



Unlocking the Procurement of Emergency Accommodation

Introduction

In the thrilling role of Homelessness Procurement Specialist, V4Services embarked on a journey within Bristol City Council, focusing on the high-stakes procurement of emergency accommodation. The mission was crystal clear: weave an imaginative open framework that beckons providers into a world of innovation. Amidst the challenges of adopting a capped framework, diverging from the previous open-ended negotiation model, this case study showcases key moments, daring challenges, creative solutions, and the transformative outcomes. As one of Bristol City Council's Top 4 priority projects, the strategic goal of far-reaching cost savings through this framework adds an extra layer of strategic excitement.

V4Services played a central role in steering the procurement landscape towards greater efficiency and effectiveness. Confronting the dynamic challenge of implementing an open framework with ceiling prices demanded strategic acumen, ensuring a delicate balance between cost control and provider engagement.

In the role of the designated Homelessness Procurement Specialist, V4Services assumed leadership, recognising the profound impact that decisions in this sector have on lives and communities. The stage was set for transformation and innovation.

Background

Bristol City Council, in collaboration with South Gloucestershire Council, set out to establish an open framework for Emergency Accommodation Services. Addressing the housing needs of households with a statutory duty to accommodate, this framework spans periods from one day to several months, accommodating diverse household compositions. The canvas of possibilities was vast.

The complexity of transitioning from an open negotiation model to a capped framework with ceiling prices presented a formidable challenge. The urgency lay in reshaping procurement dynamics to enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

V4Services aimed to transform the mundane into the extraordinary—streamlining emergency accommodation procurement, creating a system that is not only efficient but also responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.



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Stakeholders

V4 Services collaborated closely with a vast team within Bristol City Council and emergency accommodation providers, considering diverse interests and priorities, with efficiency savings and safe, secure accommodation at the forefront.

Chosen Solution

The rationale behind selecting an open framework was to allow immediate entry for interested providers and provide flexibility for others to join at any time. This facilitated ongoing communication, keeping the procurement function open for inquiries.

Implementation

As the lead procurement specialist, V4Services orchestrated the procurement process, issuing evaluation and moderation timescales to facilitate the acceptance or deferral of new providers onto the framework. The plot thickened as the characters moved seamlessly through the stages of the procurement process.

Results

During round one of the procurement exercises, six providers joined the framework, with seven deferring for improvements. The first cohort demonstrated cost efficiency improvements and increased provider engagement, contributing to savings for Bristol City Council.

Lesson Learned

Invaluable insights, such as conducting early provider events, proved pivotal. Internally, regular meetings with a consistent agenda supported continual project progression. Being proactive by providing regular procurement updates became a plot twist that the team embraced, breaking down barriers.



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Recommendations

This forward-looking approach to cost savings is on the correct track for success. Harnessing strategies for sustaining and enhancing gains is crucial, and while challenges may arise, such as resistance from larger providers facing income reductions, the long-term benefits far outweigh initial hurdles. The saga continues, full of promise and potential.

“ I am the Contract Lead for the Emergency Accommodation Framework at Bristol City Council, overseeing a complex local government business with a contract value exceeding £96m. In 2021, V4S was commissioned to carry out a Contract Review of our Emergency Accommodation Framework, leading to a major transformation project set to launch in 2024. For the past 10 months, Andrew from V4Services has been an invaluable member of our Project Team, providing a calm and measured approach as a procurement specialist. His expertise in navigating Procontract and Proactis, along with his ability to respond directly to bidder queries, has ensured the project moves forward on schedule.

When Andy announced in early January 2024 that he would be stepping back from the project, there was a palpable air of disbelief from the project team. We have now had to accept that he has moved on. Andrew has provided Bristol with a very positive image of V4S and offered immeasurable project support during this complex business transformation. The new Framework is launching on February 21, 2024, and will run for five years. We wish him luck with future procurement projects. ”

Graham, Policy and Projects Officer, Housing Options Service, Bristol City Council



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