



## **NSPIS Case and Custody – Pursuing the benefits**

**The experience of one Police Force – Cambridgeshire**

**Stephen Cavender talks to Supt Julian Eales**

*What was Cambridgeshire Constabulary seeking to do when it engaged **sigma**?*

We were in the process of adopting two computer applications from NSPIS<sup>®</sup>, the National Strategy for Police Information Systems. These will support our custody and case preparation processes and will replace our existing linked systems. The main drives for doing this are to support national criminal justice developments and to align the IT facilities for the three forces (Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk) involved in the Three Counties Custody Project. In addition, PITO (Police IT Organisation) is encouraging forces to adopt these systems sooner rather than later. There are some disadvantages to replacing our existing systems, but we see this as a small snake to go down now in pursuit of a big ladder later.

*What led you to choose **sigma**?*

We needed to implement a sound process for realising the benefits we expected, but we didn't have the capacity to do this with current internal resources. We also wanted an independent, external view, so we were seeking someone with a good pedigree and specialist expertise in the business benefits arena. We had previous experience of sigma so they were chosen.

*What has your experience been?*

Stakeholders have been involved in workshops to agree the objectives of the change and the benefits we expect to realise. We then did more detailed work with the consultant, using the output from the workshops, drawing up charts that link the changes with the benefits and the objectives. This helped to refine the output for inclusion in the Benefits Realisation Plan. We wanted a simple plan to ease communication. We are about to move on to collecting the measures for each benefit. I would describe the experience as enjoyable but demanding. It's a challenging, complex area of work, but the approach has clarified where we are going, what we need to do and why we are doing it. We looked beyond what PITO asked us to do, which made the task harder but gives a better outcome, rather than just counting what we were told to. The methodology has been an invaluable aid for understanding and managing a complex situation.

*What has Cambridgeshire gained from the work?*

It's early days yet, but I think the workshop attendees have gained insight into what changes are happening and why; in particular the delegate from the court service says she has gained a huge amount. The process has helped us to understand the bigger

picture and, speaking personally, I think it would be helpful to apply the approach at higher levels such as to the whole force and to the strategic work on Three Counties Custody.

*What problems have arisen?*

None really. It would have been easier to keep the work to a minimum, but investing the extra effort has exposed other challenges and we need to keep it going.