CIVICA
ideas into action

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service enjoys complete property and asset management through Civica

In 2013, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was formed with the merger of eight former brigades in Scotland. This meant unifying eight different property departments, each with their own IT systems and unique methods of gathering data and issuing instructions.

Following an audit of all properties and assets across the combined estate, the newly formed fire service undertook the successful digital transformation of its processes for planned and reactive property maintenance. Civica Property Management, a cloud-based property and asset management solution for public sector organisations, ensured a quick and seamless transition and provided a simple platform for onward portfolio management. The Fire Service has been able to set new standards in efficiency, financial transparency and performance monitoring by centralising the management of its estate using Civica. Here's how they did it.

Consolidation of public sector estate

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service owns 410 sites with over 1,000 buildings and nearly 100,000 plant assets. Keeping track of this full estate requires accurate data management. However, following the merger, it became evident that data maturity varied considerably from one fire brigade to the next.

Managing the transformation, Brian Rose, Property Asset and Performance Manager at Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, said: "Compiling a base level knowledge of the estate was our first challenge. Some services didn't have full sets of data available, even down to a comprehensive list of the buildings that they owned. Some services used excel spreadsheets, others had their own bespoke systems. We needed to create a master list with consistent fields of information so that we could set our new system up for success.
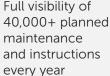
"With so many gaps in intelligence across the estate when we started, this consolidation really brought to life how much a centralised and data-driven system would improve our processes. We knew that this would be hugely valuable in transforming our capabilities to deliver far greater efficiency in our property and asset maintenance."

The new database began with a list of all buildings owned by the merged fire service. Then more detailed information was gathered or created about each site, such as the drawings and layouts, ownership titles or leasing details. Next it needed to include details of all assets and equipment, plus any information about installations and maintenance records where possible. The objective was to build a reliable and complete property and asset inventory.

Key outcomes

Eight property departments merged into one	Full visibility of 40,000+ planned maintenance and instructions every year
Efficiency gains from a centralised system	

Once the data was unified onto a single source of truth, it could be easily uploaded to the Civica system.

"Civica Property Management was the ideal software to bring it all together as one", said Brian Rose. "It's a cloud-based solution, so we didn't need to rely on ICT to carry out the implementation. We could unify our eight different IT systems via a single browser. Once the master list of our property and assets was complete, there was a simple upload onto the system and we were ready to go."

Centralised management for planned and reactive maintenance

While the eight separate fire services were still active, 140 different contractors were being used on a regular basis. This meant a lot of paperwork in issuing instructions and then managing the payments, which all needed to be manually uploaded and logged. However, under this system it was not possible to effectively track status updates from the contractors. Typically, the only formal records would be the initial instruction followed by an invoice once the job had been completed, which could take six months to get into the system. There was no way to gather useful data on maintenance work or the effectiveness of the contractors.

Part of the transformation was to amalgamate these disparate contracts into a single supplier that would be able to service all assets nationwide in a more efficient and cost-effective way.

Civica Property Management has been developed to make API integration with third party suppliers simple. As such, an interface was set up between The Fire Service and its lead contractor. When a maintenance job is raised, it automatically appears on both systems. The contractor then uses its access to provide live status updates on all jobs and projects, as well as input any further recommendations that they spot onsite.

Accurate management information for budget control and performance tracking

"We now get documentation to say that a contractor has arrived on site, what time it was, what was done, the photographs and accompanying notes, and then the job completion documentation. We have detailed information on every single instruction that we raise. This all feeds into accurate management information that we can align with service level agreements. It represents a sea change for us and has been invaluable in simplifying and enhancing our processes. Before, we had no way of knowing whether a contractor was meeting their KPIs or not, other than taking their word for it. The API integration takes care of all of this with just a few clicks."

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service issue an average of 10,000 instructions and an additional 30,000 planned maintenance tasks every year. It's budgets for this work reach in excess of £28m. Jobs can vary from pre-planned safety inspections as part of compliance reporting to minor unplanned maintenance jobs and fixes, or they can be £10m+ large scale estate upgrades and new builds. Everything is now tracked through a single, unified system.

"We now have full visibility of our budget management. For example, we set an allocation every year for reactive works, but if there are more than planned then there is a danger of overspending. If we are seeing a lot of incoming jobs and our allocation disappearing faster than intended, we have plenty of warning that we need to shift resource away from the 'nice to haves' and into the essential work. This is a really helpful feature of the platform that we couldn't live without, given just how many jobs we need to manage at any one time."

Set up for success

Civica Property Management has enabled The Fire Service to hold all property and asset management information in one place. Every single instruction that is raised can be tracked with automatic reporting, which gives the property department essential information to keep improving its performance.

So what's next?

The Fire Service is now looking at new ways to improve its facilities management. "We're exploring how we can integrate more automation and Internet of Things technology into our property maintenance activities. Sending an engineer to the Outer Hebrides every month in winter is still a requirement, and that's a tough gig! I believe we are not too far away from being able to leverage more remote testing and remote fault logs via monitors and sensors to bring even more accuracy and automation into our work."

"Civica Property Management was the ideal software to bring it all together as one."

Brian Rose,
Property Asset and Performance Manager at Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

140

different contractors were being used on a regular basis.

10,000

instructions issued annually on average.

30,000

planned maintenance tasks every year.

410

sites with over 1,000 buildings and nearly 100,000 plant assets.

Find out more about how Civica Property Management could support your organisation: