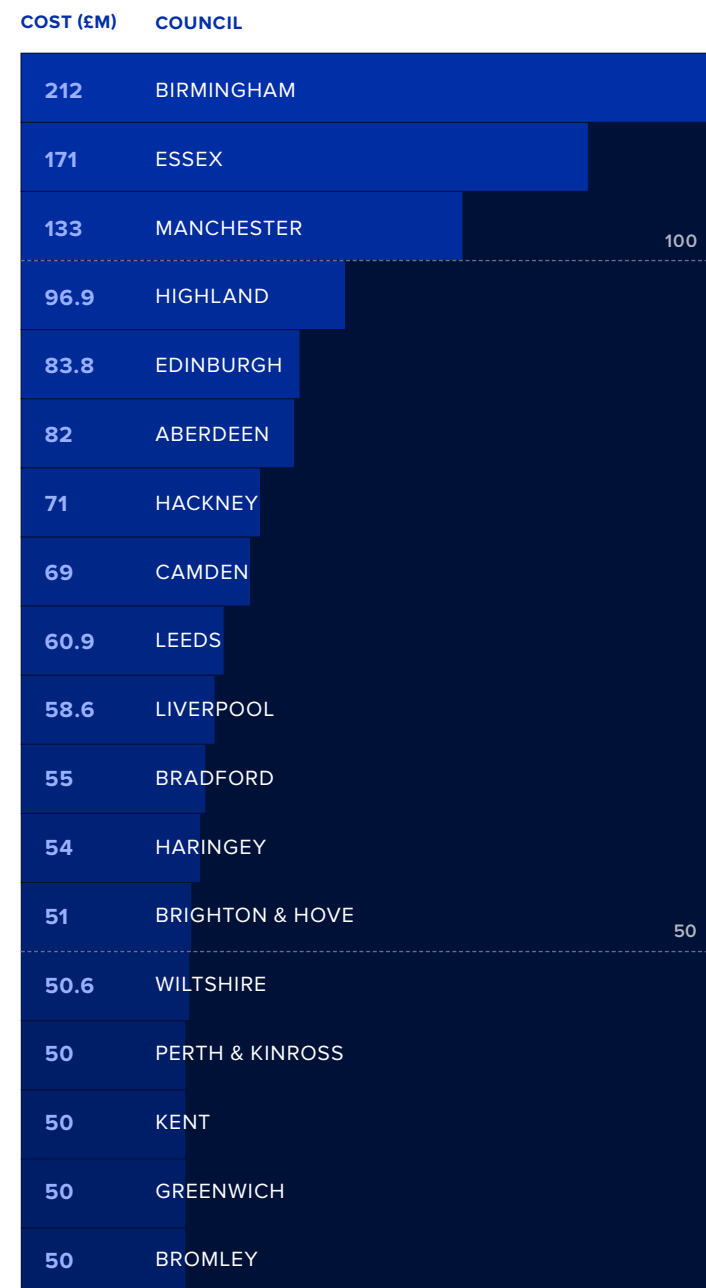
costs, maintenance efforts, and implementation time is a sound strategy to optimise efficiencies in the councils. Dated communications systems form a significant capital investment, taking up the greatest resources in personnel, upgrade, and support costs.

There's a simple way councils can directly realise savings with no upfront capital investment or initial hardware purchases, eliminating annual on-premises telephony maintenance and support contracts: a single solution that brings together telephony, messaging, video conferencing, internet fax, analytics, and contact centre in the cloud that eases budget pressures and improves internal and external communications.

Read the [RingCentral COVID-19 Pandemic Report: Restarting the UK Through Technology.](#)

How much COVID-19 is costing councils.

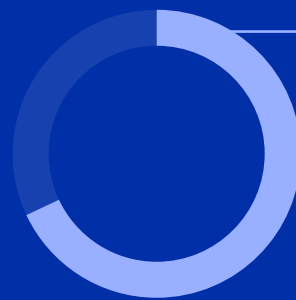
[Potential shortfall](#) as a result of the pandemic.



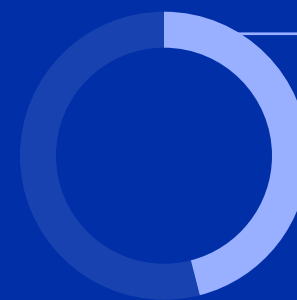
One of the most significant opportunities for improvement is finding an easy-to-use communications platform that consolidates collaboration and telephony functions into a single application. Communications is the foundation of the digital world, and the digital technology supported by cloud communications is the cornerstone for all team collaboration. Unified communications as a service (UCaaS) integrates the people, content, and tools that teams need to be more engaged and productive. By adopting a cloud communications platform, local authorities can more efficiently and effectively serve and develop their communities. Read our [post on how UCaaS can save local councils money](#).

