Protected

Case Study: Christchurch City Council

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From rebuild to refinement

With between 3,500 and 4,000 employees at any given time, Christchurch City Council is one of the largest employers in the South Island.

The greater Christchurch area experienced unprecedented population change following the Canterbury earthquakes in September 2010 and February 2011. It has now recovered to sit at around 400,000 people and growing rapidly. This has caused a welcome but steadily increasing workload for the council.

Responsible for 72 sites across Greater Christchurch and its surrounding suburbs, the council runs and maintains public amenities and services including Christchurch City's network of 20 libraries, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū and Akaroa Museum.

Christchurch City Council's manager of digital operations, Colin Lawrence says that for much of the last decade, speed was the key factor in the face of such an extensive rebuilding process.

"Now over ten years on, we are pivoting to focus on refining what we have rebuilt and perfecting the infrastructure, systems and processes that will contribute to the smooth running and future growth of Christchurch," says Lawrence.

Consistently Connected

As with many large organisations, the cloud-first approach to IT and data infrastructure that Christchurch City Council has adopted provides real benefits to the large workforce. More rapid access to data and information, better security, and enhanced collaboration between departments.

"One thing we realised early on is that without an assured supply of power, we simply don't run. We devised and are rolling out an organisation network programme which will safeguard and ensure our staffs' reliable access to our network, digital tools and data at all times," says Lawrence.

There was no better place to begin than in the heart of the city centre at Christchurch City Council's headquarters on Hereford Street.

Around 2,000 staff work here daily and although there is a robust generator setup, handling the power load while generators start-up is essential in the event of a power interruption or outage.

Lawrence says that alongside handling the power load during transition to generator power, many of our systems require a graceful shut down so that valuable data, equipment and other assets aren't put at risk.

"The older UPS devices installed at the time were not fit for purpose and the network programme was created with long-term reliable support in mind. To this end we sought out a partner that would be able to provide us with a best-in-class power solution and give us confidence in the long-term support, ongoing maintenance and scaling of the system," says Lawrence.

Best In Class

This search led to a partnership with UPS Power Solutions and the decision to standardise on Eaton power quality equipment throughout the City Council's operation.

"The network programme is around 60% complete and the power strategy has already proven itself with the monitoring solution correctly identifying a power issue and alerting us to remedy it before any loss was experienced.

"Around 50% of our infrastructure is backed-up by the new UPS strategy and the rollout is well on schedule. It's a huge job but with good guidance and a well-prepared strategy we are very optimistic in hitting our long-term objectives, says Lawrence.