

Mersey Gateway Project utilises AWARD®

Listed as one of the top 10 most innovative urban mobility projects in the world, Halton Borough Council in partnership with Halcrow Group are using the eEvaluation tool AWARD® to evaluate bidders on the Mersey Gateway Project.



The Client Profile

Halton is a local government district in North West England, sitting on either side of the River Mersey and made up of the towns of Widnes and Runcorn together with the villages of Hale, Moore, Daresbury and Preston Brook. With a population of just under 120,000 people the borough of Halton was formed in 1974 and became a unitary authority in 1998.

The borough is an urban, industrial area supporting a significant amount of chemical, manufacturing and heavy industry employers.

Linking part of the borough's vital highways network is the council owned and Grade II listed Silver Jubilee Bridge. The Silver Jubilee bridge is a key structure providing passage across the River Mersey, and is the only pedestrian and vehicular crossing point between Widnes and Runcorn. With over 80,000 vehicles using The Silver Jubilee Bridge every weekday the bridge is consequently a bottle neck.

With the provision of a second crossing, Halton Borough Council sought to relieve The Silver Jubilee Bridge from traffic congestion and to drive forward regeneration.

The Project

In 1999 Halton Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan identified that the case for a new crossing had been

acknowledged by the then Minister for Transport, making it clear the need to develop a scheme for inclusion in the Council's Local Transport Plan. Halton Borough Council subsequently began to advance the second crossing proposals for approval.

Costing £600million, 70% of which is funded by the private sector, the Mersey Gateway Bridge is a major scheme to provide a 6 lane toll bridge over the River Mersey, connecting the towns of Runcorn and Widnes. The aim is to relieve congestion on the Silver Jubilee Bridge and for the investment in new infrastructure to lead the way for the regeneration of Halton and the North West and the creation of over 4,600 jobs.

In 2012, the Mersey Gateway project was included in the KPMG Infrastructure 100: World Cities Edition, noting the Project as an example for its innovation and impact on society.

The Procurement Challenge

Making sure the procurement function was up to the task was key, and due to the complexity of the project, and the potential for bidders to propose different technical, financial and legal solutions, the council are using the Competitive Dialogue procedure. The chosen procedure means processes and regulations need to be closely managed. A clear audit trail must be captured highlighting why decisions were made, with losing and shortlisted bidders being debriefed effectively.



Working to key procurement stages the project team must also make sure the project remains on target to deliver financial close in Autumn 2013.

Role and value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD®

With over 10 years experience in delivering the electronic evaluation tool AWARD® on strategic UK Public Sector procurements, Commerce Decisions were chosen by the £600m Mersey Gateway Bridge project team to provide the AWARD® tool so that bidders could be evaluated in a robust, controlled and transparent way.

The AWARD® solution is a comprehensive supplier evaluation tool. Delivering an efficient approach to strategic procurements that involve multiple stakeholders, high levels of risk, and significant budgets.

“AWARD® was a key tool that allowed us to efficiently manage our procurement processes. We found AWARD® to be helpful in making the evaluation process as simple and effective as possible. At the same time, it is helping to ensure that the procurement process is completed in a robust and transparent manner.”

**Matthew Fearnhead Project
Co-ordinator, Mersey
Gateway Project Team**

AWARD® helped the project team overcome challenges such as:

- Make sure suppliers develop detailed submissions helping the Council shortlist 3 preferred bidders
- Manage team members workloads to help complete the project to the intended programme timescales
- Make sure bidders are engaged throughout the tender process
- Manage a number of documents and data that need to be accessed easily and rapidly

AWARD® has been used throughout the public and private procurement community to deliver more than £60 billion of contract decisions.

AWARD® provides efficiencies above traditional paper and Excel based approaches by providing a controlled and collaborative best practice method to supplier evaluations. AWARD® is proven to help reduce and manage risk effectively, and help deliver projects on time to a high standard.

Commerce Decisions has extensive experience in helping project teams maximise the use of AWARD®. Commerce Decisions is dedicated to working with key project stakeholders in developing robust and detailed evaluation criteria when using the Competitive Dialogue and other types of procedures.

AWARD® for Evaluators

Forming the core part of the evaluation, evaluators securely log in to AWARD® and respond to the relevant number of sections and questions assigned to them. Project user access and progress can be monitored by a delegated administrator, making sure that all questions are completed effectively and on time.

AWARD® Consensus scoring

Each key area of the evaluation is overseen by a Consensus scorer. The Consensus scorer will review evaluator’s collated responses and rationale to arrive at a final score. Scores are weighted and aggregated to provide a final result, where suppliers are then ranked against each other forming the basis for selection of the preferred supplier.

Bidder debriefs

One of AWARD’s key strengths is its ability to generate instantaneous bidder debrief reports, allowing clear and transparent information about why a decision was made to be presented to bidders, helping to significantly reducing the risk of legal challenge.

Summary

AWARD® is a software tool used across the UK Public Sector on strategic procurements, to help projects complete on time in a structured and fully auditable manner. By taking this approach QCDL has been able to support some of the UKs most high profile projects totalling over £60bn.

AWARD® Benefits

AWARD® delivers a transparent audit trail that underpins the bidder debriefing process and manages any challenges to the outcome of the procurement.

AWARD® is highly flexible, enabling full integration of the tender requirements and policies.

AWARD® enables project users to be managed centrally, optimising the time spent on evaluating suppliers.

AWARD® is delivered via a security accredited hosted service. Users can access AWARD® from any workstation with an internet connection and web browser.

Powerful reporting capabilities allow a range of selected reports to be generated quickly and tailored to your project.

Enhanced controls allow better management of tender stages leading to efficiencies and on time project delivery.

AWARD® provides a structured and compliant approach to the execution of a procurement.