



# DELIVERING DATA DRIVE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

**SPEAKER:** From around the globe, it's TheCUBE with digital coverage of AWS re:Invent Executive Summit 2020, sponsored by Accenture and AWS.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** Welcome everyone to TheCUBE's coverage of Accenture Executive Summit here at AWS re:Invent. I'm your host, Rebecca Knight.

For this segment, we have two guests. First, we have Helen Davis. She is the Sr. Director of Cloud Platform Services, Assistant Director for IT and Digital for the West Midlands Police. Thanks so much for coming on the show, Helen.

**HELEN DAVIS:** Welcome.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** And we also have Matthew Pound. He is Accenture Health and Public Service Associate Director and West Midlands Police Account Lead. Thanks so much for coming on the show, Matthew.

**MATTHEW POUND:** Thank you.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** So we are going to be talking about delivering data-driven insights to the West Midlands Police force. Helen, I want to start with you. Can you tell us a little bit about the West Midlands Police force? How big is the force and also, what were some of the challenges that you were grappling with prior to this initiative?

**HELEN DAVIS:** Yes, certainly. So West Midlands Police is the second largest police force in the UK, outside of the Metropolitan police in London. We have in excess of 11,000 people work at West Midlands Police, serving communities through across the Midlands region. So geographically, we're quite a big area as well as the population density, having that at a high level.

So the reason we sort of embarked on the Data-Driven Insights Platform, which was a huge change for us, was for a number of reasons. Namely, we had a lot of disparate data which was spread across a range of legacy systems that were many, many years old, with some duplication of what was being captured and no single view for officers or support staff.

Some of the access was limited. You had to be in a natural police building on a desktop computer to access it. Other information could only reach offices on the front line through a telephone call back to one of our enabling services where they would do a manual check-up, look at the information and then call the officers back and tell them what they needed to know. So it was a very long, laborious process and not very efficient and we certainly weren't exploiting the data that we had in a very productive way.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** So it sounds like, as you're describing it, an old, clunky system that needed a technological reimagination. So what was the main motivation for making this shift?



**HELEN DAVIS:** It was really about making us more efficient and more effective in how we do business. So, you know, certainly as an IT leader and some of my operation colleagues would recognize the benefits that data analytics could bring in a policing environment, not something that was really done in the UK at the time. You know, we have a lot of data, so we're very data rich in the information that we have, but we needed to turn it into information that was actionable.

So that's where we started looking for technology partners and suppliers to help us and sort of help us really with what's the art of the possible. This hasn't been done before, so what could we do in this space that's appropriate for policing?

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** Helen, I love that idea, what is the art of the possible? Can you tell us a little bit about why you chose AWS?

**HELEN DAVIS:** I think really, you know, as with all things and when we're procuring a partner in the public sector, there are many rules and regulations, quite rightly, as you would expect there to be because we're spending public money, so we have to be very, very careful and it's a long process and we have to be open to public scrutiny.

So we sort of looked at everything, everything that was available as part of that process, but we recognized the benefits that cloud would provide in this space because without moving to a cloud environment, we would literally be replacing something that was legacy with something that was a bit more modern. That's not what we wanted to do. Our ambition was far greater than that.

So I think in terms of AWS really, it was around scalability, interoperability, just things like the disaster recovery service, the fact that we can scale up and down quickly. We call it dialing up and dialing back. It's pay as you go, so it just sort of ticked all the boxes for us and then we went through the full procurement process. Fortunately, it came out on top for us. So we were able to move forward, but it just sort of had everything that we were looking for in that space.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** Matthew, I want to bring you into the conversation a little bit here. How are you working with the West Midlands Police and helping them implement this Cloud First journey?

