

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	BENEFIT
Buckinghamshire County Council needed a powerful hardware infrastructure to support the roll out of SAP modules to 13,000 users. In doing so, it aimed to maximise operational efficiency and improve the delivery of core services to the local community.	Hardware infrastructure based on Dell™ PowerEdge™ Servers and a Dell/EMC Storage Area Network (SAN). Dell co-ordinated engineers from a number of strategic alliances, including Veritas, Dell/EMC and Posetiv to support the deployment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High system availability ● Low risk implementation ● Performance and scalability ● Rapid, secure back up ● Engaging the community ● Industry-leading support

Serving the Community

Buckinghamshire County Council improves operational efficiency with new Dell infrastructure

Operational efficiency is critical for organisations of all sizes, whether they operate in the private or public sectors. To improve its remit of delivering first-rate public services across a range of channels, Buckinghamshire County Council wanted a new solution to help it increase efficiency across a range of key business processes. These range from dealing with banks and suppliers, to managing employees and administering services such as education, healthcare and refuse collection.

As part of its effort to become more customer-focused and support its drive for continuous service improvement, the Council chose to implement a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

The challenge was to build a resilient hardware platform powerful enough to support this new set of ERP applications. The planned software deployment would extend to 13,000 employees, enabling the Council to put more focus on its operations and streamline its operational processes, placing it at the forefront of electronic service delivery.

In addition to the task of sourcing hardware to support a large-scale ERP software roll out, the Council also needed to deliver a new community portal. This resource would enable authorised residents to upload large quantities of content, from photos of local sports teams to local events guides, to specified areas of the Web site. As a result, the Council needed to deploy a new hardware infrastructure that would be scalable enough to handle the demands of high volume content uploads.

Scoping the right solution

After an official tender process, the Council engaged with Dell to discuss potential Intel and Microsoft Windows-based solutions. Representatives from Dell Professional Services and the Dell Advanced System Group worked with Council officers early on to scope hardware requirements for the ERP deployment.

During this period, Council employees attended the Dell testing facility at Limerick in Ireland, viewing a number of simulations and benchmarking tests demonstrating the power and scalability of Dell hardware and its suitability for the Council's deployment.

Although the Council had previously used Dell as a hardware vendor, this close collaboration at the scoping stage established Dell as a key strategic technology partner for the Council.

Richard Nelson, Technology Services Manager, Buckinghamshire County Council, says: "Working with Dell to scope hardware requirements was critical to the success of the project. By visiting the testing centre in Limerick, we were able to establish the best possible equipment to support the ERP roll out and we could be sure it would do the job in the live environment. All this means we could minimise the risks traditionally associated with new technology implementations."

Following the signing of a fully-tailored contract for the project, Dell assembled a team comprising a number of key strategic alliances to support the new solution. Dell provided overall guidance on architecture design and delivered the required hardware. This included a Dell/EMC Storage Area Network (SAN) solution responsible for meeting the Council's storage requirements. It also brought in a specialist strategic partner to help the Council to back up data by breaking it up into streams and directing it to a tape library where it is saved in parallel, reducing the back-up window significantly.

Strategic implementation partner Posetiv was engaged to build the IT architecture and support the ERP roll out. It was responsible for implementing the storage management software, Navisphere – a suite of software provided by Dell/EMC – to ensure that the entire storage infrastructure could be managed from a central management console. It also provided configuration services for the Netbackup software and knowledge transfer to IT technicians in the Council. At all times, the project and team were managed by Dell account managers, providing the Council with the much needed continuity and peace of mind of a single point of contact throughout.

Dell equipment is now supporting the deployment of the new ERP solution to 13,000 users in a number of UK locations. It will



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— **Richard Nelson** Technology Services Manager,
Buckingham County Council

improve the efficiency of the council’s administration by enabling users to pay supplier invoices online, log details of citizen enquiries and improve the efficiency of the Council’s administration process. The system will also support the establishment of a service desk with access to a range of online information to help employees respond to customer queries.

The hardware architecture comprises:

- Dell 136T tape library
- 20 Dell PowerEdge 2650 Servers
- Six Dell PowerEdge 6650 Servers
- One Dell PowerEdge 2600 Servers
- One Dell/EMC CX600 Storage Area Network (SAN)
- Six DAE enclosures (providing an additional three Terabytes of storage)
- Four 16 Port Switches
- Netbackup Software from Veritas with configuration by Posetiv
- Hardware and software implementation/configuration
- Three 42U racks.

Reliable support for mission-critical systems

The council will use its new Dell-powered ERP solution for a range of mission-critical functions. These include commercial transactions with banks and suppliers, management of employee data and a range of citizen-facing services including community information applications and road maintenance applications. The system will also streamline the management of taxation and benefits services.

Nelson says: “The Dell hardware we have in place ensures that our mission-critical ERP system will be available at all times. We are working towards a scenario where there is no single point of failure in the entire architecture. This includes uninterruptible power supplies and a range of other fault tolerance features that are built into the Dell infrastructure.

“The Dell hardware also enables us to load balance processing tasks across multiple servers with different power sources. That means if there is a fault in one machine, the applications will continue to operate as normal.”

Industry-leading performance and scalability

The Dell hardware is proving extremely powerful and will evolve to meet the Council’s growing processing and storage needs. Ken Boxhall, Head of ICT Services, Buckinghamshire County Council, says: “It was vital that the hardware design incorporated

resilience, flexibility and scalability to cope with the anticipated increases in service demands as the project progressed.”

Nelson says: “Dell is renowned for hardware that delivers outstanding performance. Importantly, it was also able to work closely with us to help us choose the best possible hardware infrastructure to support the ERP deployment. The result is that we have technology that will easily support our processing and storage requirements for the next three years.”

Rapid, secure back-up

The Veritas NetBackup software, coupled with the Dell tape library, enables the Council to back up its data much more quickly and easily than before.

Nelson says: “As a result of the technology, we have reduced our back-up window significantly, saving time for IT administrators and reducing the risk of lost data. This is very important when you consider the mission-critical nature of the services we deliver, including taxation and benefits.”

A new community portal

As well as supporting the ERP implementation and streamlining business processes, the Dell hardware is also powering the Council’s new community portal. This enables all manner of local organisations, from parish councils to rugby clubs, to upload content such as fixture lists and photographs to the site and stay in touch with what is happening locally.

Nelson says: “We expect the volume of content on the new site to increase dramatically over the coming months and years. The Dell/EMC hardware is powerful enough to support this growth. In addition, the hardware and software is scalable and secure enough to handle the pressures of large numbers of authors uploading content to the site. We hope this pioneering project will continue to benefit local residents for years to come.”

Industry-leading support

The hardware delivered by Dell is also covered by a comprehensive Gold Support agreement. This means the Council has access to top Dell consultants who have experience of working with its own specific infrastructure. Access to these hardware specialists ensures that the working relationship between Dell and the Council remains close.

Nelson says: “As well as making a wise hardware investment in the first place, we now have total peace of mind that the infrastructure will be supported in the most effective way possible. As a result, we can deliver critical resources such as social services information without the risk of downtime. This ensures we deliver the best possible service to local people, both now and in the future.”

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