

**LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY
FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
8TH JUNE 2010**

SUBJECT		NICHE - IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE
REPORT BY	CHIEF CONSTABLE	
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SUMMARY AND PURPOSE OF REPORT		
Summary of Niche implementation to date, current status and planned activity in financial year 2010/11.		
RECOMMENDATION	<p><i>It is recommended that the Committee note:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>completed areas of implementation to date</i> 2) <i>current focus of Niche activity</i> 3) <i>agreement on planned development for financial year 2010/11 and beyond</i> 	

A. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. IMPLEMENTATION

- 1.1 The Niche project has now completed the technical implementation of
- Crime (11th January)
 - Intelligence (11th January)
 - Custody (24th March)
 - Case Prep (24th March)
- 1.2 Within this, data transfer links have been replaced for GENIE2, PNC 2-way and i2 (analyst tool). The project team has also begun work on Property Management processes.
- 1.3 While Crime and Intelligence was introduced as the product of a project covering a number of years, Custody and Case Prep followed in quick succession to this implementation with immensely tight timescales to meet the deadline for NSPIS maintenance renewals.
- 1.4 The achievement of the end of March 2010 deadline for Case Prep and Custody resulted in immediate financial savings of just under £340,000 per annum for expected maintenance costs until the proposed NSPIS Custody and Case Preparation end of life in 2014.

1.5 The significant work in this area has swiftly moved Lincolnshire from being the most recent of the 11 forces to implement Niche into a National lead in areas such as the PNC two-way interface work and migration from the NSPIS programme.

2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 Learning from other forces had indicated that not only would the introduction of Niche involve a change of software, it would force amended business processes. A records management system, such as Niche, now links different business areas as legacy stand-alone technical systems are replaced. Feedback from Lincolnshire users since go live indicates that this is now apparent, particularly within Custody areas.

2.2 Technical implementation is not the only factor within issues experienced since go-live, although the intensive delivery has impacted. Change of working practice has introduced workload into some areas, reduced it in others but overall actually improves service delivery. Realising these improvements will now take a period of embedding and cultural change following the technical implementation. The joined-up availability of the same data within Niche highlights any local practice imbalance and is unforgiving in showing the problems of reusing data in more than one area rather than viewing disparate data in separate systems.

2.3 To identify and resolve issues, significant engagement is being undertaken by

- Senior Officers - through PRIDE Action Hours
- Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commanders and Heads of Departments - through requests for experiential evidence of any operational issues for project team action and response

and

- Project Team - through responses to issues raised by previously mentioned activity, newsletters, intranet, PoTube, training updates and face to face support teams out on BCU working with Niche practitioners.

2.4 The Niche Programme Board have taken the decision to enter a short period of consolidation to support users and prioritise the enhancements that users need within existing modules. Issues are particularly apparent in the Custody business areas with much of the follow-on work identified within the implementation phase now becoming current requirement.

2.5 Work within the project is focussed on

- Back Record Conversion and improved performance information
- Replacing automated data transfer links for LIVESCAN (fingerprinting), Video Witness and NMIS
- Reducing the admin for managing Voluntary Attendees (part of national work)
- Improving Custody Whiteboard facilities
- Updating the Niche gazetteer reference
- Implementing electronic crime reports
- Supporting end users (Helpdesk service on BCU as well as by telephone at HQ, extending hours for wider support)
- Revisiting training requirements
- Mobilising Niche onto BlackBerry
- Additional communications to make sure all updates are broadcast on BCU
- Developing the Property module for release

- 2.6 Our early experiences have proven that the technical implementation is secondary to the development of our people, processes and their understanding of the linked areas of the record management system. The Niche system is a Commercial Off-The-Shelf product and we are required to adapt some process to it, but the software is written for the Police and so guides us through our own objectives for improvement.
- 2.7 A great number of the benefits to be realised from Niche will be gained by taking this time to consolidate use as well as improving the user experience. To support benefits realisation, the Niche team are undertaking a great amount of work on behalf of NPIA to document and review the effects of Niche implementation, particularly as their pathfinder for migrating Case Prep and Custody from NSPIS to Niche. These findings will also be presented to other forces in a conference hosted by Lincolnshire later this year to detail our experiences to maximise shared learning.
- 2.8 During this period of consolidation there is a significant challenge on continuing to report performance data. Currently, information is being drawn from Niche as well as historic databases for Crime. This has had an impact on timeliness of data provision and actual figures. While some difficulties will be resolved by the project team adding historic crime data into Niche, this improvement work is also supported by the Criminal Justice Information Unit (CJIU) and investigating officers to resolve. Issues particularly impacted upon sanction detections but improvements have been made since go-live and further positive steps are expected to return the level of performance reporting to that expected by the organisation and partners.

3. DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 While the work outlined above covers the immediate weeks/months ahead, the programme has also been looking at further improvements to be included within activities from September onwards.
- 3.2 Areas for improvement such as linking to Command and Control are covered by existing licensing but will incur some development costs forecast and accounted for within the existing Niche budgets for 10/11.
- 3.3 Further operational areas will also be considered for migration into Niche such as Stop and Search, management of collisions to bring us in line with other Niche forces prior to CRASH and warrants management during the current financial year.
- 3.4 The ongoing programme of business development is to be governed by the Niche Programme Board. In addition, there may be some processes that do not currently have a technical management option that may benefit from the use of Niche. It is envisaged that Niche will become the spinal infrastructure for the organisation providing opportunity for convergence of both technology and working practice.
- 3.5 A cycle of assessment, implementation, communication and embedding will now continue. Assessing our needs and the impact of change at each point, implementing change within Niche, communicating this with staff as well as other user/partners and fully embedding each area for maximum benefit.

- 3.6 Niche RMS has become a clear enabler for transforming the way in which we carry out Police business. By linking this with the way in which we access information from it in the stations, offices and out on the street, Lincolnshire are placing themselves on a springboard to achieve efficiencies for accountability, Property, Back Office and ICT as well as improving local incentives and empowerment.
- 3.7 Work is now ongoing to not only fully develop and consolidate the use of Niche but also strengthen the links between other projects in the Major Development Programme and national agenda such as Reducing Bureaucracy and Modernising Government processes.

B. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All expected spend to be covered within existing Niche project budgets.

C. LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

None

D. PERSONNEL, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

(including any impact or issues relating to Children and Young People under the Every Child Matters (ECM) framework.)

None

E. RISK MANAGEMENT

Niche implementation and development risk management forms part of the PRINCE2 methodology, reporting to DCC Neil Rhodes.

F. REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

Niche development is managed under PRINCE2 Project Management governance. The project manager reports to DCC Neil Rhodes, Executive of the Project Board.

G. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Date	Description	File
	None	