



“Objective has enabled us to **protect our files** and **meet the goals of the LGCS** while helping users make the most of the **new physical and digital workplaces**.”

Lorraine Surrey, Senior Project Manager, Thurrock Council

ORGANISATION

Thurrock Council

INDUSTRY

Government

SOLUTION

 **Objective** ECM

 **Objective** CONNECT

 **Objective** PERFORM

BENEFITS AT A GLANCE

- **Document culling** significantly reduced physical copies and disk space
- **Continuous training** drove cultural transformation, keeping users engaged and supported
- **A centralised, trusted information platform** enabling future transformation in a governance-driven world
- **Assisting the council's GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018** compliance work programme
- **Secure online collaboration** with external partners and stakeholders

Thurrock Council's office modernisation led to a digital document storage reinvention

For years, managing corporate documents had been left to individual business areas within Thurrock Council, a unitary authority directly east of London with 167,000 residents. However, over time this approach had become outdated and cumbersome. When Thurrock undertook a major overhaul of its physical office spaces – introducing hot-desking and mobile working – it also committed to introducing and enforcing use of a structured document management platform.

By the time Thurrock Council set about cleaning out its offices in 2013 ready for a major overhaul, its cupboards were filled with rarely-used paper documents and its shared file server was crammed full of 8 terabytes of business documents that had not been formally organised or culled since the drive was set up 15 years earlier.

It was a recipe for disorganisation that had challenged the council's compliance with the UK Data Protection Act. Staff were creating versioning problems and storage issues by regularly emailing each other large files, while the lack of audit trails and search capabilities meant that information on the shared drive was poorly organised.

“There had been no real ownership of keeping the shared drive organised since it was established in 1998,” explains Lorraine Surrey, Senior Project Manager, Thurrock Council. “People were allowed to create new paths and create complex permission for documents, and it was difficult to have a corporate view of the application of retention policies.”

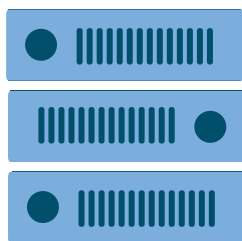
As part of its transformation programme, the council decided that its physical office modernisation – which included a refurbishment of the council offices and a shift to hot-desking, flexible workspaces, underpinned by a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) – should be accompanied by the adoption of a structured enterprise information platform.

The broader capabilities of the Objective Enterprise Content Management (ECM) platform allows the enforcement of document access controls, versioning, and secure collaboration that the council had been lacking in the past.

KEY METRICS



1 MILLION
DOCUMENTS MANAGED
IN OBJECTIVE ECM



↓ 37%
REDUCTION IN
DISK SPACE



1200 USERS

LEVERAGE A CENTRALISED DOCUMENT REPOSITORY
FOR COMPLIANCE WITH GDPR
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

Through secure and flexible collaboration Thurrock Council have develop new digital service channels that deliver operational excellence and enable staff to work more productively and efficiently than ever.

A COUNCIL-WIDE SPRING CLEAN

A successful trial of Objective within the Council's Housing Department provided a model for adoption of the platform across the rest of the council. In Housing, the ability to leverage digital workflow was seen as an engine for significant process improvement, employing best-practice principles to provide better process intelligence through the automation of low-value tasks.

Convincing the council's 2,000 staff to use it, however, proved to be a major focus of the more than six-month implementation and migration project. A project team – comprising a business analyst, records manager, trainer, change manager, project manager, and apprentice – was assembled to ensure that Objective was implemented successfully.

Even as the 12-week office move concluded, the Objective migration ramped up based on some of the same 'Making Change Happen' philosophies previously used in the office move.

Each Council department was given six months to review the contents of its shared J: drive, then move the remaining content from that drive to the Objective system.

Just as cleaning of the physical office cupboards had revealed reams of documents that were simply no longer needed – and didn't need to be scanned into Objective – cleaning out the shared drives identified many terabytes of data that was no longer relevant or necessary.

