



Northamptonshire County Council

Case Study



With the assistance of PTS Consulting, the main Data Centre operated by Northamptonshire County Council has been assessed using the PTS 'STARS' (Site Tier Allocation Rating System) service.



The Client:



Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) is responsible for the delivery of services to the populous of Northamptonshire (678,000) over an area of 2,364km². Located in central England, the county has diverse calls on its services, with national road, rail and canal routes, as well as an ethnically diverse population. Social, education, environment and planning, together with fire and safety are amongst the services expected to be delivered to the highest standards for all residents and those passing through this pivotal county. NCC is the largest single organisation operating within the county, providing more than a hundred different services with an annual expenditure of £963m. Internally, the Council supports 9,000 employees.

The Challenge:

To supply the essential back office services that support the delivery of the Council's services, a Data Centre was established at NCC's County Hall location in Northampton. The Council's front office services, presented via the web, are located at another location. The headquarters Data Centre facilities have been recently strengthened with a new uninterruptable power supply (UPS), and the air conditioning has been completely replaced. However, the full effect of this work, and how all the mechanical, electrical, communication and support operational services work together, had not been assessed as a complete Data Centre facility. The Council also required an independent analysis of any shortfalls that could affect services to the Council staff and its customers, together with an indication of the overall energy efficiency of the Data Centre.

The Solution:

Over the past 4 years, PTS Consulting has developed and deployed a Data Centre rating assessment methodology that provides a transparent, traceable appraisal across a Data Centre's mechanical, electrical, IT, communications, operations and maintenance functions. To date, over 80 sites around the globe have been assessed by PTS Consulting using STARS. The PTS Consulting STARS system is an independent Data Centre Site Tier Allocation Rating System that is aligned with the 'The Uptime Institute' (TUI) Tier Classification. STARS provides an objective and measurable method of benchmarking Data Centre requirements and facilities according to the level of resiliency, redundancy and scale of infrastructure. This facilitates a detailed analysis of Data Centre facilities and presents information in a report format



with graphical illustrations, enabling clients to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Data Centres, including the cost of ownership.

The Northamptonshire County Council Data Centre facility was assessed and a report was produced, detailing all of the Data Centre tier capabilities of the sub-criteria within each of the main functions. In all, 22 sub-criteria were examined. Each of these was then rated against a criteria rating definition and the resultant ratings were averaged by function. These were then averaged to provide an overall rating for the Data Centre facility. The results were reported to the Client, along with PTS' observations and recommendations from the assessors and specialists in each of the functions. At the same time, a gap analysis was produced against an agreed target rating for the Data Centre.

The Benefits:

The report was reviewed by NCC's IT team, who recognised the importance of the document in helping to understand the current state of the Council's Data Centre facilities and the improvements that could be investigated. Thanks to PTS Consulting, Northamptonshire County Council now has an independent Data Centre rating assessment that can be used for planning of any improvements or changes to the Data Centre that would affect the service availability to the Council's IT users. These, together with energy efficiency recommendations, provided the Data Centre team with vital information for further development work.

The Verdict:

Gary Thomas, Technology Services Manager at Northamptonshire County Council, commented:

"It has been incredibly useful to have an independent assessment of Northamptonshire County Council's central Data Centre facility. Thanks to PTS Consulting's STARS assessment, we now have a measure of our Data Centre resiliency and redundancy against industry benchmark standards in a clear and concise graphical and report format. The gap analysis also produced by PTS Consulting will inform our future Data Centre strategy and improvements to ensure that we have a reliable facility that supports the Council's requirements - now and in the future."

About PTS Consulting

PTS Consulting Group PLC (PTS) is one of the world's leading IT consultancies with a reputation for innovation and thought leadership. PTS is also renowned for its project management expertise. As the global leader in IT relocation projects, working with some of the world's largest companies, PTS has earned a world - wide reputation for independence, professionalism and quality of service. Headquartered in the UK and founded in 1983, PTS has worked in over 70 different countries, 250 cities and employs more than 330 staff in the Americas, EMEA and Asia-Pacific. www.ptsc consulting.com