

This Government housing association is at the forefront of cloud adoption in the UK public sector

With a focus on providing excellent service to customers while driving efficiencies, the East Thames housing association has adopted a 'cloud-first' policy to support the digitisation of the business and overcome the barriers of legacy technology.

profile

East Thames is one of the largest providers of affordable housing in east London and Essex and is regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). In addition to managing almost 15,000 homes, the association also builds new homes, provides care and support services and offers employment and training programmes to local people.

disaster recovery a top priority

As they embarked on exploring cloud technologies, the East Thames IT team prioritized updating their Disaster Recovery (DR) plans. Their incumbent DR solution had very high operational costs, was untested and would require significant capital investments to make it fit for purpose. The IT team was required by the Business Continuity steering group to prove the ability to recover IT systems in the event of a disaster. Their current DR solution simply didn't enable them to prove that a timely, safe and secure recovery was possible.

Paul Clark, Head of Service Operations, explains *"We faced a clear decision of whether to invest in more technology and infrastructure or whether to invest in the cloud. We needed to reduce the constraints on IT in the event of a disaster – and the iland DRaaS solution does that for us."*

putting trust in the cloud

After a thorough investigation of the cloud-based DR solutions available, East Thames chose iland DRaaS with Zerto to replicate their data at the hypervisor-level and keep an up-to-date copy of their virtualized applications in iland's cloud, recovering and testing them as needed on a self-service basis. The team is thrilled with the Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) they've been able to achieve in testing. With the old DR solution, recovery times were measured in days and weeks – with iland DRaaS, they are now able to achieve a RTO of mere minutes.

east THAMES

profile

- ▶ SIZE: Enterprise
- ▶ INDUSTRY: Public Sector – UK Govt
- ▶ SOLUTION: iland DRaaS with Zerto
- ▶ HEAD OFFICE: London, UK

challenges

- ▶ Existing DR solution was untested
- ▶ Could not prove a reliable DR plan was in place for audit requirements
- ▶ High operational costs on legacy technology

benefits

- ▶ Fast recovery times ensure business continuity
- ▶ Ease of testing drives confidence and impresses auditors
- ▶ Reserved compute provides cost-effective additional capacity

"Being able to test our DR plan was essential to pass audits and instill confidence – the iland DRaaS solution enables easy and frequent testing. And, iland ticked all the boxes for us from a cloud security and reliability standpoint as well."

- Paul Clark, Head of Service Operations

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Supplier

ease of testing ensures confidence

With the Government Business Continuity steering committee demanding a *proven* DR solution, DR testing was a priority for the East Thames IT team. The iland DRaaS with Zerto solution enables them to test on-demand anytime through the console with automated failover and failback without affecting any production workloads. Regular testing on a much reduced time scale has given the IT team the confidence they need to trust their DR plans and address audit requirements.

With iland co-location services and carrier-neutral data centres, East Thames is able to leverage stretched Layer 2 VLAN technology to maintain the same network addressing scheme on-premises and in the iland cloud. Marek Wisniewski, Head of Technical Infrastructure explains: *“With iland, we can failover a single VM in a production environment with no scripts or configuration changes required. We can do partial failovers very easily and operate in a truly hybrid environment.”*

cloud security concerns addressed

East Thames needed to show their Group Risk & Audit committee that cloud security and data sovereignty requirements could be met by the new DR solution. Failed over applications are monitored by the iland advanced security settings to ensure ongoing compliance. And, the fact that the iland data centres located in London and Manchester – as well as iland itself – are ISO 27001 certified ensures confidence when pushing that failover button.

“External auditors have been impressed with the ease of testing and RTOs achievable with the iland DRaaS solution and have remarked that it’s better than what they’ve witnessed in the private sector,” said Clark. “Our DR capability had been listed as a risk item by auditors a year ago – that’s not the case anymore.”

driving efficiencies and cost savings

East Thames benefits from being able to reserve compute space and dial up additional capacity when required in the iland cloud very quickly and cost-effectively – any changes to required disk space took a long time to implement and were very expensive in the previous DR solution. And, they’ve made significant savings as a result of avoiding the capital investment that was required for the legacy DR infrastructure.

the future of cloud in the UK public sector

Overall, East Thames benefits from a much more reliable, tested and proven DR solution than they had previously which helps meet audit requirements and support digital initiatives. *“This has been a great introduction to cloud for East Thames,” Clark says, and has given us the confidence to adopt more cloud use cases in the future.”*

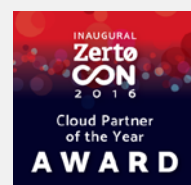
“We made a very good decision to choose iland – their DRaaS solution gives us the flexibility to perform partial failovers of VMs with no configuration changes required which other solutions simply didn’t offer.”

- Marek Wisniewski, Head of Technical Infrastructure

about iland

With data centers in the U.S., U.K. and Singapore, iland delivers the only enterprise cloud solutions in the market today with true innovation, transparency, intelligent management and advanced security built in. iland’s technology and consultative approach mean anyone—regardless of expertise, location or business objective – can benefit from a hassle-free cloud.

From scaling production workloads to supporting testing and development to disaster recovery, iland’s secure cloud and decades of experience mean unmatched service. iland has been recognized as Veeam’s Service Provider of the Year as well as VMware’s Service Provider Partner of the Year, Global and Americas. iland is also part of the Cisco Cloud Managed Service Provider Program for IaaS and DRaaS and partners with other industry leaders including Zerto, Trend Micro, Hytrust and Nimble Storage.



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