UK LOCAL COUNCILS POISED FOR CLOUD TRANSFORMATION

Both dissatisfaction with the current system and an openness to cloud-based technologies are rising

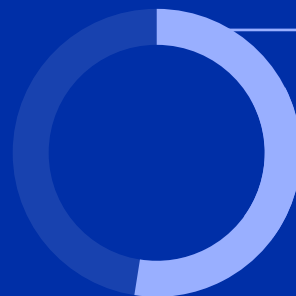


78%
of public sector organisations identify **omnichannel** offerings as important to customer service.¹

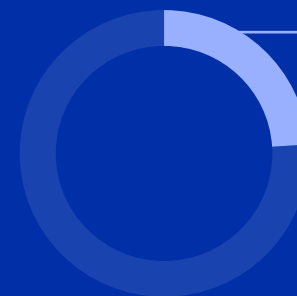


46%
of public sector entities are indifferent or **extremely dissatisfied** with their current communications system.¹

Industry data indicates a gap between knowledge of and investment in the value of an expanded platform



52%
of organisations have **already migrated** (18%) or plan to migrate (34%) their communications to the cloud.¹



24%
of public entities actually offer platforms such as **live chat** or IM today.¹

¹. Opus, [The Role of Unified Communications](#)

WHY MODERNISE ICT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES?

Staying the same for the time being can be seen as the safe option when dealing with software, but the reality is that resistance towards improving ICT can prevent organisations as a whole from maintaining efficiency and agility, not to mention the potential security risks. It may seem like the decision to modernise is an IT decision alone, whereas it is actually a strategic business decision.

The current pandemic is also practically highlighting the risks of not modernising. Digital communications played a major role in the UK's fight against the coronavirus. Virtual health apps became a lifeline for the NHS, which was balancing the rising needs of coronavirus patients with the regular cadences of people who needed check-ups, prescription refills, and ongoing treatment. Cloud communications technologies were a strong vehicle for urgent public services, such as the promotion and execution of epidemic prevention and control measures. The benefits can be seen in the growing deployment of field workers using digital platforms to report back on patrolled open spaces, along with digital platforms being used to broadcast coronavirus-related knowledge within local communities. Reliance on a cloud platform was what enabled [Arco, the leading supplier of PPE in the UK, to send its 200 contact centre agents to work from home as soon as lockdown measures came into place](#). The company's cloud-based contact centre has proved critical to maintaining customer contact and meeting the huge demand throughout the pandemic.

“The world of work we’re returning to isn’t the same one that we left. That needn’t be a frightening prospect—a new landscape means new opportunities, and it’s time for us to make the most of what’s available to us.”

Sunny Dhami, Sr. Director of Product Marketing,
RingCentral EMEA



A new landscape creates new opportunities that can be uncovered when you look at the problems you are trying to solve. Let's look at the operational benefits your organisation can achieve through modernisation of existing communication systems:

BENEFITS OF CLOUD COMMUNICATIONS FOR UK LOCAL COUNCILS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

- **Communication tool and expense consolidation:** Combine multiple communication tools and expenses (voice, messaging, presence monitoring, video meetings, digital whiteboard and screen sharing, file sharing, task management, cloud storage, and internet fax) into a single unified platform.
- **Ease budget pressures:** Moving from an on-premises PBX to the cloud is generally a major source of cost savings to local authorities. If you have a call centre/contact centre, you can also leverage concurrency features, which is the ability to share contact centre licences across users without incurring additional costs. Read this [Forrester report](#) that uncovers that on average, customers who migrate from on-premises PBX systems to RingCentral cloud products save about 42%.
- **Increase agility and business continuity:** Are you prepared for future change? If something major happened tomorrow (again), would your organisation be able to react quickly? Is there a high level of friction in your departments when it comes to ICT infrastructure?
- **Workforce mobility:** By using cloud for workflows and data storage, employees can access information outside the office securely, at any time, from wherever they are. Flexible working practices with video conferencing improves staff retention, enables remote work, and saves money by reducing your property expenses.
- **Single view of the customer:** Gain a holistic view of the customer and their needs. Instead of just responding to individual service requests, your employees can understand how to better serve customers to meet and even exceed their expectations. Reducing the steps required to complete



a task and minimising the number of confused customers phoning into a support line boosts first contact resolution and translates into positive savings on valuable resources.

