Harrogate Borough Council saves 15 days per month on data protection tasks, freeing time for value-added infosec activities.

"Thanks to Celerity and Veeam, we are devoting extra time to vulnerability management activities, helping us to cut our remediation backlog down from 40 pages of items to just four items, reduce our response times for zero-day vulnerabilities and shrink our exposure to cyberthreats."

— Mike Evans
ICT Digital Services Programme & Compliance Manager
Harrogate Borough Council

The Business Challenge

Harrogate Borough Council provides public services to residents across Yorkshire, and data is at the heart of the council's approach to service delivery.

"Practically all council services depend on our IT infrastructure," said Mike Evans, ICT Digital Services Programme & Compliance Manager, Harrogate Borough Council. "For example, we use digital systems to plan routes for waste collection, to manage local sports, leisure and conference facilities and to procure materials for public parks, among other tasks."

As Harrogate Borough Council builds and enhances its e-government services, its data volumes are growing. Over the last five years, the amount of data has increased by approximately 10% year-on-year. Today, the organization manages more than 30 TB across 30 bare metal servers and 245 virtual machines (VMs).

Because this IT infrastructure underpins so many public services, the council aims to ensure that data is protected 24/7 and can be restored quickly in a disaster scenario. In the past, the organization used Commvault appliances to back up data from its on-premises servers to tape, which was then transported to an off-site facility for storage. However, the high cost and low reliability of the process created challenges.

"As a lean IT team, we're always looking for ways to improve our efficiency, but backup-related tasks took 15 full-time equivalent [FTE] days per month," said Evans. "We'd often run our nightly backups and return the next morning to find that they'd failed. To redo the backup, we also needed our finance team to undo and then repeat all the work they'd done since the last successful backup, consuming valuable time. However, the biggest issue by far was the reliability of our tape backups. During restore tests, we frequently discovered that our data was unrecoverable, which was an unacceptable risk."

Industry

Government

Company

Harrogate
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Harrogate Borough Council is responsible for services across 500 square miles of North Yorkshire, England. The council's main responsibilities include revenues and benefits, housing, planning, economic development, sport and leisure facilities, environmental services and public protection.

As part of a wider Digital Transformation program, Harrogate Borough Council is targeting a cloud-first strategy. The council looked for a data protection expert to help it protect the new hybrid-cloud environment, including on-premises systems and Microsoft 365 applications.

The Veeam Solution

After an internal requirements-gathering process, Harrogate Borough Council narrowed down a list of six potential vendors to just two possible candidates. Based on an in-depth evaluation against a weighted list of criteria, the organization selected Celerity Backup as a Service, powered by Veeam.

"Although we were nervous at first about outsourcing a mission-critical capability, we quickly recognized that Celerity's expertise and economies of scale would deliver far greater protection for our data than we could achieve on our own," said Evans. "One of the biggest advantages we saw in the Celerity offering is that it is a fully managed service, which frees our team from repetitive, backup-related tasks."

Darren Sanders, Technical Architect – Data Protection & Storage, at Celerity, said: "Celerity has been using Veeam solutions for years to help safeguard our clients' most sensitive data. Veeam has an excellent track record for developing and enhancing their solutions, and we see that they offer the most comprehensive data protection solution on the market today both for on-premises environments and Microsoft 365. Using a single pane of glass for backup management, we can offer highly responsive services to clients such as Harrogate Borough Council without compromising on cost efficiency."

The council was working to a strict deadline. Within just two months it needed to decommission the legacy Commvault infrastructure or renew the licenses for another year. Working with experts from Celerity, the organization completed a successful proof of concept with time to spare, allowing the council to cancel the upcoming Commvault license renewal with confidence.

"We were faced with the formidable challenge of performing what was essentially eight months of work in only two months, but Celerity went out of their way to ensure we succeeded," said Evans. "By steering the project effectively and setting weekly checkpoints, Celerity demonstrated that we could back up key systems successfully, which allowed us to cancel the Commvault license renewal with weeks to spare."

