AUDIT SCOTLAND

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Failed i6 project leaves urgent need to deliver police IT requirements

A project to build a national IT system for Police Scotland followed good practice in its early stages but ultimately collapsed due to a damaging loss of trust between those involved and fundamental disagreements about what the programme needed to deliver.

Audit Scotland has found that recommended good practice was followed in the planning and procurement of the i6 programme, which was expected to generate potential efficiency savings of around £200 million over 10 years for Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).

However, the successful contractor, Accenture, underestimated the complexity of the highly ambitious programme and the resources needed to develop it.

Despite 18 months of pre-award discussion, Police Scotland and Accenture disagreed within weeks about whether the proposed system would deliver the contract requirements. This led to a rapid loss of trust which never fully recovered, and recurring disputes about the project's scope.

Police Scotland, the SPA and the Scottish Government strongly challenged Accenture on delays and serious problems with the project but received regular assurances that the system would be delivered.

The programme design meant that fundamental flaws and serious errors only became clear when the system was passed to Police Scotland for testing in August 2015.

Significant public and political scrutiny on the outcomes of police reform also added to a determination of all parties to deliver the system, regardless of growing challenges.

The programme was terminated in July 2016 and the SPA agreed a £24.7 million settlement from Accenture. This refunded the £11.1 million in payments to date, as well as a £13.6 million settlement.

The failure of the i6 programme means that some benefits of police reform have been, at best, delayed. There are also wider implications for the modernisation of Scotland's justice system and delivery of the Scottish Government's Justice Digital Strategy.

Caroline Gardner, Auditor General for Scotland, said: "Modern policing faces financial and operational challenges. Given the role that i6 was to play in police reform, there is an urgent need for a frank assessment of Police Scotland's IT requirements, and how these can be delivered alongside the vision set out in the recent *Policing 2026* draft strategy."

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Notes to editors

1. In June 2013, the Scottish Police Authority awarded a ten-year fixed-price contract of £46.11 million to the technology firm Accenture to develop the i6 IT system for Police Scotland. This national system would replace around 130 IT and paper-based systems used by Scotland's predecessor police forces.

2. The i6 programme used the waterfall method. In this approach, software is developed in distinct phases, each leading to the next phase in a sequence resembling a waterfall. Once a phase is complete, the process moves on to the next phase and there is no turning back. It meant that all of

the design, coding and construction of i6 would be completed before Accenture released it to Police Scotland for testing.

3. In December 2015, Accenture estimated that meeting the requirements of the contract would take an additional two and a half years, with go live being delayed until April 2018, almost four years later than originally planned. In July 2016, the Scottish Police Authority and Accenture agreed to terminate the contract.

4. The contract enabled the SPA to secure a settlement agreement of £24.65 million. This meant that Accenture agreed to refund the £11.09 million that the SPA had paid, and to make an additional payment of £13.56 million.

5. Appendix 2 outlines the timeline of main events during the i6 programme, including key issues raised at the programme board meetings.

6. The Auditor General for Scotland reported on the financial and operational challenges facing the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland in December 2016.

7. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk
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