- **Meeting employee expectations:** Provide a seamless experience across multiple devices. In all industries, end users are increasingly mobile and diverse. Accessibility features have become a mandatory requirement (especially for local government bodies). User experience is a big driver to [our product](#) for customers, particularly of systems used heavily by internal stakeholders or customer-facing interfaces seeing regular high traffic.
- **Connected data and departments:** A single digital platform connects disparate solutions and data across departments. Dashboards provide a comprehensive view of everything from citizen cases to roadworks and faults. Better connected data leads to quicker and improved decision-making.
- **Improve performance, stability, and reliability:** Do you regularly have outages or performance problems? Do customers complain about your service levels? A modernised system with the use of high-availability features such as multi-region data centers, active-active resilience, 99.999% SLAs, and UK data localisation can drive better performance, create more reliable processes, and reduce the risk of unplanned downtime and unsatisfied customers and stakeholders.
- **Reduce IT administration and support costs:** With RingCentral's easy to manage and use system, changing and setting up users happens in minutes. The implementation of the system can happen in days. This will significantly reduce your reliance on dedicated resources to manage the ICT system, and you can parachute them into more mission-critical projects.
- **Reduce inefficiencies and eliminate waste:** It is possible to improve your bottom line by addressing the financial inefficiencies of legacy systems. A great place to start is by asking yourself, "Is there a lot of repetitive work we do that could be automated?" Time is money, and if your skilled employees are wasting time on tasks that can be automated, this could

be a relatively quick win for your business, allowing resources to work on much higher-value activities.

- **Keep systems secure from external threats (and internal breaches):** Legacy technologies are an easy target for increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks. Financial losses, reputational damage, and a waste of employee time spent on recovering the situation from breaches of personal data can be detrimental to your organisation. Many vulnerabilities can be eliminated by updating legacy systems to the newer enhanced security protocols of modern cloud. Read [Secure Cloud Communications and Collaboration](#) for a detailed account of how RingCentral's cloud-based products are backed up by best-in-class security.
- **Transform performance using data analytics:** Local authorities collect exponential amounts of data about residents, businesses, and public projects in the community, which can be used in increasingly sophisticated ways to gain better insights into local needs. Managers can use analytics dashboards to dissect information and pinpoint problem locations proactively before they become widespread. Data from analytics can be used to prioritise local issues and eliminate information blind spots, leading to better outcomes for UK communities.
- **Take advantage of modern cloud onboarding and support:** Some legacy applications and platforms will have support contracts that have expired. These applications are therefore ineligible for the latest features, bug fixes, or security updates. When modernising your technology stack, your organisation can take advantage of RingCentral's customer onboarding and support period and get all of the above as well as access to vendor and platform support teams.

A great opportunity has arisen for public sector bodies to accelerate their IT modernisation. Councils that adopt cutting-edge technologies and successfully drive user adoption can begin to see IT as an asset to helping them achieve digital transformation, rather than as a costly liability in the general ledger.



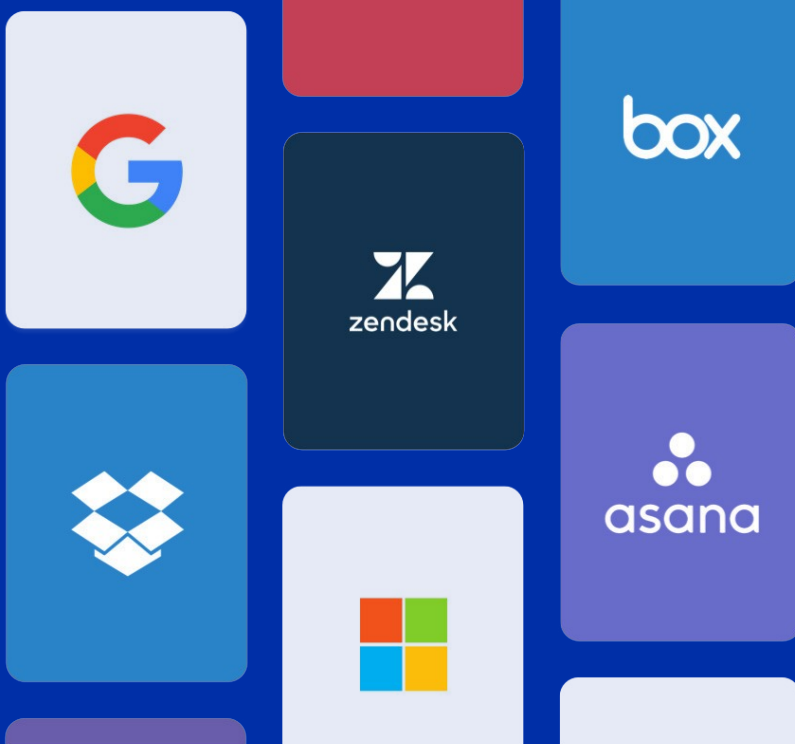
How can RingCentral UK help?

