CIRRO

CASE STUDY

Habinteg Housing Association

Migrating 50 servers, 200 users and 60 offices to a private Azure Local cloud — over a single weekend, with zero business downtime.

CLIENT
Habinteg Housing Association

PREPARED BY
Cirro Solutions

VERSION
v1.0 · For Review

DATE
10 November 2026

Document control

Client	Habinteg Housing Association
Document type	Case Study
Version	1.0
Status	For Review
Date	10 November 2026
Prepared by	Cirro Solutions
Reviewed by	[Reviewer]
Classification	Not marked – add if required

Version history

Version	Date	Author	Summary of changes
0.1	[Date]	[Author]	Original case study draft
1.0	10 November 2026	Cirro Solutions	Reworded with Cirro as lead partner; Cirro template; issued for review

Approvals

Name	Role	Date	Approval
Michelle Miller	Head of Technology and Data, Habinteg		
Kyle Flintoff	Interim Senior IT Operations Engineer, Habinteg		
[Name]	Innovate		
[Name]	Cirro Solutions		

At a glance

Habinteg Housing Association had months, not years, to replace an end-of-life server estate, exit a hosting contract on the brink of auto-renewal, and close the security gaps left by a previous cyber incident. They needed more than new kit. They needed a strategic partner.

Habinteg ran a competitive public tender and selected Cirro on the strength of its approach, solution, commercials and end-to-end capability. Cirro set the strategic direction and brought in specialist delivery partner Innovate to build a fully managed Azure Local private cloud. Users left on a Friday and came back on Monday to a new platform, with zero interruption to operations. Pricing is fixed for the full five-year term, so Habinteg gets cloud capability with fully forecastable spend.

40 hrs Friday 6pm → Sunday 10am, end-to-end migration	**0 hrs** of business downtime	**3 mo** contract award to handover-to-BAU	**5 yrs** fixed-price term, no Microsoft uplifts

Table 1: Project profile

Industry	Housing
Organisation size	>200 users, 60 offices
Cirro's role	Strategic direction and advisory Procurement (competitive public tender) Account and service management
Services provided	Cloud Migration Cloud Hosting Cloud Managed Support
Products used	Azure Local FortiGate virtual firewall
Delivery partner	Innovate
Term	Five years, fixed price

1 About Habinteg

Habinteg has spent more than 50 years building inclusive, accessible homes — today managing over 3,300 properties across 86 local authorities. Working from a social model of disability, the view that barriers come from the built environment rather than from people themselves, they design homes that support independent living. Through sharing their technical expertise and insights from working with disabled people looking for accessible places to live, they help other providers and decision makers understand the social and business case for building accessible communities. Their consultancy arm, the Centre for Accessible Environments, advises housing providers, employers and public-sector clients on accessibility across the built environment.

> For a small in-house IT team supporting more than 200 users across 60 locations, that mission carries a hard requirement: their technology has to just work.

2 The challenge

By 2024, Habinteg's IT environment was under three simultaneous strains, any one of which would have justified a major project on its own.

End-of-life infrastructure with a ticking clock. Habinteg's virtual servers — hosting their housing management, finance, HR and document management systems — sat in a third-party data centre on a contract due to expire in January 2025, with the incumbent provider's auto-renewal triggering as early as November 2024. Replacement infrastructure was needed within months.

A small team carrying a complex estate. A lean in-house technology function was managing a multi-supplier infrastructure spanning hosting, backup and network. The overhead of co-ordinating multiple vendors during a major incident — never mind a cyber event — was no longer sustainable.

The shadow of a previous breach. Two years earlier, the organisation had been hit by a cyber incident. Resilience, security and a hardened architecture were non-negotiables for the board.

Underpinning all three was a financial constraint. Habinteg wanted the benefits of cloud — but not the variable, unpredictable billing that comes with public cloud.

> *"We're a small organisation with finite resources. We needed a partner that understood our risk profile and was as invested in what we needed to deliver as we were — not one that wanted to sell us a product."*
>
> — **Michelle Miller**, Head of Technology and Data, Habinteg

3 The solution

Cirro started with strategy, not product. Working with Habinteg's leadership, Cirro shaped the target architecture and migration approach. The outcome was Infrastructure-as-a-Service on Microsoft Azure Local, delivered and operated by Cirro's specialist Innovate — a Microsoft Azure CSP trusted by major banks, national critical infrastructure providers and UK Government departments.

Azure Local, Microsoft's hyperconverged cloud platform, gives Habinteg the agility of cloud with the cost predictability of dedicated infrastructure. The underlying hardware is owned, operated and fully managed end to end, and the entire estate is integrated with Microsoft 365 and Habinteg's line-of-business systems through a single management dashboard.

3.1 Security built in, not bolted on

Before a single server moved, the environment was reviewed for security vulnerabilities and improvement opportunities. Virtual machines were hardened, security configurations were strengthened, and additional security tooling and monitoring were added.

The network perimeter was rebuilt at the same time. A cloud-hosted FortiGate next-generation virtual firewall replaced the end-of-life physical appliance at head office, providing a single, scalable termination point for site-to-site VPNs across all 60 locations, with automatic patching, integrated threat protection and centralised policy management.

