



## Telent enables East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to adopt new technologies and transform operations

Emergency Service organisations need to harness new ICT services and embrace technology to deliver smarter and safer services to the community. Firefighters and control room staff continue to play immensely important roles in keeping people safe. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) provides protection, prevention and response services for more than 800,000 people. It needed a strategic partner that could modernise and manage its ICT infrastructure to enable its transformation. Headquartered in Lewes and with 24 fire stations and a dedicated training centre, ESFRS covers the city of Brighton and Hove, and the county of East Sussex. .

Having worked together since 2016 and recently signing a three-year contract extension for 2023-2026, Telent has enhanced ESFRS' ICT infrastructure and delivered the expertise to boost the fire service's efficiency and effectiveness. Drawing on its experience in the emergency services sector, Telent has helped reduce costs, and ensured robust governance, service quality and technical innovation for the organisation.

Together, a Target Operating Model was established that mapped out how ESFRS could continue to evolve by exploiting new technologies, enable organisational efficiency and encourage interoperability with other systems and public sector partners. Initially using its Shared Service Model, Telent enabled ESFRS to retain control, collaborative direction and gain access to insights for all of its ICT activity. This involved moving its existing infrastructure - including the TUPE of five of its staff into Telent's team - and creating a catalogue of over 130 different ICT services.

Telent implemented a dedicated virtual infrastructure for ESFRS to deliver a scalable, private cloud computing and storage service. This provided the foundation for the organisation to undergo its technology transformation and expansion. Telent has a unique approach to virtual infrastructure, using best-in-breed technologies from a range of strategic partners across the areas of compute, networking, storage and virtualisation in a cost effective and resilient solution. As part of the evolving IT strategy at ESFRS, Telent will support the future planned migration of key line of business applications from dedicated virtual infrastructure into the Azure cloud.

### Transitioning to new technologies

By using Cisco AnyConnect and WebEx technologies, Telent provides a truly mobile user experience without the need to be tied to a specific location or workplace. This flexible platform allows the organisation to grow and brings improved resilience and availability which proved invaluable

throughout the Covid pandemic. Telent has standardised ESFRS' devices which has led to improved and cost-effective application performance and enhanced system integration.

Telent are working together with ESFRS to create a roadmap to identify the transformation opportunities within existing technologies for example Microsoft 365, as well as minimising any risk to ESFRS. Key elements of the overarching roadmap are supporting ESFRS in the journey of process digitisation and the preparation for its transition to ESN, as well as being prepared for further collaboration opportunities within the public sector and with other blue light partners.

Since the implementation of Telent's managed service, ESFRS increased mobility, performance, availability and resilience of its IT systems and infrastructure. Telent was also able to identify further opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce costs, without putting the organisation's continuity at risk. Telent continues to support ESFRS across a broad range of IT services to ensure that it stays as effective as possible when undertaking its life-saving and crucial work.

### Delivering digital transformation

Telent and its trusted strategic partners continue to support the transformation of key operational systems for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. This includes the delivery of multiple line of business solutions that cover applications for HR, fleet management, asset management, finances, procurement and much more.

A notable area of focus is the automation of paper-based processes relating to site specific risk information, plus business and community safety visits to improve digital workflows in line with its business-specific requirements. All of those systems link together through a modular based application built on one common platform utilising Microsoft's Dynamics 365 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. Whilst other software solutions are available, including commercial off-the-shelf options, it was felt that these options may only achieve some of the required functionality. The decision to build a best-of-breed, configurable solution designed to deliver the business requirements identified at the start of the project, ensured the benefits were fully realised in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

The solution is being implemented as three modules, the first is for site-specific risk information with information available to the crews on their Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) when attending incidents. The two other modules manage conducting fire inspections at business premises and undertaking home safety visits, with information directly entered by firefighters using tablet devices.

### Continuous evolution

Importantly, the Telent team engage in regular performance reviews with ESFRS, sharing and analysing metrics against contracted service level agreements. In addition, a full consultant led review of the contract was conducted in 2021. This involved a deep dive into the contract, senior stakeholder discussions, a financial review to ensure best value as well as an overarching service review to identify potential improvement opportunities. This was crucial in providing ESFRS with audited evidence of Telent's performance, supporting the decision of the Fire Authority to approve the award of the three-year contract extension for 2023 - 2026.

### Emergency Control room transition

As control rooms continue to look to consolidate in the future, Telent supported ESFRS with its move to a shared facility and conducted the safe de-commissioning of its original control room. When organisation's move control rooms, work around wrapping up professional services is undertaken. ESFRS' function was moved from a dedicated control room in Haywards Heath to the joint control room with Surrey and West Sussex Fire Services located in Surrey. The legacy control room needed to be de-commissioned in March 2022 due to the level of sensitive information that it contained. As part of that, a full security check was also undertaken and any issues in the legacy systems were removed. A clean bill of health from an IT security point of view for the building was given before it was returned to its previous use.



## Conclusion

A greater strategic engagement will enable the further maturity of the partnership between ESFRS and Telent. To further support this, Strategic Engagement Workshops are scheduled throughout the remaining term of the contract with the aim to ensure the IT strategy aligns with the operational needs of ESFRS. They will ensure that Telent's relationships with a number of leading future edge technologies and global leaders in the technology market are shared and will use industry experience to bring all of this together as specific innovation ideas for fire and rescue services and the wider blue light community.

Telent has helped transform ESFRS' technology infrastructure and delivered a seven-year fully-managed ICT service. This includes supporting a roadmap to migrate business applications to Microsoft best practices, converting servers from physical to virtual, and building an Enterprise-class virtual infrastructure. As its dedicated partner, Telent has improved the end-user experience, enabled mobility and supported its Headquarters relocation. It now delivers a range of IT services from a defined service catalogue to 850 users across ESFRS, allowing the in-house team to focus on supporting the wider organisation in the delivery of its long-term strategy.

*"After Telent was engaged to undertake the maintenance and support of our technology estate, and after a period of stabilisation, we have seen a significant reduction in IT incidents logged and a pleasing increase in reliability, with Telent continuing to successfully deliver against its SLAs. ESFRS is investing in a major IT infrastructure refresh and new capabilities to support the business needs of our service and Telent continues to provide critical support to ensure we deliver efficiently, effectively and maximise digital and technological opportunities."*

**Dawn Whittaker**

**Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive at ESFRS**

