

# Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

LANDesk helps Solihull support council's mission to achieve 'more with less'

## Profile

Local authority

## Company

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

## Location

United Kingdom

## Industry

Public sector

## Solutions

- LANDesk® Management Suite
- LANDesk® Server Manager
- LANDesk® Patch Manager

## Key benefits

- Accurate software and hardware inventories save on licensing costs, save on project planning time and help to produce meaningful statistics in real-time
- Remote control guarantees faster response to user problems
- Automatic software distribution reduces desktop visits by 75%
- LANDesk's auto-discovery capabilities cut back on audit times and outsourced staff costs
- LANDesk facilitates council's compliance with Government Code of Connection (CoCo)
- Innovative use of LANDesk solutions achieves more with less, addressing the challenge of public sector spending cuts

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## Overview

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) has a strong reputation for its competitive economy, good schools and thriving, prosperous environment. It is dedicated to providing high quality services to its employees and to over 200,000 residents and around 87,000 households living in the area.

## Challenge

In 1998, it was clear that the council needed to find a better way to service its growing number of PC users as Hilary Staton, Technical Operations Manager, ICT Services, Resources Directorate at Solihull MBC explains:

"Before LANDesk, most support involved an engineer personally visiting a user, whether it was just to solve a simple query or to install a new piece of software. We have two main sites twenty minutes apart, plus several other smaller locations, so users had to wait for long periods during which they were unproductive. Besides being able to handle helpdesk queries remotely, I wanted a centralised software distribution system. And last but not least, I needed a product that would give me dynamic hardware and software inventories."

After carefully evaluating three vendors, only LANDesk satisfied all Hilary's criteria and LANDesk® Management Suite was selected as the ideal solution.

Over time, Solihull MBC's original requirements for a technology solution have changed to adapt to the needs of the council, Central Government and major software providers such as Microsoft. In light of recent public sector spending cuts, Hilary has also faced mounting pressure to implement greater efficiencies without affecting service delivery and with no extra headcount.

## Solution

Solihull MBC first deployed LANDesk Management Suite in September 1999 to monitor between 1,700 and 1,800 PCs on the Solihull network and provide a faster response to users' problems.

When a call comes into the helpdesk, it is logged and passed to an engineer who uses the LANDesk software to control remotely the user's system to identify and fix the fault. Users are back to work more quickly and engineers spend less time in transit, so they can help more people.

The council then took advantage of LANDesk's automatic software distribution functionality to simplify and accelerate new application rollouts across Solihull MBC. Previously, an engineer would have to visit all potential users – usually hundreds – to check on the status of their PCs and see if they had enough memory and disk space to run the package. Any necessary hardware upgrades then had to be ordered; it took another visit to install them and yet another to install the software.

Today, LANDesk Management Suite supplies up-to-date inventory of the hardware and software installed on each machine so that when a major new application is planned, the status of every machine can be reviewed, the necessary hardware upgrades ordered well in advance and the software distributed centrally via the network. Support staff can even deploy regular fixes and upgrades remotely, after hours, using a laptop from home. With the rising number of home workers, remote control has become more important than ever before.

In 2009, Hilary's team noticed an unprecedented number of patches requiring careful attention. However, the Council's existing free-of-charge patch management tool proved insufficient and there was no budget to replace it. At the same time, Solihull MBC was under pressure to adhere to the Government Code of Connection (CoCo) which requires all local authorities to comply with a list of stringent security controls before they can connect to the Government Connect Secure Extranet (GCSX).<sup>1</sup> GCSX is a secure, private wide area network that enables secure interactions between central government departments, other National bodies and local authorities.

"The need to become CoCo compliant was a major driver for securing the appropriate funding for a new solution because we had to demonstrate effective patch management to achieve full compliance status," said Hilary. "We could have chosen a number of solutions but decided to take a fresh look at LANDesk and invest further in the technology, confident that LANDesk® Patch Manager could provide the necessary advanced functionality all from the same single console."

Patch management is now a very quick and easy process and gives Solihull MBC the controllability it needs to achieve efficiencies within the organisation and meet central government mandates such as CoCo.

Sue Lal, Head of Business Development, Public Sector & UK at Pangea Systems who deliver LANDesk products, training and consultancy to Solihull MBC, expanded on the value of an integrated technology platform: "Solihull MBC has excellent IT skills in-house so we generally go in when a new product has been installed or a new project has begun, get them up and running and then leave them alone to deal with ongoing maintenance. The single LANDesk console means we can do this very easily because little training is necessary."

Solihull MBC has recently extended its use of the LANDesk solution by maximising the sophisticated auto-discovery capabilities of the system to achieve vendor software compliance. For example, when Microsoft asked to conduct a licence review at Solihull MBC, Hilary could demonstrate exactly how many copies of each Microsoft licence were being run on every PC: "We could give Microsoft a clear picture of our entire estate broken down by applications and patches and then create accurate reports directly from the LANDesk system in real-time."

## Results

For Hilary, the major success of the LANDesk deployment is around time savings that ultimately equate to cost savings. Very quickly, remote control functionality and automatic software distribution yielded significant results with an impressive 75% reduction in desktop visits. The recent Microsoft Licence Review took just one person several days to complete. Before LANDesk, the whole exercise would have necessitated the extra expense of hiring outside contractors over a period of several weeks.

Solihull MBC's ICT services department has developed a close working relationship with Pangea Systems and relies on their expert training and consultancy services to ensure the successful deployment of its growing LANDesk estate.

"Pangea has helped us tremendously over the years. As an organisation focused 100% on LANDesk products, their knowledge, training and consultancy are excellent and we have absolute confidence in them."

Hilary concluded: "Since LANDesk was first installed over ten years ago, the number of PCs and laptops we support has risen from around 1,800 to over 2,500 yet our headcount remains the same. We couldn't live without LANDesk solutions. They are fundamental to achieving more with less, a real benefit when public sector budgets are squeezed to the limit."

*"The savings we made were significant enough to pay for our LANDesk investment very quickly. Automation has streamlined many of our tasks, helping us to service an increasing number of users without additional staff. Since LANDesk was first installed over ten years ago, the number of PCs and laptops we need to support has risen by 30% yet our headcount remains the same. LANDesk solutions support our mission to achieve more with less, a real benefit when public sector budgets are squeezed to the limit."*

— Hilary Staton

Technical Operations Manager, ICT  
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Council

<sup>1</sup> For more information, please visit the Government Connect website ([www.govconnect.gov.uk](http://www.govconnect.gov.uk))

Visit [www.landesk.com](http://www.landesk.com) for more information.

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