

Association of Consultant Architects Annual Award 2013: PRACTITIONER AWARD for Innovation in Partnering using PPC2000 & TPC2005

Maximum 250 Word Summary – Why does this application deserve to win this award in 2013

The Sector has struggled for a number of years to deliver high quality, cost effective repairs services to the dispersed stock owned or managed by some of the larger RSLs. A number of different approaches have been looked at, including Direct Labour Organisations, Insourcing arrangements, and Client led management of a huge number of small local subcontractors. Also, most of the large national social housing repairs contractors have had opportunities to deliver contracts of this nature through traditional or partnering relationships.

There has always been a tacit acceptance from RSLs and Contractors alike that whilst certain targets could be achieved on these types of contract, the same levels of customer service, efficiency, innovation, and added value as expected on a localised town or city contract would never be realised.

Moat has worked tirelessly over the past 4 years to break this status quo. Through an initial 18 month interim repairs contract, followed by an OJEU tendered 10 year term, supported by Trowers & Hamlins, and operated under the TPC2005 form of contract, Moat have made huge strides with their repairs partner Mears to create a repairs service for their residents that is genuinely sector leading, with performance statistics to support this.

The flexible nature of the TPC2005 contract has ensured that the drive and innovation within the client and contractor teams has never been stunted and has contributed greatly to exceptional repairs service that the partnership delivers today.

1000 - 2000 Word Submission, drawn from recent/current innovative research or experience of partnering

Moat and Mears have operated under a TPC2005 contract through both the interim and current 10 year partnering contract. The clarity and flexibility offered by the contract form has resulted in exceptional levels of service delivery and partnership working, which has delivered a number of genuinely ground breaking innovations.

Moat manages more than 20,000 homes spread across the whole of the South East of England (from Welwyn Garden City in the North, to Brighton in the South and from Sutton in the West to Hastings in the East) with repairing responsibility for approximately 10,500. On any given day, with the nature of the traffic across Moat's area, it can take upwards of 5 hours to drive across the stock. This has posed a problem to the partnership that is common to many of the large RSLs whereby it becomes difficult to deliver a high quality, consistent, and yet personalised service to its residents.

Moat and Mears have used the strength of their partnering relationship, which has grown over the past 4 years as a result of the strength of the TPC2005 form of contract and the involvement of Trowers & Hamblins, to develop an innovative, holistic model to deliver the service that its residents want.

This began through the 18 month interim contract that commenced in October 2009. Mears was brought in through an OJEU compliant mini tender to replace a failing contractor to deliver an 18 month contract to allow Moat time to procure a new 10 year term. The objective for the 18 month contract was purely to turn performance around. Moat's Property Services team worked extremely closely with the Mears team (that mobilised the new contract in just 4 weeks) to take the previously failing service which had more than 1,000 overdue jobs to a position whereby only a handful of jobs were ever overdue at any one time, and performance was sound. This had an immediate impact with the residents who suddenly had confidence in a service that had previously, and consistently, let them down.

