

London Boroughs select the AWARD® solution to support their collaborative Public Cultural Partnership project

The London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing and Harrow have deployed AWARD® to support their collaboration on one of the largest and most innovative procurements in the Public Cultural Services Sector to date.



Client Profile

The neighbouring London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing and Harrow have a combined population of over 800,000—the area is one of the largest and most culturally diverse communities in the UK.

The Boroughs are focused on collaboratively transforming the lives of their local communities alongside their own individual priorities. Of importance to the third largest London Borough, Ealing, is securing jobs, homes and public services for its residents. Its neighbouring Borough, Harrow has one of the lowest homelessness rates in London, and its main concern is to promote united and involved communities. Brent Council, meanwhile, is focusing on its transformation agenda and has a vision for safe and sustainable neighbourhoods.

All share a common goal to continually improve the quality of life and cohesive community for residents.

The Project

The authorities entered into a joint partnership to procure Leisure and Library Services. By working together, they found that not only could they enhance community services, but they could also make efficiency savings of over £20m.

The project involved the selection of an external provider to deliver a range of leisure services for a period of up to 10 years. Ealing and Harrow also wished to include their requirement for the management of their Library Services for up to five years.

With a large estate, the project covered seven leisure centres, three sports centres and 25 libraries.

In carrying out the procurement the authorities agreed to adopt a common set of principles with a shared 2018 vision: **“To ensure residents and visitors of all ages and abilities can access high quality, well managed, and sustainable Leisure and Library facilities.”**

Soft market testing began in 2011 with the aim of gauging interest in attracting providers to work with a multiple Borough collaboration.

Key outcomes of the procurement were:

- To provide improved community services that offer value for money
- For each council to retain its leisure and library services
- To increase satisfaction rates for both leisure and library users
- To create apprenticeships, work placements and jobs for local people
- To provide physical activity opportunities to increase levels of participation from children, young people and under represented groups
- To make a positive impact on environmental sustainability by reducing utility, water usage, land filling and pollution
- To involve the local community in leisure centre programming

The Procurement Challenges

In order to meet deadlines, it was crucial for the joint project team to be in place as soon as possible. Once established, it had the challenge of developing specifications from different perspectives and for different locations - meeting each individual authority's requirements, alongside the overarching goal to delivery a final joint service.

Based on a shared contract management model, a three stage exercise was adopted - a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) phase followed by an Invitation to Tender (ITT) and finally a Best and Final Offers end stage which allowed for an element of negotiation. As each Borough had a large leisure portfolio, the process had to be divided in to three Lots—this presented the additional challenge of managing each Lot and stage on time and in a controlled manner.

With varying sections that needed to be assessed by a diverse team of Borough officers, evaluating criteria from their own viewpoints, it was crucial for everything to be efficiently joined up and centrally managed.

“AWARD® enabled us to design, implement and manage a complex tender evaluation process simply, efficiently and effectively. Without AWARD® the administrative burden of this project would have been horrendous. Using expert technical assistance from Commerce Decisions, we were able to redesign the evaluation process to suit the project requirements. The flexibility of the system was its strongest attribute.”

Mark Johnson – Project Manager – London Borough of Harrow

Furthermore it was critical that the evaluation process ensured that the required service standards and outcomes were clearly defined, and that the successful suppliers could meet the selection criteria based on:

- Originality and innovation of the proposals
- Operational viability of the proposals
- Deliverability and sustainability
- Financial viability.

Managing the Procurement Process

Working closely with a Commerce Decisions' consultant, the configuration of AWARD® was led by the project team. Each project stage was set up in the system, together with the delivery model criteria. AWARD® was used as a centralised repository for all the project information and documents, and was the hub around which the project was built and managed.

Cooperating and Collaborating

In addition to enabling the Boroughs to communicate effectively throughout the procurement, AWARD® also effectively captured and managed supplier clarification requests. The system provided a robust and secure mechanism for suppliers to communicate directly with the project team.

In Summary

With over 12 years unrivalled experience in working with project teams on strategic UK Public Sector procurements; Commerce Decisions was selected by the three London Boroughs to provide the AWARD® solution. A primary driver in this selection decision was the need to ensure that they could collaboratively and efficiently manage a complex lot-based multi-phased project.

About AWARD®

AWARD® is a comprehensive supplier evaluation solution that delivers an efficient approach to strategic procurements that involve multiple stakeholders, high levels of risk, and significant budgets. The solution has supported £multi billions of procurement projects across all sectors and diverse areas of business.

AWARD® enables teams to follow a robust process through multiple procurement phases, from short listing of bidders through to evaluating final submissions, and finally negotiation. The project team was therefore able to benefit from the confidence, efficiency and defensibility provided by an AWARD® deployment.

Commerce Decisions provide a range of AWARD® project packages, from self service to full service solutions. The AWARD® system and our services deliver cost-effective delivery of best practice methods matched to the needs, requirements and budgets of different project types.

Combining our broad and deep procurement expertise with the efficiency and defensibility provided by an AWARD® deployment, our approach ensures that our solutions will accommodate a wide range of procurements, all benefiting from the confidence, efficiency and defensibility provided by an AWARD® deployment.

“We approached this project in a very different way to most procurement projects but impressively, the system had the flexibility to adapt and be configured according to our requirements. I would highly recommend the use of AWARD® for the evaluation of any complex procurement project.”

Mark Johnson – Project Manager – London Borough of Harrow

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.

