

HM - Prison Service

Improving operations and services

Part of the Home Office, HM Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those referred by the courts



A vital element of the Prison Services' task is the timely and cost effective movement of prisoners to and from courts and between establishments. A special unit, Prison Escort & Custody Services (PECS), is responsible for this operation.

Changing operational requirements

For some time, PECS operations had been outsourced to a number of service providers. This arrangement had successfully released the police and Prison Service from non-core duties, provided a better and more consistent service to the courts and enabled purpose built vehicles to be used for prisoner movements.

These contracts were ending and Prison Service and Criminal Justice stakeholders wanted to improve the structure and operation of the contracts. New features were designed to reflect changes in operational requirements and in the custodial services market. These included a reduction in the number of contract areas, new variable payment mechanisms and a revised performance management framework. Given the scale of the task ahead Tefen Management Consultancy was invited to support the re-tendering project.

“When Tefen joined the PECS Enhancement Project there was an immediate injection of extensive knowledge, experience and enthusiasm. They quickly became an important part of our team-bringing real insight and clear analysis. I was impressed with their dedication and commitment to the work and the fact that once their brief was completed, they left a legacy of transferred knowledge.”

Neil Caves

PECS Enhancement Project Leader

**Project Conducted by ERSKINE
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Market-based insights

The first task was to specify and gather information about the complex logistics features, future operational demands and service needs. These were analysed and fresh ideas developed on how information should be presented to maximise competition and enable a fair comparison of bids. Our market-based insights into the information that bidders would need to develop competitive proposals proved particularly valuable. Our work shaped the operational aspects of the ITT and informed decisions about commercial aspects such as service level targets, incentive regimes and service credit structures.

Quantified tender assessment

In evaluating the tenders, a crucial factor was how bidders' operational proposals could be evaluated in a quantified manner. This particularly applied to the feasibility of proposed manpower and vehicle levels. Timeliness to courts, compliance with prison reception times, ability to respond to overcrowding drafts and the need for emergency transfers of prisoners are all critical requirements. Bidders' proposals needed to be expertly examined to ensure that all operational circumstances would be resourced effectively.

Using the results from focused operational research and our own computerised Modeling tools we created a clearer understanding of the complex resource level and service trade-offs driving operational performance. This understanding was then applied to bid evaluation and the predictive assessment of contractor performance under various volume scenarios.

The suppliers acknowledged that the approach set new standards for tender evaluation. It also enabled submissions to be assessed in critical areas and potential service performance to be quantified.

Our work was influential in the short-listing of companies and set the agenda for subsequent negotiations. Contract award was successfully reached in all areas. Tefen continued to support Prison Service through implementation and post-contract review.

Benefits

- **Service improvement** - successfully delivering the new generation contracts enabled the Prison Service to respond to changing service requirements.
- **Value for money** - rigorous assessment enabled the Prison Service to accurately identify the best value proposals.
- **Operational efficiency** - resource modeling enabled the Prison Service to optimise levels of manpower and equipment to meet operational demands.
- **Reduced risk** - quantified analysis of operational proposals gave the Prison Service greater confidence in the outcome.
- **Business reputation** - an effective tendering process strengthened the Prison Services' reputation for procurement and contract management.