RingCentral helps you ease procurement and budget challenges

RingCentral has a deep understanding of public sector budget and procurement processes. We are RM3808 (Network Services 2) and G Cloud compliant, and offer UK data localisation and data residency. We are SSAE 18 certified and have SOC 2/ISO 27001 compliant data centers. We also offer the flexibility to choose either a CapEx purchasing option if the best approach for budgeting is a capital expenditure or an OpEx model that can free up precious resources to apply to other areas that need improvement.

RingCentral is an easy way to adopt GOV.UK's Cloud First policy

Since its launch in 2013, the [Cloud First policy](#) has been one of the government's flagship technology policies and an important point in the [Technology Code of Practice](#). The policy says that public organisations should evaluate cloud solutions first before considering any other option. Organisations are free to use other options but need to demonstrate that alternatives offer the right levels of security, flexibility, and value for money. RingCentral is a pure cloud, cost-efficient collaboration suite that aligns with the UK government's direction to leverage cloud to consolidate services and optimise efficiencies through cloud economics of scale.



RingCentral integrates and customises to improve efficiency, service, and insight

RingCentral's [open platform](#) integrates commonly used applications such as email, [Microsoft Office and Teams direct routing](#), file sharing (Box, Google Drive), virtual classroom technology, and more, whether you choose a standard or custom solution. Not only does this streamline interactions, it allows you to enrich your constituent picture by seamlessly capturing important data for analytics, reporting, and future strategic planning.

RingCentral has hundreds (200+) of pre-built plug-and-play integrations to all your mission-critical applications and thousands of open APIs and custom-built integrations. Say goodbye to app complexity and hello to cloud ease.

RingCentral truly future-proofs your ICT infrastructure

Gone are the days you have to worry about “end of life” or “end of support” technology. You pay per month per user to guarantee that every 90 days, RingCentral will launch new features to keep you current with communications, bug fixes, update patches, and continuous improvements to your ICT systems.

RingCentral keeps your data in the UK

Our local data center enables more UK organisations to take advantage of cloud communications to enhance the customer experience while controlling customer data. [The RingCentral data center in the UK](#) removes barriers to innovation for industries with high data security requirements while providing in-country failover, including the same 99.999% uptime trusted SLA that customers around the world have come to expect from

RingCentral. UK data localisation is available upon request to all RingCentral customers. Contact your RingCentral account manager for details.

Review [RingCentral on GOV.UK's G Cloud Digital Marketplace](#).

RingCentral mobilises your workforce and modernises your communications

RingCentral's market-leading unified communications platform enables employees to collaborate internally or with external stakeholders from anywhere on any device. Features include HD quality video, enterprise-grade voice calls, instant messaging, screen sharing, whiteboarding, file sharing, unlimited cloud storage, task management, web sharing, internet fax, voicemail to email, and integrations with over 200+ cloud applications and call centre omnichannel capabilities as needed. Everything you need in one easy-to-use and easy-to-manage cloud application.

RingCentral delivers reliability under any circumstance

With built-in redundancies, RingCentral enables you to engage your employees without disruption or delay, even in adverse environmental or technical conditions. That means that whether you are dealing with an environmental event such as a flood or notifying employees of an active threat such as a gas leak, you will reach the right people, on as many channels as you need, as quickly as possible with critical information and instructions. RingCentral's 24/7 support is always available to answer any questions or concerns.

