

AFC WIMBLEDON TICKETING POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW (PIR) FINDINGS / RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 Approach

A brief PIR on how the new Secutix ticketing platform adopted by AFC Wimbledon (AFCW) was carried out, as per the Terms of Reference sent to Chair of Dons Trust on 10/12/21. The aim of the review was, for the immediate future, to devise recommendations to improve:

- the fans experience - site ease of use, look and feel
- the efficiency of the second round of season ticket distribution
- opportunities for AFCW to increase revenue generation (e.g. reallocation of unused seats).

Some lessons also need to be learnt to improve delivery of future IT projects within the Club.

Below is a table of documents requested for the PIR. Additional documents were also reviewed, including those provided following a discussion of the interim report with the AFCW Chief Executive.

DOCUMENT	RECEIVED	OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS
IT Strategy	Yes	AFC Wimbledon Technology Strategy RFP 1.0 23.03.2018. <i>High level IT infrastructure requirements</i>
CRM / ticketing Strategy	Yes	Marketing, Ticketing and CRM strategy 19.03.2021. <i>High level requirements</i>
AFCW Requirements of Secutix	No	AFCWimbledon_Proposal_Secutix_v2. Mar 20 <i>Sales literature and high level requirements No details of bespoke AFCW tariff structures</i>
Due Diligence carried out on vendor	Yes	Secutix - Brentford feedback (25.03.20). <i>Carried out via phone call post decision to proceed with Secutix AFC Wimbledon Commercials email of 20.03.20)</i>
Requirements Document	No	
Specification Documents	No	
Test Plan and results	No	
Staff Training Plan	No	Training dates training provided - email 09.03.21. <i>No detail of contents of training, or attendance</i>
Project Governance (monitoring, reporting, change mgmt., risk mgmt. & sign-off)	No	High-level one-pager 'ACFW Season Tickets Plan.xls.' <i>No information on how Secutix system was implemented</i>
Process for tracking and reporting bug fixes for Secutix	No	<i>List of Issues / Questions (email 27.01.22) No formalised log which can be managed, tracked and reported upon</i>
Any related to the tendering process to include: market research and negotiation	No	
Contract and Performance Management arrangements	Yes	Secutix 360 Template Agreement AFCW 15th April 2020. <i>A standard contract</i>
Integrated Access Control Proposal	Yes	Technical and Commercial Proposal for Integrated Access Control System at AFC Wimbledon (v1.1, 01.05.2020). <i>Sales document, with no specifics about how AFCW specific requirements are to be implemented</i>
Season ticket fulfilment	Yes	Details relating to the late delivery of the ST cards (email, 02.02.21)
Ticketing Report 18.08.21	Yes	Assessment presented to AFCW Board meeting

Due to time constraints, it was not feasible to interview all at the club or DTB who were involved in the implementation of the new ticketing system. Nor was it possible to interview people who have since left the club. However, the team managed to discuss and validate a draft report with the previous CEO and key club employees from a variety of departments. The findings and recommendations below are based on available documentation, the experience and insight of the review team and some validation and inputs from the above.

2.0 Background to, and basis of, recommendations

Recommendations have been made based on:

- reviewing the documents and selected emails received
- meetings with key club staff
- using the system as fans and the types of challenges we identified
- assumptions and insights about how the implementation and deployment was carried out and
- the experience and insights of the review team from working on similar projects over many years.

We also acknowledge, and are sensitive to, the considerable pressure on the Trust and Club during the past 2-3 years to complete the stadium build and set up our home. In addition, there were constraints on the overall budget, and allocation of it to various activities. The unpredictability and volatility of COVID restrictions increased pressures greatly and affected the availability of resources within the club and from suppliers.

Delivering a single IT project in this environment would have been challenging. To manage several projects and integrating hardware and multiple software solutions made this even more so. To have the stadium, and its systems up and running in such a short time has been a major achievement. All club employees, volunteers and Trust members can be rightly immensely proud of this.

The recommendations below are focussed on how to improve this initial go live and help mature the club's ability to deliver IT services. It is also to enhance the fans experience and generate more revenue. Recommendations in **bold** are particularly important for the immediate future.

3.0 Key findings and recommendations

- 1) The full requirements of the club, relating to the ticketing system, were not documented before the tendering process. This meant that an off the shelf solution was, by default, purchased without consideration to any requirements specific to AFCW. A key omission was the multiple tariff structures, tariffs and discounts which were added later (see below).
- 2) Tendering for the ticketing platform was unstructured, in the absence of any club wide Procurement Policy, and Secutix was chosen on the basis of delivery in other clubs. Also, the amount of due diligence and assessing the experience of other customers was not fully carried out. Secutix was seen as "the only player in town." The experience of another club, Brentford FC, was only requested after a decision to go with Secutix was made - this is very unusual.
- 3) There is no evidence to show how subsequent AFCW specific requirements were captured and formally shared with Secutix. The complexity of how to handle resales, Hospitality, Season Tickets, Debenture, Dons Trust, Dons Trust+, Stadium Card Friends, group bookings, multiple tariffs and discounts clearly emerged later. These were implemented in haste, with insufficient requirements, skilled resource and testing. Best practice is to initially implement the "off the shelf" system, integrate with other systems, iron out any difficulties, obtain customer feedback and then consider enhancements. It is recommended that this approach is used for future IT implementations.

