



Chelmer Housing Partnership website

Chelmer Housing Partnership - Modernisation Programme

Client:	Chelmer Housing Partnership
Consultant:	EC Harris
Case Study Ref:	336
Project Number:	1198
Publication date:	November 2008
Region:	East of England
Sector:	Housing
Project Value:	£6m
Project timescales:	December 2005 – December 2008
Themes:	Partnering and Sustainable Development

Chelmer Housing Partnership developed a software package specifically to manage their sub-contractors, and this project demonstrates that the utilisation of software enables a completely different way of working with your sub-contractors, with the benefit of outstanding results.

Chelmer management wished to improve their performance but found it very challenging with thirty different refurbishment and maintenance contractors working on 3,500 properties, and a peak month expenditure of £1.2 million. The traditional process of monitoring contractor progress and validating payments proved a resource consuming exercise for Chelmer, and left no management time to look for improvements. Conventional wisdom would have been to impose even tighter controls and load more management resources, in the belief that this would enable them to control and potentially even reduce contractor costs.

Enlightened leadership recognised that a different approach with the contractors could be the key to a more effective way of working and so decided to develop a software package to enable them to monitor progress and validate payment. The proposed system would place responsibility directly with the contractors and charge them to both reduce costs and improve tenant satisfaction, while reducing levels of supervision. Chelmer recognised the crucial importance of coupling monitoring with payment, and worked closely with the contractors to ensure everyone was fully committed to keeping the information up to date and accurate.

Only a web based IT system would provide a common system that all parties could access. As no such system existed, Chelmer decided to develop one and although the potential for considerable problems existed, Chelmer recognised that the benefits of this would far outweigh the risks. Chelmer gave responsibility for the software design to EC Harris, a company they had worked with previously. Keeping the system simple and very user friendly was paramount, for instance, accounts and other existing systems remained separate, with the new system simply providing reports to feed the legacy systems.

The new system contains all Chelmers' housing stock and shows each property as an asset with agreed improvement programmes, schedules of work, progress of work in hand and work completed. The system also allows personal choice by the tenant on items such as type of bathroom and kitchen, and it monitors delivery to ensure it is achieved as required.

The system handles and records the invoice and payment status for work on each asset. Contractors enter the start time and finish time on each job in each property, together with feedback information from the tenant. Records are kept up to date daily. The system also includes capacity for an independent site inspection, which Chelmer normally employ. From this information the system creates a payment certificate, monthly invoice and a payment to the contractor, which is based on a scale charge. At any time, the system shows what is happening on any of the properties.

Each contractor can access a range of statistical information, including comparison with other contractors, and information to help them improve their performance. A systematic improvement programme operates with the contractors and Chelmer work with them to reduce delays and upsets, and improve performance. Significantly, customer satisfaction has considerably improved, and over five consecutive months 100% satisfaction has been achieved. Part of the score includes tenant enquiries and reported defects. This system also helps Chelmer to achieve a management cost of 6.2% against the 10.1% median for the industry. Another benefit of the system is that the ongoing costs are small. For the future, further development of the system is underway with Aylesbury Housing.



CONSTRUCTING EXCELLENCE
in the built environment

Constructing Excellence
in the Built Environment
Warwick House,
25 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 0PP

T 0845 605 5556 E helpdesk@constructingexcellence.org.uk
W www.constructingexcellence.org.uk

EC HARRIS

