



PRISONER ESCORT AND COURT
CUSTODY SERVICES CONTRACT (PECCS)

POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW
(PIR)

DECEMBER 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Services Contract (PECCS) became fully operational on 21 February 2005. This document forms the Post Implementation Review (PIR) for the project and covers a year and a half of the new contract operation. The purpose of the review is to confirm whether the benefits envisaged by the original business case have materialised in practice.

The PECCS Project Initiation Document (PID) set out the following expected benefits for the new arrangements:

- More effective use of resources;
- More appropriate deployment of police and prison officers to the delivery of front line services;
- Less duplication of effort and greater uniformity of service;
- More clarity on delivery and performance with better management information;
- Better and 'joined up' service delivery from a multi-agency project; and
- Delivery of 'best value' using best practice from the prisoner escort service sector.

In summary the Review concludes that the main business benefits identified have been achieved:

- The new arrangement has released about 300 police and 200 prison officers to undertake core duties in addition to delivering efficiencies including in back-room co-ordinating functions; and
- The management information available has improved in terms of accuracy, consistency and quantity. Performance information is now made available on the SPS website.

Further improvements to performance will be monitored and managed, by the SPS, through the ongoing contract management process.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Review

This Post Implementation Review (PIR) concludes the project cycle for the Prisoner Escort and Court Services Contract (PECCS). The purpose of the review is to confirm whether the benefits envisaged by the original business case have materialised during the operation of the contract to date.

The PIR has been undertaken in line with Office of Government Commerce guidance and marks the conclusion of the project process. Service delivery is now fully managed through SPS contract management structures and processes.

In conducting the review the Scottish Prison Service has consulted with relevant partners.

THE PECCS BUSINESS CASE

The Drivers for Change

By 2001 most agencies involved in the court custody and prisoner escort processes were expressing growing dissatisfaction with existing arrangements. The main factors leading to the restructuring of the service delivery mechanism were:

- A growing and shared sense that arrangements were not working as well or as efficiently as they might;
- A belief that the existing arrangements could be significantly improved;
- Growing demands to maximise deployment of police officers to front line services;
- Inconsistent regime delivery in prisons due to increased and variable escort demands diverting prison officers from delivering constructive activities for prisoners;
- Increased awareness around the inefficiencies of deploying police officers and prison officers to roles that did not require their full range of skills or powers;
- Increased dissatisfaction with the duplication of effort, nugatory work and inefficiency of the extant arrangements, aggravated by a lack of coordination between the agencies involved;
- Frustration at arrangements and systems that did not allow for the recording of accurate data on either performance or incidents, making performance improvement difficult; and

- Alternative service provision in England and Wales had shown potential benefits in terms of performance, new working practice and technology. This suggested a mature and experienced market existed to provide a new service.

Background to PECCS

In 2003/2004 there were around 140,000 prisoner escorts across Scotland, About two-thirds of these were undertaken by the eight Scottish police forces and the remainder by the Scottish Prison Service. The process was relatively uncoordinated which resulted in operating inefficiencies for all parties.

Following a multi agency review, in January 2002 a procurement process was launched to engage a single operator for court custody and prisoner escort services.

In November 2003 the SPS signed a contract on behalf of Scottish Ministers with Reliance Secure Task Management Ltd (Reliance) for the provision of prisoner escort and custody services. Implementation commenced in April 2004 and the PECCS contract became fully operational on 21 February 2005.

The contract is available on the SPS website at www.sps.gov.uk and will run until December 2011 (with the option of a three year extension.)

The contract itself covers a range of prisoner transport and security related services which are delivered to a number of agencies, namely:

- SPS;
- Scottish Court Service;
- District Courts (Local Authorities);
- Eight Scottish police forces; and
- The State Hospital and other NHS secure Units.

The Business Benefits

The PECCS Project Initiation Document (PID) summarised the Business Case for the project as being:

'To free up police and prison officers to secure better value for money through a phased implementation of a contracted out prisoner escort and court custody service throughout Scotland.'

In summary the Project set out to deliver this by:

- Realising and maximising the effective use of resources across the range of activities associated with prisoner escorting and court custody requirements within the Scottish Criminal Justice System;

- Providing better value for money by using appropriate staff to conduct court custody and escort work activity. Such staff did not require to be police officers or prison staff;
- Removing the duplication and consequent inefficiency from existing arrangements;
- Providing uniformity and consistencies of service delivery throughout Scotland;
- Obtaining better management information about the delivery of service with a focus on continual improvement;
- 'Joining up' agencies in a way that delivered a complex project and improved multi agency working between key partners; and

Delivering 'Best Value' and making use of the best practice learned from established providers in the prisoner escort service sector.

REVIEW OF BENEFITS REALISED

Value for Money and Effective Use of Resources

The major business benefit envisaged for the project was more efficient service delivery through more effective use of resources.

In line with projections the implementation of the PECCS contract freed up at least 200 police from court duties and an estimated further 100 from escorting duties. In all, around 300 police officers were redeployed to front line duties across Scotland's eight forces. In addition stakeholders report some additional efficiencies in their backroom co-ordinating functions.