Veeam recommends backing up least three copies of data, stored on two different media, with at least one copy off site and offline and with verification to ensure zero backup errors. With the Celerity service powered by Veeam, Harrogate Borough Council can now meet and exceed this 3-2-1-1 rule.

"We've enabled incremental backups of our production VMs, which are now stored on two lightweight, on-premises backup appliances fully managed by Celerity and located at our primary and secondary data centers," said Evans. "We also have another copy located off site in Celerity's private cloud object storage repository. In the past, we had very little confidence in our backups and our ability to restore from them. Now, that's all changed. When we arrive at work in the morning, we no longer expect to see a long list of issues

Challenge

Harrogate Borough Council strives for maximum availability for the digital systems that support its public services. With data growing by 10% year-on-year, tape backups were neither efficient nor reliable enough to protect its 30 TB of critical data. As the council began its cloud journey, it looked for a fresh approach to back up its hybrid environment, including on-premises and Microsoft 365 applications.

Solution

Celerity Backup as a Service

Veeam® Backup and Replication™

Veeam Backup *for Microsoft 365.*

Results

- Reduces manual data recovery work by 99%.

- Saves 15 FTE days per month, freeing time for value-added activities.

- Follows the 3-2-1-1 rule, strengthening data protection.

to resolve. Everything just works. On the rare occasion where something does go wrong, most of the time Celerity fixes the issue before we're even aware of it."

With Celerity Backup as a Service powered by Veeam, Harrogate Borough Council can protect its data reliably and restore rapidly, allowing the organization to shrink the risk of disruption in a recovery scenario.

"We've already successfully restored data using the new solution — it's extremely quick and easy," said Evans. "Crucially, we're now empowering the IT team to focus on value-added tasks that we just didn't have enough time for previously. Thanks to Celerity and Veeam, we are devoting extra time to vulnerability management activities, helping us to cut our remediation backlog down from 40 pages of items to just 4 items, reduce our response times for zero-day vulnerabilities and shrink our exposure to cyberthreats."

The Results

- **Reduces manual data recovery work by 99%**

  "Previously, restoring an accidentally deleted file took more than an hour of work in total, including finding and retrieving the tape from an off-site location," said Evans. "Today, we simply raise a ticket with Celerity and they handle all the work for us, cutting our side of the process down to less than 30 seconds."

- **Saves 15 FTE days per month, freeing time for value-added activities**

  Since moving to managed services from Celerity powered by Veeam, the Harrogate Borough Council IT team has redirected extra resources into areas such as information security, helping to defend public services against cyber attackers.

- **Follows the 3-2-1-1 rule, strengthening data protection.**

  Harrogate Borough Council now backs up its data in four different locations, including both off-site and offline locations, all managed by Celerity. The new infrastructure can also be fully integrated with Celerity's Disaster-Recovery-as-a-Service solution, which could further enhance cyber resiliency.

→ **Learn more**
www.celerity-uk.com

About Veeam Software

Veeam® is the leader in backup, recovery and data management solutions that deliver Modern Data Protection. The company provides a single platform for Cloud, Virtual, Physical, SaaS and Kubernetes environments. Veeam customers are confident their apps and data are protected and always available with the most simple, flexible, reliable and powerful platform in the industry. Veeam protects over 400,000 customers worldwide, including 82% of the Fortune 500 and 69% of the Global 2,000. Veeam's global ecosystem includes 35,000+ technology partners, resellers and service providers, and alliance partners and has offices in more than 30 countries. To learn more, visit **www.veeam.com** or follow Veeam on LinkedIn **@veeam-software** and Twitter **@veeam**.

About Celerity

celerity

Celerity was founded in 2002 and established itself as a successful enterprise Infrastructure provider. Since then we have expanded into the cloud and managed services arena, drawing upon our extensive experience and knowledge as a data protection specialist, accumulated by working with clients operating in all industry sectors to provide value and unique solutions as a real, hands-on partner.

In the minefield of regulation and compliance, protecting our clients' interests is at the heart of everything with do, with a heritage that demonstrates our commitment to developing long-term, successful relationships with all of our clients and partners.