# forfusion

fusion connect

Newcastle Building Society

**Case Study**

# Self-healing network brings the focus back to the customer.

## Background

Newcastle Building Society is the eighth largest building society in the UK.

Since 2015, more than 6,000 bank branches have closed across the UK, forcing customers to travel miles to their nearest branch and making it harder for people to manage their money.

As part of its commitment to its members and communities, the Newcastle Building Society strives to invest in and grow its network of 32 branches, bucking the national trend of branch closures and restoring essential banking services to residents in towns abandoned by the high street banks.

The Society's innovative 'blueprint for branches' combines people, technology and partnership to meet the needs of its communities. The use of shared spaces has seen it open branches in unexpected locations, such as inside the YMCA North Tyneside's community hub in North Shields, inside Knaresborough Library in North Yorkshire and alongside a tourist information office and gift shop in Wooler, Northumberland.

## Challenge

The Society's existing network was reliant on a Wide Area Network (WAN) underpinned by Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) and ageing infrastructure/ hardware, which meant there was an increased risk of outages, degraded service quality, and the inability to implement their vision efficiently, accessibly, and sustainably — especially in rural areas where banking is already difficult due to accessibility and poor connectivity.

"Banks continue to close branches across the UK at an alarming rate, turning their back on our high streets. Our approach is very different, with customers at the centre of everything we do, we believe it's our responsibility to find new ways to keep face-to-face financial services in our communities"

Andrew Haigh, CEO
**Newcastle Building Society**

## Solution

Our customer-centric approach and focus on long-term IT strategy helped the Society drive its digital transformation.

Our team worked collaboratively with the Society to design a solution that replaced the existing MPLS network with a software-driven solution and effectively installed an innovative self-healing network with no downtime to sustain the Society's growing network of branches, no matter where they're located.

Forfusion's partnership with Evolving Networks meant that the Society could procure an innovative, secure, and carrier-resilient SD-WAN solution designed in the UK, for the UK. The Evolving Network solution uses policy-based load balancing across all available access circuits that are part of the network underlay. This clever connectivity solution would support all the Society's sites, delivering dependable connectivity across data centres, the cloud, the internet, and its 32 branch locations.

## Results

The new network provided instant, reliable connectivity: a failure of any one circuit would be unnoticeable to branch teams and customers. The solution enabled the adoption of cloud-based technologies, which supported the Society's innovative plans to establish full-service community partnership branches in spaces such as libraries, community hubs and tourist information offices. The solution also supported the Society's free multi-bank kiosks, which enable customers of any bank to carry out cash transactions, restoring access to cash in communities impacted by bank branch closures.

The solution was cost-effective and quick to deploy due to the ability to take xDSL, 3G, 4G and 5G from different Telcos/suppliers - making it a more flexible and resilient alternative to MPLS or Ethernet. The connectivity underlay operates independently of the Society's chosen security overlay, so it retains control of its networking infrastructure whilst having the ability to outsource circuits management - meaning it isn't tied to one supplier.

**The result: A flexible, secure, and scalable connectivity solution for the future.**

**Connection is everything.** Transform your business today.

**forfusion.com**

+44 (0) 191 500 9100

hello@forfusion.com

In partnership with **evolving** NETWORKS™

CISCO Partner — Gold Integrator

CISCO Partner — Gold Provider

Carbon Neutral Britain

UKAS — ISO 27001 INFORMATION SECURITY MANAGEMENT