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Solihull Council

THE CLIENT



Solihull Council is one of seven district councils in the West Midlands.

Excluding teaching staff, it employs around 3,000 people to manage and deliver local government services to over 215,000 residents.

The Council is currently working with both public and private sector partners to achieve identified priorities, including regenerating the Borough, transforming secondary education and further enhancing customer-focused contact services.



Business Needs

As part of a wider refurbishment project running across its estate, Solihull Council created a suite of 65 meeting rooms. These range in size from six to 24-seat spaces, with the Training Room at the Council House configured to serve 55 people with a potential capacity of 100.

The Council had also adopted a hybrid working model to provide employees with the flexibility to work from the office or home. To support this, it recognised that it needed to enhance its meeting rooms technologies to effectively facilitate meetings attended both in person and remotely.



Yealink MVC400



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“The kit we had was no longer fit for purpose, we needed hybrid meeting functionality so our Procurement and IT departments undertook a tendering process” explains Facilities Manager John-Evan Jones.

That process ran through a framework operated by public sector specialist, KCS Procurement. The tender specified a requirement for a standardised meeting room solution to satisfy the varied visual and acoustic challenges across small, medium and large rooms.

It further specified that the solution should support Microsoft Teams, the Council's default video-conferencing tool, and facilitate document sharing among meeting participants.

Ease-of-use was a further priority, with the Council requiring that the technology enable users to start, direct and stop meetings with a single touch.

Unsurprisingly given the size and value of the contract, multiple bids were received through the KCS framework. “Avoira won the tender primarily on the quality of the solution and service offered,” reports John-Evan.



The Solution

Our engineers worked closely with John-Evan to scope the project, both in terms of specifying the most appropriate technologies for each room and planning implementation across the estate over a three-year period.

"I walked the Avoira guys around the various meeting rooms and they made recommendations based upon the tender specifications. It was really us saying we want to do this, come back and tell us how you're going to achieve and manage it, and what the cost is."

Our engineers recommended deployment of Yealink MVC Teams Room systems, all of which incorporate easy-to-use native Microsoft Teams interfaces and enable one-click, real-time content sharing.

For small meeting rooms, our experts specified deployment of [Yealink's MVC400 video-conferencing system](#). This has at its core the all-in-one UVC video bar which incorporates a high-definition AI-powered camera offering auto-framing, speaker tracking and a generous 133o field of view.

Meeting room technologies & configurations

To read about the factors and technologies you should consider when kitting out your small, medium or large meeting rooms with video-conferencing equipment, download our free, independent guide, [Let's Meet](#).

[Click here to read](#)



Yealink MVC640

No fewer than eight micro-electromechanical system (MEMS) microphone arrays, coupled with precision beamforming signal, acoustic echo cancellation and dereverberation technologies, ensure a high quality full duplex experience and more precise voice-pick up.

As with all the MVC systems our engineers deployed, this package also incorporates Yealink's MTouch II touch panel, MCore Mini-PC and supports remote device management, monitoring, configuration, updating and diagnosis via the Yealink Device Management Platform/Cloud Service.

When it came to Solihull's medium meeting rooms, we specified [Yealink's MVC640 Microsoft Teams Rooms system](#).

This video-conferencing bundle features the 4K UVC 84 camera with 12 times optical zoom, coupled with an MSpeech speakerphone incorporating an integrated three microphone matrix.

This audio-visual configuration delivers exceptional meeting experiences, with the camera's auto-framing functionality identifying and appropriately framing attendees and the speakerphone offering AI-driven voice recognition, transcription and Cortana functionality.



The Solution (continued)

Completing our specification line-up, was Yealink's MVC840, a system designed specifically for use in large rooms such as Solihull's Council House.

This offers all the benefits of the smaller systems, plus an impressive six square metre, 360o voice pick-up range courtesy of the VCM84 video-conferencing microphone array. This powerful piece of kit can also be cascaded to further extend audio reach.

At Solihull, these were complemented by VCM38 ceiling microphones to guarantee the full participation of all attendees within the spacious Training Room.

Finally, for full peace of mind, we backed the entire solution with a three-year, fully-managed support contract. This provides not just highly-responsive diagnostic and repair services, but preventative maintenance visits designed to avert component failures.



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The Benefits

Thus far, 24 of the 65 meeting rooms earmarked for upgrading have been completed, with pre-planning and partnership working between Avoira's installation teams and the Council ensuring the smoothest possible implementation.

John-Evan and his colleagues identified the buildings and rooms it wanted to prioritise, starting, obviously enough, with the Council House, together with The Bluebell Centre in Chelmsley Wood.

Those priorities were then put to our engineers so they could map out an installation plan, mindful that meeting rooms would remain in use throughout.

"We said it's business as usual, these meeting rooms are still getting used. So I would ask if, say, we could do rooms 1 and 3 on a Monday, 2 and 4 on Tuesday and so on. Avoira would then let me know if that would work or not."

And work it did with John-Evan reporting that after the first couple of days, the Avoira installation teams were already ahead of schedule and working with him to gain early access to other rooms.

Want to learn more about equitable engagement?

If you'd like to learn more about how to meet the challenges of delivering equitable meeting participation in the era of hybrid working, you can read our guide, [Are You Empowering Equitable Engagement?](#)

[Click here to read](#)



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The praise continues for the quality of the solution provided, not just of audio-visual excellence but ease-of-use. "It's great quality, I'm more than happy," confirms John-Evan. "It's incredibly straightforward. You walk in, the tablet on the wall wakes up, shows you the next three meetings and you just click to join. That's it!"

He adds that the Avoira solution very much supports securing the holy grail of mixed remote and on-site meetings: equitable engagement. "It's light years away from where we were previously. Where we've come from, to where we are now, with Avoira's help, is fantastic."

Summing up his satisfaction, he says: "The best compliment I can give is the fact that in the last couple of weeks I've recommended Avoira to another local council and walked around some external partners, including major local authority. They've all been blown away by what we've got here."