4) **There is no evidence of a detailed plan to test the Secutix implementation before going live. This would typically involve developing the test strategy, user scenarios, approach, resources, expected results and actual results. Testing was ad hoc, unstructured and informal. This meant the system went live with bugs and errors. Future testing would benefit from more formality and transparency.**

5) **It is unclear how a decision to formally go live was made, and on what basis. Standard practice is for test results and known bugs (with release times) to be part of a formal go / no go decision made by senior executives in a transparent auditable way. Board minutes have not been provided about this decision and it is likely that the decision was made quickly, due to significant time pressures and without structure.**

6) **Whilst this may be held by Secutix, there is no evidence of a formal log of bugs, fixes and enhancements. These usually have priority and fix times (or releases) identified. This needs to be developed and tightly managed moving forwards, with a formal go/no go decision point for the next season ticketing round.**

7) **There is evidence, based on the review teams personal experiences, that testing was carried out, and changes made, to a live system. This goes against all basic practice with IT implementations. More formality is needed to ensure that systems are not compromised or jeopardised by making changes to a live system. We recommend tight control, including formal releases is applied for future changes to the Secutix system.**

8) **It will be important to ensure that suitable resources (skilled and experienced in IT implementations) are fully utilised within AFCW. Also that the subject matter experts, the ticketing team, are involved, with the team having clear roles and responsibilities. This did not happen for the initial implementation, which meant that decisions were made without full inputs.**

This is to ensure the changes required for the next season ticket round (and others), is smoother than the past one. This means that changes are thoroughly tested, results documented and formal approvals obtained before go live.

9) **The ongoing contract and relationship management with Secutix needs to be more managed, again with suitable resources. A single accountable person within the club should manage the relationship, and ensure communication and feedback is formally managed and logged.**

10) **Whilst some dates for when staff system training have been provided, there is no visibility on what they were trained on, or how effective it was. Feedback from the ticketing team is that it was not comprehensive enough. It is recommended that another round of training in the enhanced system is carried out. Also, to make more people in the club skilled enough to handle fan enquiries. Consider allowing Supporter Liaison Officers to obtain feedback from fans on useability and what new things they would like to see in the system.**

11) **There is insufficient documentation is available for staff (either in house or outsourced) to support queries. Recommendation is to review and for Secutix to provide simplified user guides to key fan facing staff.**

12) **There was a major lack of formal governance during the implementation - clear deliverables, a detailed project plan, status reporting, go/no go decisions, costs against budget etc,. The system was implemented very "informally" with few key people seemingly making decisions. **Looking ahead, more formal governance and reporting is recommended for future changes to the Secutix and other IT implementations.****

It is unclear if the governance of the project had appropriate levels of involvement from club, board(s) and Dons Trust to ensure appropriate control of budgets and risks for the Secutix implementation. Looking forwards, a closer more integrated working would be helpful.

13) There was no evidence of a quality plan, to identify if the live Secutix was a quality implementation or not. Such plans, in the future, will help other club improve the efficiency, cost effectiveness and useability of changes to Secutix and other future implementations.

14) It is unclear if the Secutix “Business Consultant” specified in the contract, has been used to assess the system. For example, its functionality, to optimise the configuration, data, new improvements, ability to send emails and use the system to increase revenues to the club. **It is recommended that this skill is used to review the system as it currently is implemented in AFCW.**

15) **It is clear that the in-house resource overseeing the implementation did not have the necessary technical or project skills to implement such a mission critical revenue generating system. This was a key weakness and looking forward, using in house IT expertise, or hiring someone with necessary experience will be key.**

16) This skilled and experienced resource would also be allocated to manage the relationship with Secutix, on a day to day basis, to make sure fixes and tweaks are made and that the club gains maximum value from the Customer Success Manager offered by Secutix within the Proposal.

The set up and effectiveness of the support for fulfilment of season tickets should be thoroughly reviewed in good time before it is needed for the 22/23 season. This is to ensure that the required performance and responsiveness is available to AFC Wimbledon.

17) **The Integrated Access Control Proposal, which integrates the Secutix and turnstiles was a scoping document, consisting primarily of sales materials. There is little information on how the systems would be successfully integrated, where master data of fans resides, capacity and the number of hand scanners necessary as a contingency, should the main turnstiles fail. It is strongly recommended that the integration of these systems, and indeed all of the systems implemented is thoroughly reviewed to ensure they are working effectively together. This should be by suitably skilled and resourced resources.**

It has been observed that there are still specific issues with the interface between the Secutix ticketing app and the gate entry systems. Team members have experienced that tickets bought for friends/family regularly fail at the gate. This is a significant risk, both in terms of stadium security and potential revenue loss. This needs to be reviewed as part of an overall detailed technical review.

4.0 Longer term recommendations

It is advised that AFCW documents a set of business requirements (if not already in existence) and map out the core processes required as part of the ticketing arrangements offered by the club.

If available, it would be useful to see the ‘end-to-end architectural diagram’ of the whole new integrated solution (i.e. access control, ticketing solution, payment mgmt. and any other back-end systems) and how data is flowing between systems. Again, we need to understand where the master data about fans and hospitality is stored and maintained.

The club has another thorough data cleanse from various systems to make sure information in Secutix is up to date and accurate. E.g. from ticket sales, shop sales, other databases or spreadsheets. It is important to have a single source of customer data, rather than potentially being in two (e.g. CRM) systems or more.

It is recommended that a review of system integration is carried out across all the current key IT systems to assess if it has been optimised to generate the most revenue. Examples are between Secutix, the CRM, HID, shop tills and other systems

For future projects of this scale, establish project board to ensure controlled delivery and risk management, with involvement from CEO, other Board member(s), Supporter Liaison Officer(s) and the supplier, with Project Assurance function provided by (volunteer) specialists.