Within prisons the number of prison officers released from escort duties was around 200 many of which were given up as efficiency savings or to allow reinvestment for improvements to services.

The main benefit to prisons was the increased stability and consistency of delivery of regimes. In local prisons escort variability had frequently resulted in the restriction of regime activity. The new contract allowed for improved delivery of constructive activity for prisoners.

The Police and SPS further report that they have reduced the costs associated with maintaining the vehicle infrastructure necessary to deliver a high volume prisoner escorts.

Process Improvement and Reducing Inefficiency

Any assessment of the benefits delivered by the PECCS contract is hindered by the lack of detailed, reliable data in relation to 'pre-contractual' service delivery. Much of the evidence of benefit, therefore is from anecdotal reports but these present a pretty positive picture of service delivery and, if not a perfect service, one which is continually improving its level of delivery against a range of performance measures.

The performance data collated by SPS supports this.

The 33 performance measures in the contract set out a minimum standard to be achieved against each one. This standard increases during the life of the contract. RCS have matched or exceeded the required standards in all but a few months. This despite a 15% increase in the volumes of escort transactions, with peaks at times when the volumes have been 40% more than the contract initially envisaged.

Escort volumes have increased in line with the general increase in the prison population, which over the same period, has continued to rise dramatically.

Performance for the year to date stands at around 90% 'on time deliveries' with an average of 15,594 escort movements per month.

So the contract is delivering improvements in performance despite significantly higher transaction volumes.

In addition the delivery of prisoner escort services by a single contractor has improved accountability and removed duplication of effort between agencies. Feedback from partners has confirmed that the introduction of the contract has rationalised the service at a national level. Not only has this resulted in savings, attributable to former backroom personnel but it has clarified reporting lines and promoted an improvement culture.

Better Management Information

The Auditor General's Report of September 2004 commented that there was no accurate pre-tender data available. This is now no longer the case with RCS maintaining databases covering a wide range of information previously unavailable. This means better strategic decision making is possible. The SPS also maintains records in relation to key contract performance data. Performance data is shared with partners at the Multi-Agency Liaison Group and management information in relation to the contract is published on the SPS website for increased transparency.

This includes statistics on RCS performance across 33 performance measures, which includes a Release in Error statistic which was not previously systematically recorded.

Multi Agency Working

The Multi-Agency Liaison Group (MALG) was formed in November 2005 by the SPS. The MALG comprises of representatives of the key stakeholders and provides a multi-agency vehicle for:

- Monitoring performance;
- Joint problem solving;
- Review of incidents; and
- Advising the contractual authority on new requirements.

The PECCS contract has shown that complex multi-agency contracts can be delivered and has promoted consultation and information sharing between all partners, in setting up and in the subsequent management of the contract.

Joint working has been further developed by the development of a multi-agency approach to contract monitoring. The police currently have a secondeed opportunity as part of the Contract Monitoring Team.

Best Value

Since April 2002 there has been a duty of Best Value placed on Accountable Officers. The SPS believes that the PECCS contract reflects the principles of 'best value' both in development and subsequent deployment.

Previous sections have outlined benefits around economy, efficiency and effectiveness and the benefits realised in the delivery of the contract. The tendering process has assured VFM by ensuring that an experienced provider presenting the best service solution at the best price had been selected.

The structure of the contract and the performance management process are also designed to secure continuous improvement on the life of the contract. Improved management information allows for better:

- Alignment of service to business strategy;
- Joint working to ensure continued service satisfaction; and
- More sustainable service with a contract that can adapt to changes in demands from partners.

So the SPS are satisfied that feedback to date suggests that the PECCS Contract reflects many of the principles of a best value solution.

CONCLUSION

In September 2004 the Auditor General stated:

“The SPS set clear objectives for the project based on perceived difficulties with the existing system and consistent with achieving best value for money but it is too early to say whether these objectives have been achieved. It is therefore important that

SPS's post implementation review considers the extent to which the original aims of the project have been achieved and in particular, the success of the new arrangements on releasing police and prison officers to undertake their core duties."

This review concludes that the benefits originally envisaged have been achieved. In particular the delivery of 300 police officers from court and escort work. SPS also mentioned efficiencies equivalent to about 200 prison officers. The review suggests that the level of performance delivered by RCS has consistently improved and that potential exists for even further improvements in service delivery.

Consultations with partner organisations have produced favourable comments in relation to the overarching benefits of the new arrangements and have suggested improvements that will be taken forward as part of ongoing contract management and in conjunction with the ongoing work of the MALG.

Bibliography

Auditor General for Scotland Report (September 2004)

Scottish Prison Service Web Site (www.sps.gov.uk/keydocs)

Post Implementation Review Questionnaire

Comments received from:-

- ACPOS
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
- District Court Service
- Scottish Court Service
- HM Prison Kilmarnock
- HM Prison Perth
- HM Prison Barlinnie
- HM Prison Greenock
- HM Prison Edinburgh
- HM YOI Polmont

Parliamentary Questions

(<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/webapp/wa.search>)

HMCIP Reports

Reports on individual prisons between June 2004 - March 2006

Red Folder correspondence

Multi Agency Liaison Group Minutes