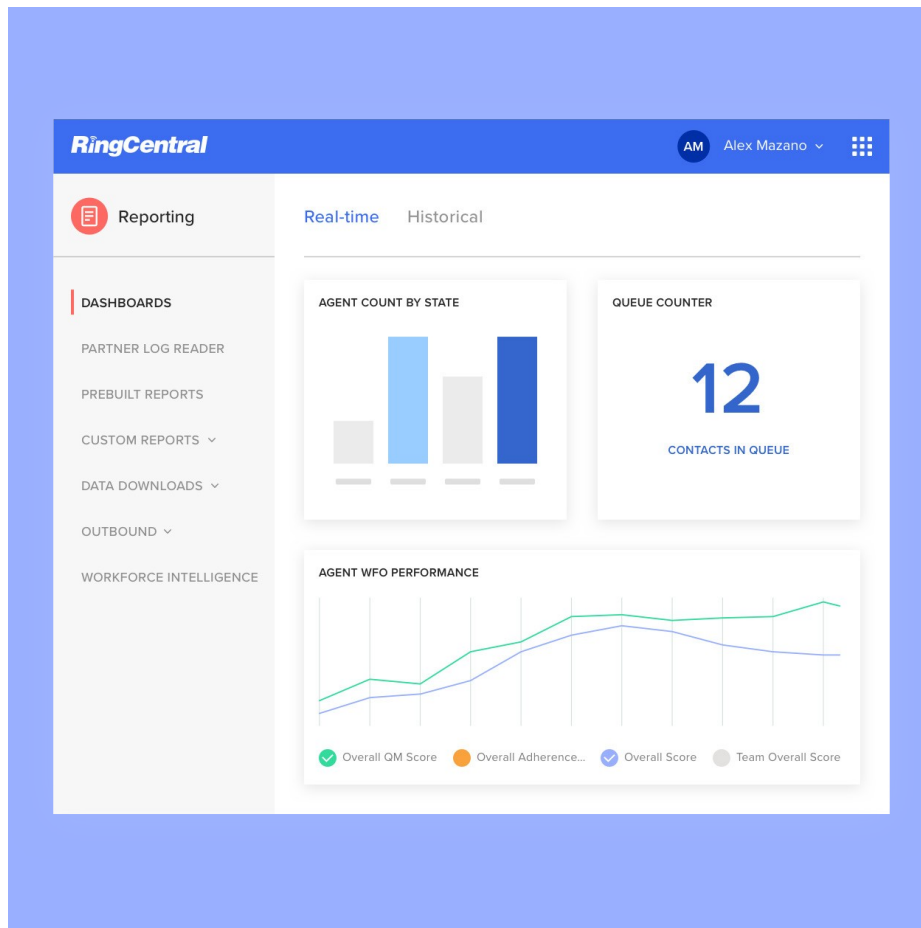
RingCentral has industry-leading cloud security

In general, data in a cloud environment can be secured with as much confidence as data in a closed enterprise network, provided the system is equipped with appropriate protective measures and is well maintained. [With seven layers of application security](#), RingCentral gives you added peace of mind by instituting robust security measures at every level of our architecture and processes. These include the physical, network, host, data, application, and business processes, as well as the enterprise level of your organisation.

RingCentral gives you complete control of your council through real-time automated dashboards and analytics

Robust [automated dashboards](#) allow you to proactively monitor and troubleshoot call quality issues impacting your users in real time. Access to near real-time data allows you to proactively troubleshoot and correct quality issues before they become disruptive to your organisation.

Our expertise is more than just cloud. RingCentral can strengthen the link between local government, small businesses, and UK residents to allow for greater collaboration, problem solving, and benefit sharing between all three. [RingCentral is a 5x leader in the UCaaS Gartner Magic Quadrant, recognised for our industry-leading technology, manageability, and reliability](#). We have over 20 years' experience implementing, managing, and improving mission-critical cloud communications for customers across all sectors and have helped over 400,000 customers and millions of users migrate to the cloud. RingCentral integrates with your already familiar apps and services such as Microsoft Office, Outlook, Teams, G Suite, Google Chrome, Jira, and more. Our celebrated customer onboarding and end-to-end migration support is notable to our success in the UK. RingCentral has the cloud migration expertise to help define a viable path to the cloud for your government applications and data. We are on the G Cloud framework and RM3808 (Network Services 2) certified and can offer UK data localisation as well.





About RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of unified communications (message, video, phone), customer engagement, and contact centre solutions for businesses worldwide. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises PBX and video conferencing systems that it replaces, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed

workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect via any mode, any device, and any location. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading third-party business applications and enables customers to easily customise business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.

For more information, please contact a sales representative. Visit ringcentral.co.uk or call **0800 098 8136**.