

# South Tyneside and Gateshead Councils work with Commerce Decisions to support BSF projects

## Customer profile

South Tyneside and Gateshead (StAG) Councils are working on a joint Building Schools for the Future (BSF) project with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Partnerships for Schools (Pfs). The joint project will see about £400 million invested in the region's schools over the next decade.

The Borough of South Tyneside Council provides essential services to a population of about 150,000 covering six areas across 64 sq km - South Shields and Jarrow. Gateshead Council provides essential services to a population of more than 192,000, covering Jarrow, Tyne Bridge, Gateshead East and Washington West.

## Project overview

South Tyneside and Gateshead Councils have been searching for the right partners to help them build 23 new and refurbished secondary and special education schools over a 10-year period. STaG's vision is to transform academic and vocational achievements across the region.

The STaG BSF project has ambitious plans for the schools in their area, aiming at high achievement for all. Schools will be established as community hubs and multiagency bases. They will be ICT-rich environments and will be networked. This will enable collaboration, yet allow the schools to be autonomous.

"South Tyneside and Gateshead Councils have been working together as a 50/50 partnership for over three years. We are the only surviving and successful joint authority project in the whole of the BSF programme," said Pramod Nayak, Deputy Project Director of the STaG BSF.

## What are BSF and Pfs?

Building Schools for the Future is part of the drive to raise standards in schools, to deliver state-of-the-art learning and social spaces for 21st century education. Schools will look different, and the teaching and learning will be different. The improved facilities will be for use not just by schoolchildren but by all members of the community outside school hours.

Partnerships for Schools (Pfs) is responsible for delivering the BSF programme. It is working with local authorities and the private sector to rebuild or renew almost all of England's 3,500 state secondary schools during the 15-year lifetime of the programme.

## Project procurement challenges

The key challenges for the STaG team were:

- Ensuring that the two councils collaborate successfully
- Successfully implementing the competitive dialogue process on a complex project
- The size of the project and dealing with a complex set of requirements
- Providing a clear and transparent audit trail to help manage potential challenges
- Managing a large number of documents (over 175) and data that needed to be accessed easily and rapidly



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- Coordinating the involvement of a team of over 100 evaluators
- Working to tight timescales
- Gaining agreement from stakeholders spread across two councils
- Effective debriefing of the losing bidders
- Managing risk and preparing for any challenges

**"Through our use of AWARD®, we found a tool that can significantly help local authorities to reach good quality procurement decisions and manage risk effectively. Its inherent flexibility allowed us to tailor it easily to match our specific processes. With the support of Commerce Decisions we have configured AWARD® to support our BSF programme in a comprehensive and powerful way."**

**Pramod Nayak, Deputy Project Director, South Tyneside and Gateshead Building Schools for the Future**



## Role and value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD®

Given the innovative nature of this project, with the collaboration of two councils, the STaG project team decided to work with Commerce Decisions to tailor AWARD® to fit the process and documentation provided by PFS. This included the competitive dialogue process.

“The success and ease with which the South Tyneside and Gateshead BSF project team have been able to tailor AWARD® to meet the process and documentation laid down by PFS has had a very significant impact on the success of this project,” said Stanley Johnson, Joint Project Director of STaG BSF.

Commerce Decisions was involved with the first high-level PQQ which was sent out to evaluate six bidders using the standard PFS documentation. This reduced the bidders to three and was followed by the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue (ITPD), further reducing the number of bidders from three to two.

“Using AWARD® helped us manage the evaluation and competitive dialogue process, particularly as it got more complex as we moved through the selection. Based on our experience, we would also strongly recommend that councils planning a BSF project should bring Commerce Decisions on board right at the beginning before they get external consultants involved,” observed Pramod Nayak, Deputy Project Director of STaG BSF.

The next stage, the Invitation to Continue Dialogue (ITCD), involved only two bidders, but brought another level of complexity with the involvement of over 100 evaluators. AWARD® was ideally suited to manage this, and the team were further supported by the Commerce Decisions professional services team who assisted STaG in developing an evaluation structure and process.

At the Invitation to Submit Final Tender, the final stage of the selection process, AWARD® was used extensively to evaluate the two remaining bidders. Feedback from the evaluators was that AWARD® was easy to use and did not need a high level of IT skill - they required very little training to get up and running.

“Most importantly, AWARD® was tailored to manage the competitive dialogue process, incorporating both the PFS and the European Union requirements. AWARD® has the capability to take public sector project managers through the critical competitive dialogue process effortlessly,” said Stanley Johnson, Project Director of STaG BSF.

**Building Schools for the Future (BSF)** was the name given to the British government’s investment programme in secondary school buildings in England in the 2000s. The delivery of the programme was overseen by Partnerships for Schools (PFS), a non-departmental public body formed through a joint venture between the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (formerly the Department for Education and Skills), Partnerships UK and private sector partners.

On 5 July 2010 the Secretary of State for Education, announced that the Building Schools for the Future programme was to be scrapped.

## 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.