**MATTHEW POUND:** Yeah, so I guess our journey with West Midlands Police started maybe 5 years ago now. So we've set up a partnership with the force and wanted to operation a way that was very different to a traditional supplier relationship. So through that, the Data-Driven Insights Program is one of many that we've been working with West Midlands on over the last five years. It's how we said already, cloud gave a number of advantages, certainly from big data expected and things that enabled us to be. And from an Accenture perspective, that allowed us to bring in a number of the different teams that we have, say cloud teams, security teams, Interactive from a design perspective, as well as more traditional sense is that people associated with Accenture.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** I mean so much of this about embracing comprehensive change to experiment and innovate and try different things. Matthew, how do you help an entity like West Midlands Police, think differently when there are these ways of doing things that people are used to? How do you help them think about what is the art of the possible as Helen said?

**MATTHEW POUND:** There's a few things for that. What's been critical is trying to co-create solutions together. There's no point in just turning up with what we think is the right answer, trying to collectively work through the issues that the force is seeing, the outcomes they're looking to achieve, rather than simply focusing on a long list of requirements, I think was critical. And then being really open to working together to create the right solution, rather than just trying to pick something off the shelf that maybe doesn't fit the force's requirements in the way that it should do.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** Right, it's not always a one size fits all.



**MATTHEW POUND:** Absolutely not. You know, what is critical is making sure that we're creating something that met the forces needs in terms of the outcomes they're looking to achieve, the financial intellect that were available and how we can deliver those in an iterative, agile way rather than spending years and years working towards an outcome that is out-of-date before you even get there.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** So, Helen, how are things different? What kinds of business functions and processes have been reimagined in light of this change, in this shift?

**HELEN DAVIS:** It's actually unrecognizable now in certain areas of the business as it was before. So just to give you a little bit of context. When we started working with Accenture and AWS in the Data Insights Program, it was very much around providing what was called locally a whizzy tool for our intelligence analysts to interrogate data and look at data, you know, decide whether they could to do anything predictive with it and it was very much through a back office function to sort of tidy things up for us and make us a bit better in that area or a lot better in that area.

And it was rolled out to a number of offices, a small number on the front line and really, it was in line with the mobility strategy that we had where our offices were getting new smartphones for the first time and to do sort of a lot of things on policing apps and things like that to, again, to avoid them having to keep driving back to the police stations, etc. And the pilot was so successful, every officer now has access to this data on their mobile devices.

So it literally went from a handful of people in an office somewhere using it to do sort of clever, whiz, bang, things, to every officer in the force being able to access that level of data at their fingertips literally. So what they were touched, we've done before is if they needed to check an address or check details of an individual, just as one example, they would either have to, in many cases, go back to a police station to look it up themselves on a desktop computer or they would have to make a call back to a centralized function and speak to an operator, relay the questions, either wait for the answer or wait for a call back with the answer when those people are doing the data interrogation manually.

So the biggest change for us is the self-service nature of the data we now have available, so officers can do it themselves on their phone wherever they might be. So the efficiency savings from that point of view are immense. And I think just parallel to that is the quality of our data because we had a lot of data, but just because you've got a lot of data and a lot of information, doesn't mean its big data and it's valuable necessarily.

So, again, it was having the single source of truth, as we call it. So you know that when you are completing those searches and getting the responses back, that it is the most accurate information we hold and also, you're getting it back within minutes as opposed to half an hour, an hour or a drive back to a station. So it's making officers more efficient and it's also making them safer. The more efficient they are, the more time they have to spend out with the public doing what we all should be doing.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** And have you seen that kind of return on investment? Because what you were just describing with all the steps that were needed to be taken and prior to this to verify an address say, and those are precious seconds when someone's life is on the line in the course of every day police work.

**HELEN DAVIS:** Absolutely, yeah, absolutely. It's difficult to put a price on it, it's difficult to quantify, but all the minutes here and there certainly add up to a significant amount of efficiency savings. And we've certainly been able to demonstrate the officers are spending less time at police stations as a result and more time out on the front line. Also, they're safer because they can get information about what may or may not be at an address, what may or may not have occurred in an area before very, very quickly without having to wait.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** Matthew, I want to hear your observations. So working so closely with West Midlands Police, have you noticed anything about changes in its culture, in its operating model, in how police officers interact with one another? Have you seen any changes since this technology change?



