

Watford Community Housing Trust Procurement of Grounds Works and Landscaping Services

Background

Watford Community Housing Trust was created in partnership with its tenants and leaseholders to take over the ownership and management of more than 4,700 homes and local neighbourhoods from Watford Borough Council in September 2007.

In accordance with tenants' wishes, the Trust is a new not-for-profit registered social landlord with charitable status, based in Watford and founded on the principles of the Community Gateway model placing tenant and community empowerment right at the heart of everything we do.

Appointment

echelon was appointed following a tender process by the Trust and was awarded the project as we were able to demonstrate clearly how residents would be involved in every stage of the procurement process.

Role

echelon were engaged to undertake a review of the grounds works service that was being provided by Watford Borough Council via a service level agreement following the transfer of the councils housing stock and the creation of the community gateway.

Overview

Following the review a procurement model was created and a new specification developed in full consultation with the members of the gateway committee who are the residents of Watford Community Housing Trust. This new specification was developed in a facilitated workshop environment where areas of service that could be improved were highlighted by residents, staff and other stakeholders who had an interest in the service.

Soft market testing was undertaken to ask the key providers of the service in the market which influenced the content of the various elements of the procurement process.

Throughout every stage of the process the evaluation panel members of whom 90% were residents evaluated the contractors using a structured procurement process taking best practice ensuring and exceeding compliance with the procurement rules as set out by the Office of the European Union.

The process was delivered by echelon within the agreed timescales and showed a saving to the Trust by the newly appointed contractor. In addition to this saving the services being provided as detailed in the new specification delivered a more comprehensive service to its residents and demonstrated value for money.



“echelon proved to be a valuable partner in assisting Watford Community Housing Trust procuring a new Grounds Maintenance Contract. The work of Aaron and his team was seamless and took away a great deal of time consuming work which would otherwise have to have been carried out by the Trust.

echelon proved to be a highly professional consultant who aided us in delivering a high quality service to the residents of Watford, with well structured and organised workshops and briefings throughout the procurement process.”

**Sean Hurley, Estate Service Manager,
Watford Community Housing Trust**