

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN PROCUREMENT DRIVES SAVINGS AND IMPROVES PERFORMANCE



The Plus Dane Group - a registered provider - describes itself as a Neighbourhood Investor. Setting itself the mission of doing everything it can to improve quality of life, choice and opportunity for the people living in its homes and the neighbourhoods in which it operates.

The group needed to re-procure a £32 million contract for responsive repairs; out of hour's emergency works; packaged repairs; work to void properties; and gas servicing to 7,000 properties.

It was recognised that in order to get the best possible service for tenants, Plus Dane residents should be involved in the competitive procurement process from the start.

EC Harris was appointed to work in partnership with the client team and tenants to project manage the whole tender process; providing advice, training and support to ensure the best possible repairs and maintenance service would be achieved for residents.

Creating solutions

At the start of the process tenants were invited to join the Procurement Commissioning Team to be involved in every aspect of the tender process. This was important to Plus Dane, as it is the residents who will experience the services on a regular basis and so it fits with the provider's Neighbourhood Investor values that residents should influence how the contract is operated.

“The procurement process managed by EC Harris has empowered residents, improved service delivery and led to annual efficiency savings of circa £500,000.”

Twelve people volunteered, giving up a total of 250 days of their time by the end of the process. Once the team was set up, a robust training process was launched to ensure the residents had the skills, knowledge and confidence to ask the right questions throughout the procurement process. The team also developed a number of initial objectives, which they wanted the winning contractors to subscribe to:

- To buy in to the Neighbourhood Investor values and promises
- To have a clear customer led delivery focus
- To demonstrate value for money without cutting quality
- To Embrace resident involvement in the performance management of the contract.

With the EC Harris team ensuring all the procurement formalities were in place and advising throughout, the Procurement Commissioning Team then took the following steps:

- Measuring the current service and setting the standards for future service delivery
- Short listing companies from the tender responses received
- Conducting interviews and site visits to shortlisted companies
- Appointing the successful organisation(s)
- Developing a plan for resident involvement in ongoing performance management.

A total of 22 contractors submitted tenders and after an intensive process Plus Dane's 'in house' DLO team were appointed along with two other contractors to deliver attentive responsive and voids repairs.

Adding value

This innovative tender process has added significant value to residents, supporting the corporate objectives of the Plus Dane Group.

Direct tenant involvement has not only empowered those individuals who volunteered but improved the service residents are receiving and saved money.

Improved service - With the previous contractors, residents were often visited by different trades people for different jobs. Instead, the new contract creates several Neighbourhood Teams which work in specific areas and on the same properties. This is appreciated by residents who now see a familiar face whenever works are undertaken.

“EC Harris was integral to the whole process, which won Plus Dane Group a “Best Client” award at the National Housing Maintenance Forum Awards 2011.”

Saving money - Efficiency savings are being generated by being able to do more planned works in resident properties, reducing duplication and improving cost control; saving Plus Dane more than £500,000 in annual efficiencies. A further £150,000 in annual VAT savings has been secured as a result of bringing the work in house.

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