**MATTHEW POUND:** I think what's unique about the West Midlands Police is the buy-in for this program. The chief and his exec team and Helen, as the leader from an IT perspective. The entire force has bought into what is a significant change program and that trickles through everyone in the organization. Change is difficult and there's an awful lot of time out there just being pressing to make the technical delivery and the business change and adoption aspects around each of the projects. But you can see the step change that it's making and you adjust that to the organization and where that's putting West Midlands Police as a leader in the technology on policing in the UK and I think broader.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** And this is a question for both of you because, Matthew, as you said, change is difficult and there is always a certain intransigence in workplaces about this is just the way we've always done things and we're used to this and don't try to get us to do anything new here, it works. How do you get the buy-in that you need to do this kind of digital transformation?

**HELEN DAVIS:** I think it would be wrong to say it was easy. We also have to bear in mind that this was one program in a five-year program. So there was a lot of change going on, both internally, some of our back office functions as well as front line offices. So with DGI, in particular, I think the step change occurred when people could see what it could do for them. We had lots of workshops and seminars where we all talked about its big data and it's going to be great and it's data analytics and its transformational and quite rightly, people are very busy doing their day job that not necessarily aren't technologists in the main and weren't particularly interested and quite rightly so, in what we are about dealing with a cloud.

And it was like, yeah, okay, it's one more thing. And when we started to see it on their phones and what teams could do, that's when it started to serve itself and I think that's when we started to see the step change. And if we have any issues now, it's literally our Help Desk is in meltdown because everyone's like, well, we can't manage without this anymore. And I think that speaks for itself.

So it doesn't happen overnight. It's sort of incremental changes and then, that's the step change in attitude. And when they see it working and they see the benefits, they want to use it more and that's how it's become fundamental to our policing by itself really without much selling.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** Matthew, Helen just made a compelling case for how to get buy-in. Have you discovered any other best practices when you are trying to get everyone onboard for this kind of thing?

**MATTHEW POUND:** We've used a lot of the traditional techniques, things around content engagement. We've also used things like 30-day challenge and nudge theory around how can we gradually encourage people to use things. I think there's a point where all of this around how do we just keep it simple and keep it user centric from an NGs perspective? I think DDR's is a great example of where the technology is incredibly complex, the solution itself is extremely large and it's been very difficult to get delivered. But at the heart of it is a very simple frontend for the user to encourage it and take that complexity away from them. I think that's been critical through the whole piece of DDR.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** One final word from Helen. I want to hear where do you go from here? What is the long term vision? I know that this has made productivity savings equivalent to 154 full time officers. What's next?

**HELEN DAVIS:** It think really, it's around exploiting what we've got and I use the phrase quite a lot, dialing up, which drives my technical architects crazy, because it's apparently that simple. But, you know, we've been through significant change in the last five years and we also continue to embed all of those changes into every day operational policing. But what we need to see now is we need to exploit and build on the investments that we've made. In terms of data and cloud specifically, the next step really is about expanding our pool of data and our functions, so that we keep getting better and better at this.



And the more we do, the more data we have, the more refined we can be, the more precise we are with all of our actions. You know, we're always being expected to, again, look after the public purse and do more for less. And I think is certainly and our cloud journey and Cloud First by design, which is where we are now, is helping us to be future proofed. So for us, it's very much an investment. And I see now that we have got it embedded in operational policing. For me, this is a start of our journey, not the end. So it's really exciting to see where we can go from here.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** Exciting times, indeed. Thank you so much, Helen and Matthew, for joining us. I really appreciate it.

**MATTHEW POUND:** Thank you.

**REBECCA KNIGHT:** And you are watching TheCUBE. Stay tuned for more of the CUBE's coverage of the AWS re:Invent Accenture Executive Summit. I'm Rebecca Knight.