Cost effective protection for vital citizen and services data

The London Borough of Bexley is one of the local authority districts that makes up Greater London. It covers 23 square miles, stretching from the Thames in the north to Kent in the south and provides a full range of council services to over a quarter of a million people.

The Borough was carrying out a significant digital transformation to upgrade its user environment to Windows 10. As part of the project, it wanted to move its 2000 staff onto Office 365 (O365).

Robust backup for Office 365

While the 90-day retention provided by Microsoft for O365 was acceptable for staff email, it fell far short of the long-term backup needed to protect the important unstructured file data being migrated to the Borough's new SharePoint site and OneDrive storage. Like many local authorities, the Borough is at risk of ransomware attacks and the protection offered in Office 365 was lacking here too.

"As a London Authority, we must protect our data against ransomware attacks and other threats to data availability," explains James Scott, Head of ICT for London Borough of Bexley. "Any incident could quickly impact the delivery of vital public services."

Cristie Data was asked to advise on the best solution as it has in-depth knowledge of the Borough's IT systems, having provided Bexley with storage solutions and hardware for many years.

Best value protection

The Borough has 2000 users but needed to protect an essential dataset of only 20 terabytes. This meant the 'per-user' pricing model most common with O365 backup technologies would not provide best value. Cristie Data presented Arcserve, which could offer either direct-to-cloud or on-site solutions – both of which are licensed on capacity.
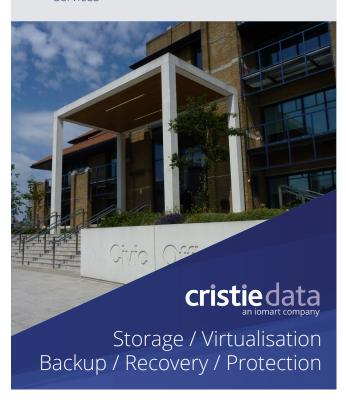
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Challenges
- Lack of long-term backup for Office 365
- Unexpected additional expense
- Risk of cyber attack
- Data sovereignty

Solution
- Arcserve UDP 9288 appliance

Benefits
- Long-term, reliable, efficient local backup
- 40% comparative cost savings
- Increased data security and simplified compliance
- Robust protection for citizen data and services

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London Borough of Bexley Case Study

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Following a collaborative engagement and deep-dive product demonstrations with the Cristie Data and Arcserve presales teams, the Council's IT team was able to understand the differentiators between and long-term benefits of the two solutions. Cost however was critical, as this extra backup solution was an unforeseen and therefore unbudgeted expense.

Best market value was achieved by procuring the onsite solution, an Arcserve UDP appliance. Licensed on physical capacity it provides over 90 terabytes of storage, which more than meets the Council's future growth requirements. By storing public cloud data on premise, the Council retains data sovereignty. The Arcserve UDP appliance includes the Sophos Intercept X Anti-Ransomware Engine. This reactive tool ensures data is secured against malicious intent through inbuilt encryption-at-rest features.

Forty per cent cheaper than other solutions

While other market solutions that are priced on a per-user basis include unlimited storage, with only 20 terabytes to protect the Arcserve UDP option worked out 40% cheaper. The ability of the appliance to provide unlimited backup licensing means London Borough of Bexley can use the solution tactically to protect Exchange Online, OneDrive and its on premise virtualisation infrastructure, with an increased recovery point retention, at no extra cost.

The solution was tested on site on a 'try-before-you-buy' basis. Cristie Data used its close technical relationship with Arcserve to ensure Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) was configured correctly. MFA is extremely important for the Borough to ensure the security of its citizen data.

The results – reliable and efficient data protection

The London Borough of Bexley has a hybrid balance of off-site cloud and on-premise local backup for SharePoint, OneDrive and Exchange Online. The

previous three different systems it used previously have been replaced with one efficient process that uses incremental backup and highly efficient block-level storage deduplication.

"It's a very efficient solution," says James Scott. "It's plugged a major vulnerability that wasn't natively protected in Office 365, ensuring we are in full control of our data and its retention. Now, if an employee accidentally deletes a financial report, or we're hit by a ransomware attack, we know we are protected by a backup solution we trust."

Scott admits that it seems almost counterintuitive but it works. "We are taking data back out of the cloud and storing it locally but this means it is in an environment that we have complete oversight of," he explains.

In addition to only storing incremental backups, deduplication has reduced the data 3x further, dramatically reducing Bexley's storage footprint.

"Cristie Data has supported us over many years," Scott concludes. "As a result of the great relationship we have we knew they'd give us the best advice and recommend a solution that met our data protection requirements in the most cost-effective way. They are always great to work with."

About London Borough of Bexley
The London Borough of Bexley is a borough in Southeast London. It is within the Thames Gateway, an area designated as a national priority for urban regeneration. For more information visit **https://www.bexley.gov.uk/**

About Cristie Data
Cristie Data has been an IT infrastructure and data management specialist for over 40 years. We take a consultative and platform agnostic approach to any customer project and advise on the solutions that are best aligned to your business. For more information go to **www.cristie.co.uk**