



## Microsoft Business Solutions Customer Solution Case Study

# New solution flows seamlessly at Sutton & East Surrey Water



### Overview

Country: UK

Industry: Utilities

#### Customer Profile

Sutton & East Surrey Water supplies water to 252,000 domestic customers and 18,000 commercial customers.

#### Business Situation

A crucial requirement for Sutton & East Surrey Water was to ensure that their system could comply with stringent regulatory reporting requirements.

#### Solution

Dynamic data reporting now gives management greater control across the business. Streamlined administration has enhanced service delivery, while the system ensures regulatory compliance.

#### Benefits

- Manages over 1000 cost centres
- Time saved processing tasks
- Improved reporting
- Reduced admin costs

"We selected Microsoft Business Solutions Navision because it was extremely capable."

Jenny Hornby, Financial Controller, Sutton & East Surrey Water

Sutton & East Surrey Water plc provides water to both domestic and business customers. Sister companies provide other, related, services. It had been using an old database system that was becoming obsolete; Microsoft® Business Solutions Navision® gave the customer a powerful flexible system that met all the relevant regulatory requirements.



**TVISION**  
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**Microsoft Business Solutions**

## Situation

Sutton & East Surrey Water (SES) can trace its roots to the mid-19th Century, when Victorian engineers first started piping water direct to people's homes. Today it supplies 650,000 customers in 270,000 properties over an area covering 322 square miles of Surrey, Sussex, Kent and London. Alongside its domestic services, the company supplies 1,800 commercial customers. On an average day its 280 staff oversee the supply of 160 megalitres (35 million gallons) of water. It manages nine treatment works, 36 service reservoirs and towers, and 60 pumping stations.

SES was using an old database system that was becoming obsolete. Using the opportunity to upgrade an outdated system, the company had to be watchful that the changes still enabled reporting to be undertaken within the accounting rules dictated by industry regulator OFWAT.

The old database system was clever, but old-fashioned, inflexible and there was no upgrade path. Regulation constraints meant that SES's accounting must follow strict rules. This included the ability to separate regulatory and non-regulatory costs and revenue.

SES wanted to put in place a more reliable and robust accounting system that would offer improvements in the way financial data is managed and used, but which would make few changes to the underlying accounting structure. The aim was to use the project as a streamlining exercise, as well as replacing the existing system.

This was not as simple as it sounds. SES's accounts department has 1,018 cost centres to manage and had to ensure that the software could cope.

SES also has approximately 300 infrastructure and capital projects in progress in any year. These cover such things as water mains and water treatment plants, which have to be converted to fixed assets on the balance sheet and Hornby hoped this tricky conversion could be managed with very little bespoke work.

## Solution

SES spent nine months trying to find the best accounting system to suit their needs. There are few options available to mid-size organisations looking for business systems. Thoroughbred bespoke developments are out of favour and the larger ERP systems that are being wedged into the mid-market can be unnecessarily large, complex and expensive.

Two of the three systems that made it to SES's shortlist were from Microsoft Business Solutions, the third was from SAP. "We liked Microsoft Navision best," say Jenny Hornby, Financial Controller at SES. "And we liked the people at TVision. As they are a smaller company, we thought we would get good service and that is what happened. The implementation was carried out with SES and TVision working as a team."

## Benefits

After deciding on Microsoft Navision, it took just five months for the solution to be designed and implemented. And Hornby credits Microsoft Certified Business Solutions Partner TVision Technology with the relative ease with which the Microsoft Navision system was implemented. And Microsoft Navision Jobs Ledger took on the task of managing the 300 infrastructure and capital projects with ease. "That's why we liked Microsoft Navision, because it was very capable of doing it," says Hornby.

Other aspects of the software pleasantly surprised the accounts department, such as the powerful, yet straightforward reporting.

"That has been a real bonus and more so than we ever thought," explains Hornby. "Now when managers request information we can respond quickly."

Monthly management accounts are now produced in a much shorter time span. The accounts department has saved time and effort through the use of Microsoft® Business Solutions Navision® in its most taxing tasks. SES's last half year-end was completed five days faster than usual and this was performed while Microsoft Navision was still new to the organisation. Hornby expects the year-end accounts to be tied up even more quickly.

Having proved its worth in accounts, the benefits of extending Microsoft Navision are being considered in other parts of the organisation. It has already been chosen to provide an electronic purchasing system for non-stock items, which will help reduce administration costs and also reduce the paper chase.

SES has also installed Microsoft Navision as a replacement for its works management system, improving management reporting still further. In addition, SES's sister company, Sutton & East Surrey Water Services, are also live on the system, tracking Jobs completed by their team of domestic plumbers.

And it may not stop there. The stores department could be the next area to benefit from the standard stock management modules.

What started as a need in accounts has now become a major companywide strategy to unify IT throughout the organisation and to maximise investment in Microsoft Navision and TVision Technology. Richard Thompson, from TVision, says, "We believe in working with clients in partnership, continually

evaluating how best the software can serve the business. That way, systems do not need to be replaced so frequently, they keep pace with any change."

## For More Information

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For more information about TVision Technology products and services, call 01932 242 001 or visit the Web site at: [www.tvisiontech.co.uk](http://www.tvisiontech.co.uk)

For more information about Sutton & East Surrey Water plc products and services, call 01737 772 000 or visit the Web site at: [www.waterplc.com](http://www.waterplc.com)

## Microsoft Business Solutions

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## Software and Services

### ■ Solutions

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