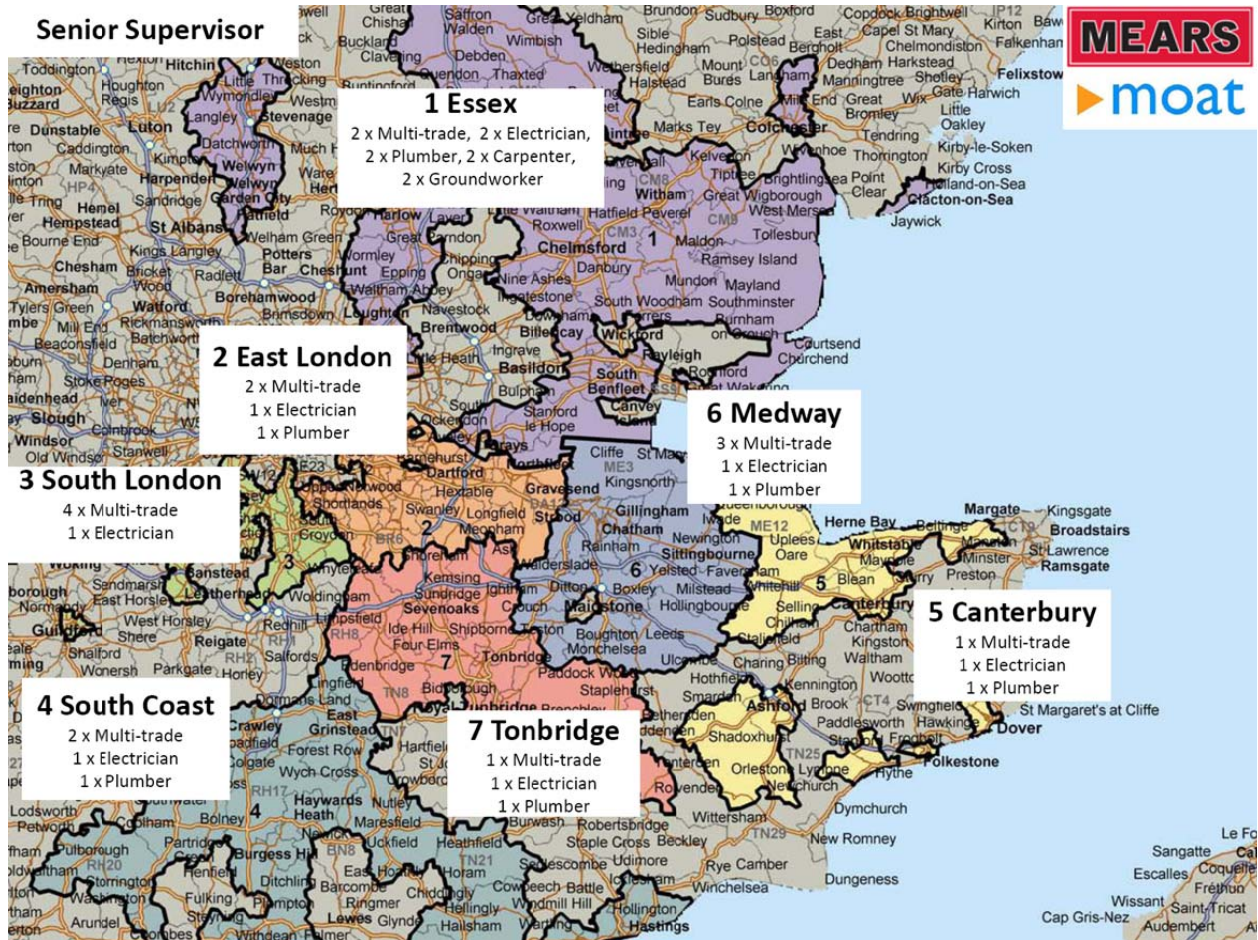
The quality of the service at this time was comparable with any large RSL with geographically spread stock, but Moat was not prepared to stop there. Considerable time and effort was invested into the re-procurement process, with the support of Trowers & Hamblins, and it was made clear to all tendering contractors that the only acceptable performance on the new contract was upper quartile, and sector leading.

Through the tender period in 2010, which included considerable time invested in a competitive dialogue process, Mears began developing a new approach to service delivery. It was this approach that Moat bought into and the partnership worked together to develop through the mobilisation period to bring this to life.

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This began with an analysis of every SOR code carried out during the interim contract by postcode and a number of days were spent by Moat's Property Services Team and the Mears team to allocate teams of operatives to specific areas and properties to deliver the service through mini teams of multi-skilled and directly employed operatives. The defining moment came when the decision was taken to employ a working supervisor to head up each of these teams, with complete autonomy in terms of people management, complaint resolution, and cost control. Seven of these positions were created to head up the mini teams (of between 4 and 10 operatives) with the clear objective of delivering outstanding services to the customers in the homes that they had responsibility for. In simple terms they were completely empowered to run their teams as small local businesses but were given the support of the experience and back office functions of Moat's property services team and the centrally based Mears management and administrative team.

Each team was setup with a local base in either a Mears or Moat office in the centre of their patch which gave them access to the partnerships interfaced IT systems, meeting rooms for regular toolbox talks, and material supply and waste solutions. The reduction in travel time and fuel costs has been significant offering considerable benefits in terms of sustainability.



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Of the seven newly appointed working supervisors, 6 of these positions were filled through internal promotion. This theme has continued with the roles of Repairs Manager, Voids Manager, Customer Care Manager, and Partnership Manager also benefiting from significant training and development. The level of buy in and commitment that this has engendered has been significant.



Mears employ 2 trade apprentices and working on this contract has given them significant exposure to this ground breaking service delivery model. Each has spent a significant amount of time with not

only the operatives, to develop their technical skills, but also with the working supervisors to gain an understanding of the importance of people management, problem solving and customer care.

The 2 central teams are based within Moat's head office in Dartford. The operational model takes co-location to the next level by utilising it as a tool out in the field as well as for central functions. The sharing of the partnerships office resources in the field is replicated by co-location of the 2 management and administrative and call taking teams at Moat's Head Office in Dartford.

