

Command, Control and Communications across West Midlands Fire Service network

Business needs

In 2008 the Fire Service corporate strategy identified areas to improve operational polices and performance that took into account a number of local and central government initiatives. Areas such as New Dimension, Emergency Call Management, Integrated Risk Management as well as elements of the CLG governmental initiatives around "convergence policies" in line with the transition to the planned Regional Control Centres were all considered.

The Fire Service required implementation of a single virtual system, providing a Command, Control and Communications system across the Fire Service network, with main and secondary control centres along with a dedicated training suite. The Fire Service also required the ability to integrate to their existing mobile data solution supporting AVL, status updates, short data messaging and the delivery of incident data to resources. The implementation of a premise level address database based on NLPG was also required.



Project delivery

The solution and approach taken by West Midlands and Capita was designed to allow the Service to rapidly introduce the new system into the control room environment in line with the building of the new FSHQ facility. This met the immediate requirements to deliver enhanced technology, whilst also providing the opportunity to introduce changes to business processes and operational working practices as practical and appropriate.

The solution was based on the supply of our VISION FX Command and Control solution developed to meet the business requirements of the Fire Service in all key areas of operation. One of the award criteria of the Fire Service was the high level of compliance to the requirements of the West Midlands Fire Service using standard software and Open interfaces.

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

Customer profile

- Handles circa 60,000 calls per year which result in excess of 35,000 incidents
- Covers 348 square miles including 3 major cities
- Serving a population in excess of 2.6 million people
- 1,500 Fire Service Personnel
- 92 Fleet Vehicles
- 39 Fire Stations





VISION FX

VISION FX was successfully deployed within a short timescale. It offered the Fire Service a new approach to Command and Control capability which delivered significant operational benefits to West Midlands. These benefits were particularly relevant to the changes and strategies being sought by central and local government during the lead up to the RCC control room project.

Flexible Response Policies

VISION FX supports a more efficient response strategy through the utilisation of advanced mobilising techniques using business rules to define the number and type of resources required to attend. The system will use these business rules and route finding algorithms to select the nearest appropriate resource and make recommendations of which resources should be mobilised.

Attribute Based Mobilising

VISION FX allows the service to define the number of crew, equipment and appliance roles for each incident scenario. This information is highlighted to the operator during the despatching process with warnings raised and logged where the appliances mobilised differ from those recommended by the system.

Resilience

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service were keen to ensure the new system offered a resilient and robust system architecture. The VISION FX servers provide full redundancy and failover features. Each Client connects to each of the application servers requesting data from an available nominated server to provide optimal loading across the servers. Should this nominated server become unavailable the client simply makes future requests to an alternative server.

Automatic Resource Location

Capita supplied the required technologies to offer full integration to info terra including resource location, status updating, short data messaging and delivery of incident details to mobile resources.

