

Sutton & East Surrey Water plc

Sutton & East Surrey Water can trace its roots to the mid-19th Century when Victorian engineers first started piping water direct to people's homes. Today it supplies 630,000 customers in 265,000 properties over an area covering 322 square miles of Surrey, Sussex, Kent and London. 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.

Business Challenge

One thing that often surprises people about Microsoft® Dynamics NAV™-based systems is the relative ease with which they can be implemented. Sutton & East Surrey Water (SES) spent nine months trying to find the best accounting system. After deciding on a Microsoft Dynamics NAV solution it took just five months for it to be designed and implemented.

Jenny Hornby, Financial Controller at SES, says it was the smoothest implementation she has worked on, thanks in part to TVision Technology, the Microsoft Business Solutions partner that assisted in the development and implementation.

There are few options for 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 other, from SAP, was, Hornby says, too big for the task at hand. "We liked the Microsoft Dynamics NAV product best," she says, "And we liked the

people at TVision – we thought we'd get a good service and we did.

"They were very hands-on, you could talk to Richard (Thompson), TVision's MD, easily and get things sorted quickly. And we worked as a team instead of it being soul-less like it can be when working with a bigger company."

The old database system SES had been using was clever, but old-fashioned, inflexible and had been discontinued. Nevertheless an upgrade was not necessarily desirable: the old adage, *if it ain't broke don't fix it*, is especially true for accounting systems in the water industry. Tight regulation by Ofwat, the water regulator, dictates that accounting must follow strict rules, such as the ability to separate regulatory and non-regulatory costs and revenue.

The brief for this project was to put in a more reliable and robust accounting system that would offer improvements in the way financial data is managed and used but which made no changes to the underlying accounts. Hornby says it was largely a streamlining exercise.



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Jenny Hornby, Financial Controller,
Sutton and East Surrey Water (SES)

Yet it was not as simple as it sounds. SES's accounts department has 1,018 cost centres to manage and had to make sure the software could cope with the load. "That's why we liked Microsoft Dynamics NAV the best of all of them because it was very capable of doing it," says Hornby.

SES also has about 300 infrastructure developments in progress in any year, for things like pipes and water treatment works, which have to be converted into fixed assets on the balance sheet. Hornby hoped this tricky conversion could be done with very little bespoke work: simplicity was the watchword. The Microsoft Dynamics NAV Jobs Ledger took the task on easily.

Other aspects of the software pleasantly surprised the accounts department as well, such as its powerful, yet straightforward reporting. "That has been a real bonus and more so than we ever thought," says Hornby. "Now when managers request information we can do it really fast and they are all quite astounded."

Monthly management accounts are also produced more quickly. And the accounts department has saved time and effort through the use of Microsoft Dynamics NAV in its most taxing tasks. SES's last half year-end was done five days quicker than usual and this was performed while Microsoft Dynamics NAV 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, Microsoft Dynamics NAV may be creeping into other parts of the organisation. Microsoft Dynamics NAV has already been chosen to provide an electronic purchasing system for sundries, which will help reduce administration costs. "SES is also using Microsoft Dynamics NAV as a works management system, which has improved management reporting still further."

The Solution

Microsoft Business Solutions Microsoft-NAV modules including:

- Financials
- Inventory
- Resources
- Jobs
- Fixed Assets

The Benefits

- System right size for the job
- Personal touch from supporting Microsoft Business Solutions partner
- Better management reporting
- Easily manages over 1,000 cost centres
- Time saved processing accounting tasks

“ We liked the Microsoft Dynamics NAV product best, and we liked the people at TVision – we thought we'd get good service, and we did. ”

Jenny Hornby, Financial Controller,
Sutton and East Surrey Water (SES)

For more detailed information on how the Sutton and East Surrey Water (SES) project was managed and delivered, or for more information on how TVision can support your own project, please feel free to contact Sales on 01932 242001

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