3.2 One accountable partner

Cirro provides account and service management and ongoing strategic advice, giving Habinteg a single point of contact across the whole service. Monitoring, alerting and incident management run from a UK-based service desk on a 24/7 basis, backed by a dedicated technical team.

> **Cloud, without the bill shock.** Habinteg wanted cloud, but not the variability of public cloud. Pricing is fixed for the full five-year term, with no exposure to Microsoft licensing uplifts — giving the finance team fully forecastable IT spend.

4 The migration

Habinteg's users logged off on a Friday and logged back in on Monday to a new platform. To them, the migration was invisible — and complete.

Rather than a phased migration with rolling outages, the project was planned as a single, end-to-end cutover. Work started at six o'clock on Friday evening. By ten o'clock on Sunday morning every server was migrated, every site was tested and Habinteg had signed off. Total business hours lost: zero. From contract award to full handover-to-BAU took three months.

That outcome was the result of meticulous swing-migration planning, paired sessions between engineers and Habinteg's IT team in the run-up, and a 'no surprises' project culture: weekly steering, full visibility and named owners against every identified risk. Even an unrelated issue with a third-party phone system, outside the project scope, was triaged and resolved over the weekend without affecting the timeline.

That is the aim of Cirro's account and service management model: issues are anticipated and resolved before they ever need escalating.

> *"The migration couldn't have gone any better and we're very happy with the service Innovate deliver. There has never been a need to approach Arwel, our account manager from Cirro — something I genuinely can't say about other providers. The fact that we're not talking about it means it's working."*
>
> — **Michelle Miller**, Head of Technology and Data, Habinteg

5 Why Cirro

Habinteg evaluated multiple bids through the public tender. Cirro won — not on price alone, but on fit.

Larger MSPs talked about themselves and their products. Cirro talked about Habinteg — the mission, the risk profile, the business outcomes — and brought a 200-user housing association the same rigour applied to major banks and government departments. Habinteg spoke to existing customers before signing, and the lived experience matched the proposal.

The commercial terms reinforced the fit:

- No upfront migration charges, where most competitors quoted on an hourly basis.
- Predictable quarterly billing.

- Pricing fixed for the five-year term, with no exposure to Microsoft price uplifts.
- Hardware owned by the delivery partner, so the provider is financially and reputationally invested in keeping it running well.

At project closure, three priority service-improvement items were identified and built into a forward roadmap, which Cirro now steers with Habinteg as part of its ongoing strategic advisory role. The work did not end at go-live. It began there.

> *"The support has been pretty much outstanding. Rikki and Joseph instantly spotted an issue with a configuration file and sorted it out. That's quite a quality in IT staff — being approachable enough that people actually want to come to them for support. Even with the most technical IT person on the planet, if no one wants to speak to them, it's not particularly helpful."*
>
> — **Kyle Flintoff**, Interim Senior IT Operations Engineer, Habinteg

6 Business outcomes

Table 2: Challenges, delivery and outcomes

Challenge	What Cirro delivered	Outcome for Habinteg
End-of-life servers in a third-party data centre, with auto-renewal looming	Strategy, public tender and migration to a private Azure Local cloud	Off the legacy contract before deadline; one contract, one bill, one accountable partner
Risk of disruption to a 60-site operation	Single-weekend, end-to-end cutover	Migration invisible to users; zero business downtime
Multi-supplier hosting and backup complicating business continuity	Single-platform IaaS, consolidated monitoring and a 24/7 UK service desk	Simpler incident response; fewer hand-offs; faster time-to-resolve
Lingering exposure following a previous cyber event	Security review, hardened VMs, strengthened configurations, additional tooling and monitoring, next-generation firewall	Hardened, actively monitored environment for board, regulators and tenants
Need for cloud without unpredictable public cloud costs	Cloud platform with pricing fixed for the five-year term	Fully forecastable IT spend; easier multi-year planning
Limited internal capacity for platform operations	Named Cirro account manager, dedicated technical team and ongoing strategic advice	IT team freed to focus on tenants and services, not infrastructure firefighting

7 By the numbers

~50	200+	60	5 yrs	24/7
servers migrated	end users	offices	fixed-price term	UK-based service desk

8 What’s next

Across the five-year term, Habinteg has fixed, forecastable spend, a single accountable partner, and an in-house IT team free to focus on tenants rather than infrastructure.

The three-point service-improvement plan is already in flight, deepening platform automation and adding further resilience, with Cirro aligning the roadmap to Habinteg’s wider strategy. The relationship is structured for the long haul.

FACING A SIMILAR CHALLENGE?

Let’s talk about your infrastructure.

If your organisation is dealing with end-of-life infrastructure, rising security expectations and pressure for predictable IT budgets, Cirro can help — from strategy and procurement through to delivery and ongoing service management.

Book a discovery call with Cirro: www.cirro.dev

[email address] · [phone number]

Cirro Solutions is ISO 27001, 27017 and 27018 certified and a Crown Commercial Service approved supplier.