Project Expiry

Case Study: British Transport Police

May 2022

Vercity

Summary

Commencing in 1999, the British Transport Police PFI Project provided accommodation across 7 sites. Having supported the delivery of police services across London for 23 years the project reached contract expiry and handback in March 2022.

Understanding and then delivering the contractual expiry process and reverting the facilities to the control of separate entities (public and private) needed all project stakeholders to work together.

Expiry Statistics

7 Locations - Five standalone Police Stations (two built as part of the project) and two facilities within Underground stations.

3 Scenarios - several properties revert to public sector, one property sold to public sector and one property reverts to private landlord.

1.5GB Data & 23 Boxes of Documents - not only O&M manuals, Asset Registers and Maintenance Records but other documents such as TV Licenses.

7 Services - maintenance and lifecycle, provisions of FF&E, external grounds, helpdesk, cleaning, general office and Health, Safety and Environmental service.

4 Years - Project Company planning for expiry and handback began in 2018.

Vercity's Involvement

Vercity was the provider of management services to the PFI Project Company and was a key part of the expiry process. To ensure that the business as usual of the PFI Project, supporting the police in their activities, was not disrupted, resource had to be tasked to each of the four key workstreams identified.

Key Workstreams

1. Ensuring Asset Condition
2. Information and Documentation
3. User Communications
4. Property Transaction

Expiry planning commenced in 2018 with a workshop and briefing to review the process and engage with legal advisors to clarify the obligations. That was followed with coordination and collaboration with other project stakeholders to establish and deliver the process for asset and documentation handback. Staff transfers were managed as a separate workstream by the FM provider.

Ensuring Asset Condition

The contract set out the requirements at expiry, which included the requirement to assess the future maintenance of the assets being handed back. There was therefore a focus not only on ensuring that all assets complied with the statutory and contractual requirements up to the expiry date, but that the assets would meet the future requirements.

Vercity technical specialists were engaged to validate asset condition and report their findings. Where works were identified they then supported the contractor in assessing and delivering the required works. Having this key workstream resourced appropriately was important and by helping the contractor find solutions rather than just raising issues continued the positive collaboration that underpinned the whole expiry process.

Information and Documentation

Plan, Plan, Plan

Managing the process and having a plan that all parties signed up to was an important success factor. A document sign off protocol was agreed and an action tracker put in place to ensure all stakeholders had a single reference point for the activity around the expiry process.

Implementing this required time and commitment from all parties but having a clear plan for managing the process itself was invaluable and ensured everyone know what was happening.

Document Handover

Document transfers to London Underground and to the private landlord totalled 1.5 gigabytes of soft copy documents and 23 archive boxes of hard copy documents.

Without a concerted effort to digitise and collate documents in the final years the split would have been very different, but the work required to get to that point should not be underestimated.

Incoming Contractor Mobilisation

The incoming contractor needed a lot of information and in the months immediately prior to the practical handover regular review meetings were held with an excel document updated at each meeting on the collated information and target dates for handover of further required information. Two key decisions helped this process to run smoothly:

i) Confirming that aside from HR matters the Authority client would be the key link with the incoming contractor, filtering the requests for information and managing the process

ii) Tracking the information provided so that all parties knew what had already been provided and what remained outstanding.

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User Communications

Communications to end users, not just the Authority client, was a key activity stream. This was especially so in the final months of the contract. Agreeing a clear communications plan early and, with the benefit of hindsight, an FAQ reference document, would help to keep end users informed. Even with these there will be questions from users and other parties. To ensure enquires can be addressed promptly and professionally one of the project parties needs to be designated as point of contact and put the capacity and capability in place to respond.

Property Transaction

One of the sites was an asset of the PFI Project Company but it was agreed to sell to London Underground on expiry of the project.

As a distinct workstream the negotiations and transaction were handled by a separate team acting for the Project Company, ensuring that the core team could focus on preparation and handover of the assets and documentation.

Key Learnings

1	Start early
2	Get the specialists involved – legal, commercial and asset
3	Put a plan in place and review it regularly
4	Develop a communications plan and ensure capacity to deliver it
5	Don't underestimate it!

Summary

Having the right people doing the right things on the key workstreams was critical to making the handback a success:

- Legal advice to ensure the process is understood
- Asset specialists to ensure condition is met
- Commercial advisors to manage property aspects and transaction

Having this support in place meant that the operations team could focus on day-to-day delivery while coordinating the overall expiry process.

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