

# Richmondshire District Council

**Richmondshire District covers 509 square miles and is actually larger than four English counties, but within its boundary live only 51,400 people.**

Richmondshire is therefore one of the most sparsely populated District Councils in the country, its boundaries stretching from the River Tees to Cumbria.

Like many public sector organisations in the UK, more is being asked to be delivered with less budget and as such the decisions that the IT service make have to be the correct one, not only just in the short term, but for the foreseeable future, ensuring any systems deployed will deliver services as required today and for many years to come.

*“COOLSPIRiT enabled a very smooth transition from our old system to new.”*

**Graeme Thistlethwaite,**  
ICT & Business Change Manager

**COOLSPIRiT™**

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## Challenge

To provide security of information and the services that have become trusted by the residents and visitors who live in and visit the area, Richmondshire District Council relies on its IT infrastructure. With 100% of IT systems based within Mercury House in the town of Richmond, it is crucial that the IT service deploy highly resilient, trusted hardware that delivers services consistently and reliably within the performance parameters required by all employees of Richmondshire District Council. Key systems include finance, revenues and benefits, planning, housing email and general file data which all need to be highly available.

“Our existing system was end of life, it had been in operation for 5 years in which time it had become very slow and out of date compared to features available on the market today. A new system was required to be deployed inline with our refresh policy,” recalls Graeme Thistlethwaite, ICT & Business Change Manager at Richmondshire District Council.

“This slow down of the existing system had started impacting upon our service delivery,” adds Graeme Thistlethwaite.

“With capacity issues arising whenever any form of change was required, the old system had no space to run side by side system upgrades, which are critical to ensure service delivery.”

It was decided by the IT service to request solution designs from suppliers that would include the replacement of server, network and storage hardware to address these issues, while being fully compliant with their existing VMware licenses.



## Solution

Richmondshire District Council started by evaluating how traditional and next generation technologies have developed since their previous refresh project, which had proven to be a very reliable system. They needed the new system to be as reliable, but soon realised that new features available with modern solutions would be of great benefit compared to their existing deployment. Within the project scope, data protection was also a key requirement and any improvements that would be possible above the current situation would play a very important part of final decision making.

A formal proposal exercise was carried out by Richmondshire District Council to ensure they had efficiently researched the marketplace. "The COOLSPIRiT response met our requirements the best in terms of functionality and cost," recalls Graeme Thistlethwaite. "During the initial demonstration that COOLSPIRiT showed us, we could clearly see the solution would be easy to use and manage, bearing in mind we are a small team any time saved managing a system allows the team to do other important tasks."

The COOLSPIRiT proposal included technologies from three manufacturers, including Nimble CS1000 array for SAN storage, HPE DL380 Gen9 for compute and Brocade DS-300 for the network fabric. "With our current data size of 15TB, delivering a mix of systems and file data from our 220 virtual servers, growth can be unexpected and selecting a solution like this allows us to be ready for any expansion of services when required," confirms Graeme Thistlethwaite.

Richmondshire District Council utilised the COOLSPIRiT professional services team to ensure a smooth, quick and correctly configured transition, as Graeme Thistlethwaite explains, "Project management and installation of the new solution was very professionally carried out and extremely helpful. With the additional knowledgeable skills transfer workshop carried out, this enabled us to move forward with the new solution quickly and be setup ready for the migration phase of the project." Together COOLSPIRiT and Richmondshire District Council successfully implemented the new infrastructure, which also enabled the Council to facilitate a new disaster recovery solution by utilising previously used hardware.

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## Benefit

Thanks to the end-to-end service from COOLSPIRiT, Richmondshire District Council now has a reliable, easy to use and expandable system, delivering the performance required, as Graeme Thistlethwaite explains, "Previously on our Citrix environment we had experienced a lot of performance degradation with applications locking up. The Nimble CASL architecture and its intuitive cache mechanism has enabled our applications to run smoother and inline with user's expectations."

The new system has not only delivered the better performance and flexibility for the Councils primary system, but also delivered in other areas. "The new system has enabled the team to perform smooth upgrades and quicker backup of information that makes it more available to users, who now operate in extended longer hours. The backup window has shrunk to 6 hours from over 12 hours," confirms Graeme Thistlethwaite.

By migrating to a new infrastructure, Richmondshire District Council has enabled a measurable financial return. "There has been a dramatic saving in power and cooling, as our footprint has been dramatically shrunk as part of this change," reveals Graeme Thistlethwaite. "We now have a 5 year warranty in place on the new solution and have stopped paying for warranty on our out of date kit, which was expensive. We are now inline with budgets allocated for the next 5 years and delivering clear cost savings, which are so important to the Council."

By working with COOLSPIRiT, Richmondshire District Council now has the confidence that as additional services are required to be brought online, the new system offers the capability to deliver these critical additions easily and quickly, offering staff, residents and visitors of Richmondshire uninterrupted access to services they have become accustomed to.