

SIMON COWEN

LEONK DIGITAL SERVICES
FREELANCE BUSINESS DIGITAL CHANGE LEADER

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Areas of Expertise

Supplier Management:

- ✓ Managed procurement processes, securing quality components and services for large-scale infrastructure projects.
- ✓ Built and maintained strong relationships with suppliers, ensuring timely delivery within budget.
- ✓ Oversaw contracts and service level agreements (SLAs) with suppliers to ensure compliance and performance.

Stakeholder Management:

- ✓ Collaborated with cross-functional teams and stakeholders across Leeds City Council to ensure successful project delivery.
- ✓ Engaged with 140 GP Practices to onboard them into a comprehensive support agreement, ensuring tailored solutions that met each practice's unique needs.
- ✓ Acted as the primary point of contact for stakeholders, ensuring transparency and alignment with organisational goals.

Procurement:

- ✓ Led procurement activities for enterprise-class infrastructure projects, including server support and networking support.
- ✓ Ensured procurement processes adhered to budgetary constraints while maintaining high-quality standards.
- ✓ Negotiated contracts and managed supplier relationships to optimise cost-efficiency and service quality.

Financial Management:

- ✓ Managed budgets for large-scale technology projects, ensuring cost-effective use of resources while achieving project objectives.
- ✓ Monitored financial performance, ensuring adherence to budgetary constraints and timely allocation of resources.
- ✓ Implemented cost-saving initiatives that enhanced the financial efficiency of service delivery.

Responsibility:

- ✓ Held accountable for the operational support and management of critical infrastructure serving over 33,000 employees.
- ✓ Ensured the reliability, scalability, and security of IT services across multiple Leeds City Council departments.
- ✓ Took responsibility for service delivery, ensuring the continuous operation of critical systems with minimal disruption.

Leading a Team:

- ✓ Successfully led multiple teams across different roles, from Senior Support Officers to IDS Technology Managers.
- ✓ Fostered a collaborative and high-performing team environment, driving continuous improvement and professional development.
- ✓ Mobilised and managed resources across multiple services to achieve key objectives, ensuring timely and effective project delivery.

Delivery:

- ✓ Delivered complex IT projects, including the integration of 140 GP Practices into a unified Service Centre.
- ✓ Ensured the seamless delivery of operational support services, enhancing the reliability and efficiency of IT systems across the organisation.
- ✓ Managed the successful rollout of an enterprise-class ISP infrastructure supporting 300 schools.

Accountability:

- ✓ Accountable for the successful operation and management of enterprise-class IT infrastructure, including server farms, telephony, and cybersecurity.
- ✓ Maintained a strong focus on accountability, ensuring that all team activities aligned with organisational standards and objectives.
- ✓ Delivered on key performance metrics, driving operational excellence and customer satisfaction.

Recruitment and Building a Team:

- ✓ Conducted interviews and played a key role in the recruitment process, selecting candidates who aligned with the organisational culture and technical requirements.
- ✓ Built and developed high-performing teams, ensuring the right mix of skills and experience to meet project demands.
- ✓ Implemented training and development programs to enhance team capabilities and ensure long-term success.

This list encapsulates your broad experience and the specific skills I have honed over my career in various roles at Leeds City Council.

Experience

Leeds City Council - Integrated Digital Services

August 2020 to August 2024

Senior Responsible Officer Full Fibre Programme

Successfully led the development and deployment of an enterprise-class Smart City LoRaWAN/IoT network across a major metropolitan area. Spearheaded the procurement, design, and strategic placement of 45 LoRaWAN gateways, ensuring optimal coverage and connectivity throughout the city. Additionally, managed the procurement and installation of numerous IoT sensors, integrating them seamlessly into the LoRaWAN network. Leveraged Microsoft Azure to connect, visualize, and monitor the sensor data using Power BI, and efficiently ingested this data into a Data Lake for further analysis. This project significantly enhanced the city's data-driven decision-making capabilities, demonstrating strong expertise in IoT and network architecture.

I was the senior responsible officer of a successful £25M+ OJEU Competitive Dialogue procurement for delivery of gigabit-capable full fibre networks across the Leeds Metropolitan District covering over 1400 Council and Health Partner assets and delivering first of its kind contract award with BT and Openreach. Underpins Best Council Plan and Leeds Digital Strategy, assisting social inclusion and widening digital participation, improving health outcomes and operating conditions for businesses across the city and leading to reduction in car journeys and improved air quality.