Whilst most teams were able to review their shared drive data within the six month deadline, the shared-drive reduction project continues to identify large amounts of old data that requires review in order to determine whether it is out of retention and can be deleted or whether it needs to be migrated to Objective and stored within the controls of the industry-standard file plan established under the Information and Records Management Society's Local Government Classification Scheme (LGCS).

BRINGING USERS ON THE JOURNEY

Throughout the implementation of Objective, regular user surveys and reviews of lessons learned helped adjust the rollout for maximum effectiveness. Up to 185 'super users' were put through a series of three file planning workshops, then given delegated authority to support local users in each department.

This approach helped to deliver a decentralised control structure that reduced the burden on the central Records Management Team and helped build a culture of digital document sharing across the council. User support through a dedicated team proved to be critical to the implementation, since users had for many years become accustomed to the freedoms that the shared-drive approach allowed.

Breaking this habit required the project team to push users through a number of stages: for example, personal H: drives, which were available for every user, were locked down so that Objective became the default storage location. Files stored on employees' VDI desktops are erased every Friday, and employees have been informed that anything they wish to keep must be stored in Objective (unless it is more appropriately stored in their line of business system or case management system).

By gradually but firmly steering users towards the Objective environment, Thurrock's project managers were able to change user habits dramatically. The volume of data in the shared drive reduced by 37 percent, and personal drives by 70 percent, and Objective's document controls have become widely used across the council.

Thurrock's Strategic Leader for Information Management, Lee Henley, is responsible for the Records Management Team that looks after the Objective system now that the implementation is complete.

"We have to be careful of data breaches: where people aren't locking down sensitive information. We must ensure that access to personal and business sensitive information is strictly on a need to know basis. We have had to drive home the point that we all work for Thurrock Council, and that we all need to follow the same rules when managing files", explains Lee Henley.

MAINTAINING THE USER EXPERIENCE

The flexible-working project helped free employees from their desks, allowing them to work where and how makes the most sense at any given time. Similarly, the standardisation on Objective ECM and LGCS allowed Thurrock Council to bring much-needed order to its data management.

“We just need to cut down the time people spend sending emails containing documents to each other,” Surrey explains. “It’s a big change for users, but you only need one version of a document, so we need to get people in the habit of sending the reference instead.”

During the rollout, more than 1,200 users were trained. Classroom training now takes place 2-3 times per month for new starters, but existing users can also attend as a refresher. More than 1 million documents are now stored in Objective and 14,000 documents being added each week.

The recent upgrade to Objective 10.3 and a move to Objective’s Web-based self-service interface will be making the system even more intuitive to use for Thurrock’s users.

The project team keeps interest and engagement alive through techniques including themed drop-in sessions, e-learning modules, video clips, one-to-one sessions, regular newsletters, and more.

Back-end integration of Objective and line-of-business systems has also been undertaken where it was judged necessary. The Liquidlogic application used by the adult social care has already been integrated, and plans are in place to integrate the children’s social care Liquidlogic application. The Tribal education support system is scheduled to be the third integration as resources allow.

Over time, the project will be supported by initiatives such as secure external document sharing using Objective Connect, allowing teams to collaborate online, easily and securely, with third parties.

“Corporately we need to make sure that files aren’t destroyed before they should be or stored for longer than they should be” Surrey says. “Objective has enabled us to protect our files and meet the goals of the LGCS while helping our users make the most of the new physical and digital workplaces that we have created.”

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ABOUT OBJECTIVE CORPORATION

Objective Corporation (ASX:OCL) creates information and process governance solutions that are effortless to use and enable organisations to confidently advance their own digital transformation.

Designed for regulated industries, these solutions turn the imperative of compliance, accountability and governance into an opportunity to streamline business processes and deliver the innovative services that customers expect.

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With a heritage in Enterprise Content Management (ECM), Objective's expanded solutions extend governance across the spectrum of the modern workplace; underpinning information, processes and collaborative work-spaces.

Through a brilliant user experience, people access the information they need to progress processes from wherever they choose to work.

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