Scottish Borders Council – case study

Background
Scottish Borders Council (SBC) was created in 1995 to replace the former Borders Regional Council. The Scottish Borders area covers more than 1800 square miles of some of the most scenic countryside in Europe. It comprises the four historic counties of Berwickshire, Roxburghshire, Peeblesshire and Selkirkshire, which contained a number of historic and royal burghs.

SBC is a modern council and has embraced the practical use of technology within its Electronic Services Infrastructure (ESI) to enhance public services. Many services are available online, including Council Tax payments, fault reporting, recruitment, library searches and planning and building standards information.

The Challenge
The Council's IT Security policy has been developed over a period of time to ensure that all public facing IT systems are configured and managed to reflect accepted good security practice and to conform to appropriate regulatory security standards including PCI and connection to Government Systems, such as ISO27001.

The Solution
Assuria Auditor was employed to support the following security and compliance process for all servers within the scope of the Council's EIS infrastructure:-

- Vulnerability Assessment and Server Hardening (i.e. removing or neutralising known vulnerabilities and establishing good security controls);
- Establishing baseline configurations (i.e. creating a 'known, secure state' for each in scope server);
- Automated monitoring for any significant configuration changes, raising alerts where appropriate;
- Automated monitoring of changes to specified critical system files and applications, raising alerts and generating reports where appropriate.

SBC has been a user of Assuria Auditor software for a number of years, and this vulnerability assessment, compliance and change detection solution is a core component of the ESI security infrastructure.

Gordon Rogerson,
IT Security Manager,
Scottish Borders Council.

"It's a very old cliché but Assuria Auditor does just what it says on the tin and it's been here so long now it's just part of what we do.

Although we have a regimented hardening procedure for new server builds, Assuria Auditor easily shows us the bits that we forgot or missed, and in the real world that does happen from time to time. In addition, daily compliance scans quickly and clearly shows any modification to the systems, from missing patches, new or changed users or permissions, changed to service state, right down to who was it that forgot to switch the modem off."