The new approach has resulted in outstanding levels of performance being achieved – see this year's kpis below:

Moat / Mears Partnership KPIs - 2013 / 2014														
ook Reference														
'Right First Time'														
	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Cumulative	Target
Satisfaction Survey Result	94.38%	92.61%	96.10%	95.19%	95.58%								94.77%	95.00%
Customer Satisfaction														
	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Cumulative	Target
Satisfaction Survey Result	98.31%	97.80%	95.05%	99.36%	98.73%								97.85%	90%
Response to Complaints														
	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Cumulative	Target
Responded to within target	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%								100.00%	100%
Number of live complaints	2	5	0	0	2								2	>10

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One of Moat's strengths is that it has a very clear strategic vision that is well communicated and bought into by people at all levels of the organisation. Moat were determined to include Mears within this on the new contract. Mears staff working on the contract attends all Moat communication cascades and has bought into all of its strategic objectives. For example, Mears operatives are regularly updated on the Moat Code of Conduct and work in line with this. Indeed new Mears staff even attends Moat core induction training.

Regular operational and strategic Core Groups meetings are held, with residents heavily involved to drive the service. The operational model and subsequent successes are regularly reviewed and tweaked to ensure that the service is continually improving.

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Moat and Mears have taken relationship driven approach to sharing of risk. This is documented through a jointly developed and regularly reviewed risk register, but is more clearly seen in the partnership's approach to complaint handling. The Mears Customer Care Manager leads the complaint management and resolution process for the partnership, to the point that she has responsibility for managing and closing complaints through the Moat system. The operational model has resulted in very few complaints being received and this innovative approach to complaint management ensures that these are managed in a professional and timely manner. Complaints received in 2012/13 represented 0.25% of the volume of orders raised to Mears.

The Customer Care Manager also heads up an innovative approach to collecting customer feedback. Every Mears operative carries out a satisfaction survey through their handheld device on completion of a job (with a response rate in excess of 60%). Any residents reporting that their customer experience has been anything other than excellent or good receives a phone call the same day. This

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ascertains what went wrong and how it can be remedied. Likewise, jobs that fail to be delivered right first time are picked up by the Customer Care Manager through the real time surveys and passed to the Repairs Manager to review. This information is used to inform the on-going development of van stocks and the continued training needs of the operatives.

The success of the repairs service has resulted in Moat involving Mears in the management and delivery of the planned works programme. Larger repairs are not done through the repairs service but are placed on the planned maintenance programme by Mears, reviewed by Moat, and then ordered in a strategic and cost effective way

As the performance of the contract has continued to improve into upper quartile and beyond, Moat has brought fresh innovations to the contract. One such innovation is the removal of repairs priorities which have been replaced with simply ‘emergency’ or ‘at residents convenience’. Mears have resourced this change in approach to achieve the exceptional levels of ‘first choice of appointment’ and ‘appointments kept’ performance outlined above. This innovation has also had a considerable impact on the perception of the service by residents. They have fed back that they see this approach as far more customer focussed and more in line with other high performing service industries, rather than a traditional repairs service.

The partnership has also implemented monthly ‘handyman coffee mornings’ in the sheltered and supported schemes. This allows the residents to save up their repairs until their local working supervisor (who is now well known to all of the residents) attends with a couple of multi skilled operatives to complete the repairs and also carry out any non-qualifying work they request free of charge.

“Moat and Mears are currently exploring working with other Housing Associations and RSLs in the South East regarding rolling out this sector leading end to end repairs service to others”

The partnership has also carried out a number of property and community MOTs in some of the outlying areas to ensure that the residents receive as much care and attention as any others. The value of these MOTs in terms of both customer satisfaction, but also in terms of commercial benefit to the partnership is reviewed over the subsequent months.

The partnership continues to hold 6 monthly externally facilitated strategic partnering workshops to ensure that the contract stays at the forefront of the sector and that Moat’s residents continue to receive one of the best repairs services in the country irrespective of the geographically spread nature of the stock. Both Moat and Mears are keen to explore innovation to add value to the service we offer to residents. Currently a new way of running our void contract is being trialled but it is testament to the partnership that both sides are keen to try new ways of working ‘outside the box’, including moving onto a price per property pricing mechanism.

Following the latest Partnering workshop we have implemented a Service Development Plan which will chart the progress of the contract and detail our aspirations and goals and this will be monitored at the quarterly core groups.

Building on the success of the Moat/Mears contract, as well as carrying out similar workshops for other contractors, Moat will be hosting one workshop for all of our partnering contractors to come together and share good practice. This we hope will help us introduce all of our contractors to each other and hopefully generate some joint working regarding sustainability and improving supply chains

Moat and Mears are currently exploring working with other Housing Associations and RSLs in the South East regarding rolling out this sector leading end to end repairs service to others.

