

2012 construction commitments - Affordable housing providers

Procurement and integration

A successful procurement policy requires ethical sourcing, enables best value to be achieved and encourages the early involvement of the supply chain. An integrated project team works together to achieve the best possible solution in terms of design, buildability, environmental performance and sustainable development.

- Procurement decisions will be transparent, made on best value rather than lower cost, use evaluation criteria and where appropriate, specialist advisors, whilst encouraging the contribution of smaller, specialist, or BME organisations.
- All members of the construction team will be identified and involved at an early stage, particularly during the design process, and encouraged to work collaboratively.
- Supply chain partners will be required to demonstrate their competency, their commitment to integrated working, innovation, sustainability and to a culture of trust and transparency.
- To ensure effective and equitable cashflow for all those involved, all contracts will incorporate fair payment practices, such as payment periods of 30 days, no unfair withholding of retentions, project bank accounts, where practicable and cost effective, and will include mechanisms to encourage defects free construction.
- The duties of each project team member will be identified and shared at the outset of the project and appropriate insurance policies, such as project insurance, put in place
- Risks will be clearly identified, financially quantified and allocated in line with each party's ownership and ability to manage the risk.
- All contracts will have an informal and non-confrontational mechanism to manage out disputes.
- The client is expected to have an equality and diversity policy, promote its principles to its supply chain partners and monitor supply chain application.

Client leadership

Client leadership is vital to the success of any project and enables the construction industry to perform at its best.

- The client structure and responsibilities will be clearly identified and adequately resourced to ensure continuity in leadership for the duration of the project.
- There will be client commitment to best practice guidelines and engendering cooperation with all organisations involved in the project.
- A clearly expressed, well researched impact and financial appraisal for the project will be developed for major development proposals.
- A detailed brief with clear financial objectives, programme and definition of what is meant by success will be developed by the client before the design stage for all projects and this will be shared at the outset with all those involved.
- The client will champion best practice in design, team-working, innovation, health and safety, and sustainability, and demand an appropriately trained and qualified workforce.
- A clear, collaborative and flexible procurement policy will be developed by the client.
- The client will work within the project team from the outset of the project to identify and manage project risks.
- The client will strive towards a zero defects policy and ensure that any defects which might adversely affect the occupiers enjoyment of the home are rectified prior to handover.

Design quality

The design should be creative, imaginative, sustainable and capable of meeting delivery objectives. Quality in design and construction utilising the best of modern methods will ensure that construction projects meet the needs of all stakeholders, both functionally and architecturally, for 2012 and beyond.

- The client will produce a clear brief before design commences.
- Designers will be selected according to ability and quality, together with other criteria appropriate to the scale and complexity of the project.
- Every opportunity will be taken to encourage visionary designs, including green spaces, good landscaping, art and sculpture, and high quality public realm.
- The design must suit the needs outlined in the project brief and ensure that whole-life value is delivered by addressing buildability, maintainability and usability, whilst driving health and safety throughout.
- Project briefs will specify performance criteria to encourage innovation in order to deliver cost-effective solutions, taking advantage of opportunities, where appropriate, for standardisation, prefabrication, off-site manufacture and adopting modern logistics principles.
- The client should regularly test its design approaches by means of 3rd party design reviews and other tools for assessing design quality.
- The client should consider using collaborative tools and communication technologies on a regular basis.

Commitment to people

Valuing people leads to a more productive and engaged workforce, facilitates recruitment and retention of staff and engages local communities positively in construction projects.

- Local employment projects and local training initiatives will be utilised wherever possible in order to create sustainable communities.
- Local communities will be fully involved and engaged from the outset of all projects.
- Training and development will be offered to all staff, including where appropriate supply chain partners, to meet individual and project needs.
- Supply chain partners will be encouraged to offer opportunities for apprenticeships and work experience.
- A policy of equal opportunities will be adopted to encourage a diverse workforce across all supply chain partners.
- Supply chain partners will be encouraged to regularly review and seek improvement through better employment practices, including training as well as health and safety.
- Construction sites will be regularly monitored to ensure that they are clean, tidy and provide good quality facilities, including catering, appropriate to the diverse needs of the workforce.
- Sites will be regularly monitored to ensure that they are run considerately without causing nuisance to local communities.

Sustainability

Sustainability lies at the heart of the delivery of communities in which people want to live and work. A sustainable approach will bring full and lasting environmental, social and economic benefits through regeneration and legacy (see also Commitment to People).

- The projects will be designed in accordance with the concept of "One Planet Living".
- An overarching Sustainable Development Strategy will be developed with relevant stakeholder.
- Each major project will have a specific Sustainability Action Plan which will address environmental, social and economic aspects, and aim to attain the highest levels within relevant standards and include all aspects of the supply chain.
- Targets will be set and performance will be monitored and appraised regularly.
- Projects will incorporate best practice approaches to resource use, waste minimisation, low-carbon performance, employment, training and community engagement.
- Development plans will seek to enhance, create and protect the local natural environment.
- Projects will actively aim to enhance the vitality and viability of local communities.

Health and safety

Health and safety is integral to the success of any project, from design and construction to subsequent operation and maintenance.

- All designs will address health and safety issues and all projects will have a risk register.
- Construction projects will aspire to be injury and incident-free.
- Every major project will have a strategy to deal with occupational health and provide qualified medical staff on site.
- All health and safety risks, including those relating to occupational health, will be assessed, managed, action taken and communicated from inception to design.
- Supply chain partners will be encouraged to sign up to and implement the Strategic Forum Health and Safety Code.
- All professional and site staff will be encouraged to hold Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards or equivalent.