- **Built a team to deliver a full-lifecycle programme for gigabit-capable full fibre infrastructure across the city including development of and sign off of £25M business case delivering multi-level organisational change across the Council and region.**
 - ✓ Delivered year on year 5% reduction in pricing across all circuits and annual rental costs for Council and Health Partners.
 - ✓ Facilitated key discussions and engagement with the supplier partner to deliver Leeds as the first city in the UK to implement a standalone 5G network and generate a guaranteed additional income stream of c. £2M over the life of the contract.
 - ✓ Operated at Elected Member, Chief Officer and Director level to ensure Council wide buy-in to a connectivity strategy resulting in centralisation of all budgets under Digital and Information Services remit (£1000's p/a), streamlining procurement strategy and the delivery of future proofed full fibre technology throughout the region.
 - ✓ Delivers significant social value over the life of the contract, enabling an additional 8000 connections to commercial and residential properties allowing better access to services.
 - ✓ Mobilised and managed resources across multiple services to deliver against key objectives as set out in Best Council Plan, Full Fibre Business Case and Council Digital Agenda.

Leeds City Council - Digital Information Services

January 2017 to September 2020

DIS Technology Manager

I successfully led and onboarded 140 GP Practices into a comprehensive operational support agreement, ensuring a seamless transition to a fully integrated Service Centre. This process involved meticulous planning and coordination, resulting in the effective implementation of Managed Service and Tier 1, 2, and 3 support structures. I played a key role in establishing and upholding service contracts, operational level agreements (OLAs), and operational services, which

collectively enhanced the efficiency and reliability of support. My efforts ensured that each practice received tailored, high-quality support, improving operational performance and satisfaction across the board.

Leeds City Council - Digital Information Services

July 2008 to January 2017

DIS Principal Infrastructure Manager

As the Principal Infrastructure Manager, I successfully led a dynamic team responsible for the operational support and management of a comprehensive enterprise-class infrastructure. I was accountable for overseeing a large-scale virtual server environment, ensuring optimal performance and availability to meet the organisation's critical needs. My leadership extended to managing an enterprise-class telephony environment, enabling seamless communication across the organisation, as well as a robust networking infrastructure that supported secure and reliable connectivity at scale. Additionally, I directed a virtual cybersecurity environment, implementing cutting-edge solutions to safeguard enterprise assets and ensure compliance with industry standards. My proactive approach and strategic vision fostered a high-performing team, delivering exceptional operational support across all facets of the infrastructure.

Leeds City Council - Information Communication & Technology Services

DIS Principal Infrastructure Manager

May 2003 to July 2008

As the Principal Infrastructure Manager, I successfully led a dedicated team responsible for the operational support and management of an enterprise-class, large-scale server farm infrastructure. This environment provided robust hosting solutions for mission-critical front-line services within a large public sector council, serving over 33,000 employees. My role involved ensuring the reliability, scalability, and security of the infrastructure, meeting the high demands of a complex and dynamic organisation. Through strategic planning and proactive leadership, I drove initiatives that enhanced system performance, optimised resource utilisation, and ensured seamless service delivery, all while maintaining a strong focus on accountability and continuous improvement.

Leeds City Council - I.T Services (Leeds Learning Network)

January 2000 to May 2003

Senior Technical Support Officer

As the Senior Support Officer, I successfully led a dedicated team responsible for the operational support and management of the Leeds Learning Network, an enterprise-class ISP service supporting 300 schools across Leeds. I oversaw the build and rollout of the ISP infrastructure, ensuring each phase was meticulously executed to guarantee seamless integration into every school's unique environment. My leadership involved coordinating cross-functional teams, managing project timelines, and addressing any technical challenges to maintain continuous, high-quality service. This ensured that the network not only met the diverse needs of each school but also supported their educational objectives with reliable connectivity and robust infrastructure.

Leeds City Council - M.I.S Services (300 Leeds Schools)

June 1991 – January 2000

Senior Technical Support Officer

As the Senior Support Officer, I successfully led a dedicated team responsible for the operational support and management of 300 Leeds Schools' Management Systems. I oversaw the entire process, from the initial build to the rollout of the computer infrastructure, networking, software, and printing services across the school network. My leadership ensured seamless integration of the Management System into each school's unique environment, maintaining a high standard of service and minimising disruption to daily operations. Through meticulous planning and coordination, my team and I were able to deliver a robust and reliable support system that met the diverse needs of all 300 schools.

Time Technology Services | Electronics Engineer

June 1985 – June 1991

Principal Electronics Engineer

As the Principal Electronics Engineer, I successfully led numerous in-house electronics projects, demonstrating expertise in every phase from conceptualization to deployment. My role encompassed a comprehensive range of responsibilities, including programming, PCB design, and assembly, ensuring each project was executed with precision and efficiency. I effectively managed procurement processes, building and maintaining strong relationships with suppliers and stakeholders to secure quality components and services on time and within budget. Additionally, I spearheaded the design of new services, guiding them from first principles through to seamless implementation in customer environments, ensuring high standards of innovation and performance throughout.