

Levelling the playing field



Housing and care organisation Midland Heart worked with its customers to encourage social enterprises to tender for contracts during 2012.

Customers wanted to see local employment, a reliable service and personal contact from their landlord's contractors. It was this bottom up approach and the commitment of the Midland Heart team that drove this change.

The objective was to review the procurement process for landscaping, contract and window cleaning across all 32,000 Midland Heart homes.

This £1.8 m contract had previously been serviced mainly by one private sector contractor. Now it would be offered in a combination of 31 geographic lots, offered as single lots or combined to create larger areas so contractors of different scale and size could bid.

The objective was to 'level the playing field' and to allow smaller organisations to take part, while still being OJEU compliant and taking cost and service delivery into account.

Working together SEWM and Midland Heart:

1. Held a 'Meet the Buyer' event, attended by 55 social enterprises, community organisations and SMEs, to inform them of the opportunity and answer questions. A further 30 organisations expressed an interest by email.
2. Explained the subject of "social value" so contractors could prepare, collaborate and adapt. Had the chance to come along to the event and find out more. 55 organisations attended the 'Meet the Buyer' event with a further 30 EOI's (expressions of interest) received by email.
3. Adapted the PQQ and ITT documentation to shape the language and remove barriers for smaller businesses.

As a result half of the 52 PQQs received were from organisations whose primary purpose would be to demonstrate social value above and beyond their contracted service. Of the 24 organisations invited to ITT, 40% were from social enterprises and wider civil society organisations.

Midland Heart appointed eight contractors, which include a mix of social enterprises, local small family run businesses and large private sector contractors.

The contracts are also expected to lead to a financial saving of 6%, plus the additional social value.

In the future, Midland Heart will hold more "contract readiness" workshops, ensure social value is measured during and at the end of the contract and signpost bidding organisations to professional help.

Follow the link below or search for SEWM's YouTube channel to see a video on this case study.

Embedding Social Value in Procurement - Midland Heart



'Meet the Buyer' Open Day

Time: 9am-1pm
Date: 20th January 2012
Location: BVSC, The Centre for Voluntary Action
Address: 138 Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DR