

# Bolton Council – using AWARD® to standardise process across the organisation—benefiting from cost and time efficiencies

**Bolton Council has used the AWARD® evaluation solution to support procurements across the organisation for over three years. Drawing on the collective expertise built up during this time, the Council has recently completed a project to set up a framework agreement to provide an innovative Care and Response Service to support its Extra Care Housing schemes.**



## The Customer

Bolton Council has responsibility for a population of approximately 276,000 and forms part of the Greater Manchester Metropolitan Borough Council. It consists of a mix of affluent and deprived wards. Bolton has a reputation as a welcoming town which offers both beautiful surrounding countryside and easy access to a thriving international conurbation.

The Greater Manchester Metropolitan Borough Council flows down processes and guidance to the Councils within its jurisdiction. This includes guidance to the procurement teams on the processes to be followed in order to

ensure adherence to EU and local regulations and also to assure that all Councils are delivering value for money to tax payers.

### AWARD®

Partly as a result of this governance, Bolton Council has good procurement procedures in place. In order to assure that their processes are robust, and followed across all departments, the Council selected AWARD® to support its procurements in 2011. Commerce Decisions has worked with the procurement team to train key users in the use of the tool,

and to develop a set of templates for reuse on projects.

There is now a small team in place with good AWARD® knowledge. There is also a set of templates set up in AWARD® that will support future projects and engender wider use of the solution across the Council. Commerce Decisions supported Bolton Council in aligning and coordinating various aspects of the procurement process:

- Standardisation of theory and process across departments and stakeholders
- Managing information
- An audit trail to demonstrate adherence to self-imposed qualification
- Support/training for new hires

As well as having a robust and transparent process in place to underpin all procurements, the team has realised significant time efficiencies in having the right information in the right place at the right time.

### Case Study Project

The Council is made up of six departments, one of which is the department of Health and Adult Social Care. In addition to providing social support and care for the adults in the community, this department is also



responsible for commissioning housing-related support services.

Bolton Council's adult social care services are amongst the most highly rated in the country. As well as having mostly "excellent" ratings in annual assessments by the Care Quality Commission, Bolton Council was also the first in the country to obtain three "excellents" for independence and wellbeing, and the first ever to achieve "excellent" in safeguarding. Bolton Council has one of the lowest "spends per head of population" on adult social care, compared to similar Councils (Audit Commission data).

Bolton Council's aim is for people who need care in Bolton to be able to say:

- It's quick and easy to get through the system.
- It's my choice.
- I can get the care I need.

As part of this initiative, Bolton Council's Health and Adult Social Care Department launched a project to set up a framework of 'dynamic, forward thinking organisations' to provide a Care and Response Service within Extra Care Housing schemes in Bolton.

Extra Care Housing offers a range of facilities through specially designed, purpose built or adapted homes. Extra Care Housing provides an alternative to both care at home, and in some cases residential care. It can help prevent avoidable admission to hospital, and also assist in getting people home from hospital more quickly. Where possible, Extra Care Housing aims to provide a 'home for life'. The Service will promote best practice in areas which particularly affect older people and

be effectively managed with ongoing review, e.g. dementia care or end of life care.

The aim was for the Framework Agreement to cover a target customer group of older people in Extra Care Housing Schemes with special needs such as:

- Physical disabilities
- Mobility issues
- Mental Health problems
- Dementia
- Substance misuse
- Learning disabilities

The Care and Response Service provided under the Framework Agreement would be complementary to the re-ablement services delivered by the Council and the Support and Housing Management service delivered by the housing provider.

### The Challenge

The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review significantly reduced the Revenue Support Grant which councils receive. As a result Bolton Council had to find £100m of savings between 2011/12 and 2014/15. As adult social care represents approximately 42% of the Council's budget, it was of critical importance that the establishment of the framework would result in efficiencies across residential and commissioned care, as well as reducing the costs of care assessment and planning.

### Solution and delivery

Given the nature of this procurement, the Council sought support from Commerce Decisions to assist them in

delivering on their strategy. The various departments and stakeholders involved in the project all had a clear idea of the outcomes they required from the framework. Commerce Decisions was able to advise and guide them on the best way to achieve the desired results.

**"The level of customer support and appreciation of the context in which the system is used along with relevant procurement related knowledge has also been both excellent and helpful."**

**Kevin O'Neill, Principal Officer, Contracts and Quality Commissioning Team**

### Benefits delivered by AWARD®

Over the past three years, Bolton Council has undertaken 30 procurements and 50 evaluations in AWARD®. At the beginning of the engagement, Commerce Decisions created a set of templates based on the Council's processes and then supported their rollout with appropriate training.

Commerce Decisions initially worked with a small number of early adopters, building up a core knowledge of AWARD®. This is now being propagated across the Council, and the use and knowledge of AWARD® is becoming more widespread. As a result, the Council is confident that EU and local government regulations, as well as their standard practice and guidance is being adhered to and followed.

**"Bolton Council has found that AWARD® has been a very effective way of easily recording tender evaluations. In particular we have been impressed by the ease of use by evaluators who have never previously used the system. The templates within the system are also very helpful in assisting to structure the criteria and questions used within tendering exercises."**

**Kevin O'Neill, Principal Officer, Contracts and Quality Commissioning Team**