

Working in Partnership – Innovation in Estate Cleaning



In 2012 we kick started the procurement process for our provision of Estate Cleaning. We delivered this within our timetable with a new contract in place beginning April 2013. The process was carried out under OJEU procurement regulations with a contract value of £6m over the 8 year term.

Generally seen as a 'Cinderella Service' this is a contract which is delivered to over 60% of our 20,000 residents; constitutes a large part of resident's service charges and affects all tenures. It impacts greatly on a residents experience and impression of their landlord and can lead to high levels of dissatisfaction. It is resource hungry if not done correctly and can encourage a lack of respect to the buildings and areas in which people live.

Estate cleaning is often procured and contracted in a regional or piece meal fashion using bespoke contracts or service level agreements. We knew by introducing one provider across a wide geographical area and introducing a partnering ethos to the delivery of the service a more effective and efficient service would be delivered. It was a natural fit that a TPC contract should be used not only to frame the procurement exercise but also deliver the service.

Why did we use a TPC Contract?

For our Neighbourhoods Directorate the TPC contract was unknown. A short training session was given to key staff to run through the key clauses and how this could easily be used for Estate Services. The way the contract is written was easily understood by staff whose primary role is not contract management. It was well received that there was no onerous penalty clauses or lengthy legalese which would confuse or detract from getting the services delivered.

The way in which the core group and dispute resolution elements of the contract are created suited a contract which is operationally delivered by many but strategically managed by few – it allows for concerns to be easily escalated, reviewed and processes improved without having to disrupt service delivery or the day to day tasks of the Neighbourhood Officers.

With combined benefits of the term brief and service provider proposals amendments or improvements, either at a contract or estate level could be varied easily without having to materially change the contract. It provides a flexibility that is so needed within Estate Services.

What benefits did this bring during the procurement process?

By adopting the TPC form of contract before the tender documentation had been created it ensured that the requirements of the delivery team and residents would directly translate in the final form of contract. We used the TPC contract as a framework to develop our specification, contract terms and conditions and meant we thought early on in the process how we would manage processes and situations that may arise in contract delivery. Some examples of this were:

Term Brief and Service Proposals used to create Operations Manual

- Fragmented service across 400 locations
- 35 staff operationally managing the service
- Varying contract management skills

Risk Register used to identify operational risks

- Risk Management generally poor in estate services
- Length of time taken for risks to materialise
- Clear remedies for staff for risks, mitigation and remedial action

Early Warning Clause and Dispute Resolution

- Lack of clear direction for staff on how to progress issues
- The type of service has lots of small service issues rather than big service failures
- Needs to be a rapid response approach to dealing with issues

Partnering Timetable

- Clear contract aspirations identified during tender
- Concerns that long term planning would be lost during delivery
- Previously a lack of contractor ownership for improvements

Resulting from the tender process Moat appointed Cleanscapes as the sole provider of Estate Cleaning for the full 8yr term.

‘The way in which the tender was structured and the use of a TPC contract was new to us. Throughout the tender documents there was a clear link to the contract which we would be working under. It allowed us to fully consider how the contract would be managed and the type of relationship we would have with Moat. We felt that not only would this assist in contract delivery but also develop our skills as a Service Provider which would bring wider benefits to Cleanscapes.’ Daryl Goldring of Cleanscapes

What innovations were brought to the contract by using TPC?

The contract has now been in effect for 18mths and not only has brought a saving of 18%, directly reflected in residents service charges but has given Moat a range of added value benefits. Whilst some of these are not unusual within a planned or responsive maintenance contract it is seen that they are ground breaking within the Estate Services contracting environment.

The three main areas of improvement have been:

Co-Located Contracts Manager – True Partnering

By borrowing the principle of Co-Location from Responsive Repairs contracts we required a full time contracts manager to be located at our offices in Dartford. They would be the key contact for all staff and would be integrated within the organisation. This benefit has reduced the Client side administrative resource for the contract as well as improving the Service Providers knowledge of its client. Chris Stevens, our contract manager says:

I have managed this contract for the past year – being based in Moat's offices and working alongside the neighbourhoods team has really helped me to deliver an excellent service. I am able to resolve resident queries straight away and deal with staff requests immediately. I also have a level of understanding of the Moats culture and stock which helps no end. This has proved so successful we now include the offer of a co-located contracts manager on all our large key contracts.

Moat Lite App – Performance Management

We have developed an App which allows Neighbourhood Officers to carry out real time inspections with the results and actions being immediately sent to the contracts manager. This is our way of adapting the Early Warning Clause to suit the nature of the contract. For Estate Cleaning, early warning is demonstrated through a number of small issues, rather than a catastrophic breach of contract. Not identifying and managing these can result in a breakdown of the contract through the aggregation of these problems. It also means there is clear and auditable trail to feed KPI's and assist the core group in ongoing performance management.

Social Value – Added Value

The procurement of the contract coincided with the introduction of the Social Value Act in January 2013. We knew that we wanted to use this contract as a bedrock of our Back to Work Programme. Within the procurement process

and resulting contract we created a framework to allow the contractor to commit to a range of programmes and activities which would help our residents get back into work. During the last 12mths, Cleanscapes have worked closely with our Back to Work team to secure:

- 3 residents into full time employment
- 7 work placements – some of which have led to employment with alternative companies
- Mentoring of 2 residents by the co-located contracts manager
- Attendance at a number of job clubs across our estates

Nicky Reynolds is one of those residents who is now working Full Time with Cleanscapes, talks about his experience:



CASE STUDY

The support I received from Moat and the help from Brenda , in the Back to Work team, was excellent. I was offered a work placement with Cleanscapes who then offered me a full time job. I would say to anyone in my position 'Go for it'. It has really helped me. Look at me: I am a lot better off financially, which can only be good. I work hard, and make sure I do a good job, not taken a day off sick since I started 5 months ago. And I'm sure I will get a good reference from Cleanscapes, if and when I decide to move on."

The inclusion of this framework with the Cleanscapes contract, and others across Moat were Shortlisted in 2014 for a National Go Procurement Award for Sustainability.

So what has changed?

