

Pinnacle Facilities Management Trafford Housing Trust – Environmental Services Case Study

Method of Procurement

This grounds maintenance contract was procured through EU procurement and is for a fixed three-year contract. Residents were involved in the selection process.

Volume of Contract

This contract commenced in June 2006, representing an annual turnover of £260,000 and providing grounds maintenance services to more than 3,000 properties. The contract area comprises of 64 sites, 138,000 square metres of grass areas, 7,276 square metres of shrub/flower beds, 15,000 linear metres of hedges and approximately 10,000 square metres of hard surfaces/paving.

Nature of Work Undertaken

Grounds maintenance provisions to communal land owned by Trafford Housing Trust incorporating the following:

- Open spaces
- Grounds to sheltered schemes
- House frontages
- Community gardens
- Grass verges on footpaths that have not been adopted by the Local Authority.
- Individual garden maintenance
- 10 day cyclical maintenance of grassed areas including collection of 60% of grass arisings - which exceeds contract requirements.

Grassed edges are reformed during the winter period by hand or mechanical means to give a clear delineation between surfaces. Fencing lines, tree bases, signage and paths are sprayed with glyphosate on three occasions per season with spot treatment as required. There has been a 70 per cent improvement in the condition of grassed areas and sward.

Shrub and flower beds are cultivated and edges reformed when required so as to maintain a sharp neat edge. Shrub beds are treated with a granular residual herbicide such as Embargo. This type of application removes the risk of drift damage associated with conventional application. Shrub pruning is divided into two work areas to account for early and late flowering varieties. Pruning starts in November and we have produced a pruning schedule to inform customers and clients when each bed or shrub can and will be pruned. There has been a 60 per cent improvement in the condition of shrub beds since commencement of the contract.

Evergreens are pruned to minimize disease and reform shape to account for space restrictions. All hedges are maintained to a maximum height of 1.8 meters, a minimum two cuts per year.

All areas are litter picked before completion of horticultural task and all green arisings are environmentally recycled via Trafford Borough Council green waste unit which returns the waste to the public as useable compost.

Pinnacle believe quality control, inspection and monitoring are a key part of the management task. We have therefore implemented our own rigorous system which exceeds client systems and contract requirements. Pinnacle inspects sites prior to commencement of operations and again on completion with spot checks during operations.

Communication, partnership/multi-agency working and responsiveness, intrinsic in the Pinnacle way, are also a key part of the work undertaken and is demonstrated in continuous improvement detailed later.

Cost Model and Incentives / Shared Savings

This contract was tendered on a quality and cost price basis. The annual fee is fixed for core services with an annual uplift in line with AEI and agreed with client. Incentives for Pinnacle are primarily based on the quality and efficiency with which we perform services. This enables us to undertake additional fee earning work both the RSL and the local community which adds value to the overall area.

Form of Contract Used

The contract is a client contractor contract drafted by Trafford Housing Trust. Pinnacle and Trafford aim to work in partnership as much as possible, meeting regularly to discuss performance, new initiatives, resident involvement and the local supply chain.

Details of KPI's and Performance Achieved

In partnership with client representatives, Pinnacle were instrumental in devising performance indicators. The following indicators and monitoring criteria are now used by all contractors, client representatives and customers. The example below is for 'Tree Estate':

Element of Maintenance	Score (Out of 5)	Max Score
Soil Channels	4	5
Paths	4	5
Grass	4	5
Hedges	4	5
Shrub Beds	3	5
Ornamental Bed	5	5
Litter	5	5
Leaves	5	5
Other	5	5
TOTAL	39	45
PERCENTAGE	87%	

1=Poor 2=Unsatisfactory 3=Satisfactory 4=Good 5=Excellent

The contract was handed over by the previous incumbent in a very poor condition, which was reflected in a Poor/Unsatisfactory assessment at contract start. Through our approach of a quick win strategy and continuous improvement our scores now reflect a Satisfactory/Good/Excellent service.

Additional indicators and performance are:

Indicator	Pinnacle Performance
Percentage of telephone enquires/complaints resolved within 1 working day	100%
Percentage of written enquires/complaints resolved within 1 working day	100%
All contractor staff engaged on sheltered housing maintenance to be appropriately trained.	100%
All contractor staff in contact with vulnerable residents will have clear CRB check	100%
All vehicles, plant and equipment operated in with legislation & manufactures guidance/instructions	100%
All contractors staff will receive Customer Care, Equality & diversity training and understand THT EO policy	100%
All hazardous deposits to be removed within 4 hours of notification.	100%

Examples of Customer Involvement and in Service Delivery

From the inception of this contract, residents were involved in defining the specification. Residents and other stakeholders were also involved in the selection process through site visits, reality checks, short-listing and contractors' interviews.

Customers and client representatives randomly and routinely monitor service provisions and standards. Monitoring forms above are completed and since the commencement of the contract 380 monitoring assessments have taken place.

Pinnacle conducts monthly joint monitoring inspections with customers and client representatives. Sites for inspection are randomly selected by customers/clients without notice. Monitoring forms are completed and scored as above. Since commencement of the contract, 90 joint inspections have been completed.

Pinnacle also convenes a bi-monthly residents/client monitoring panel. We provide a performance assessment from our rigorous monitoring systems, and highlight our activities and achievements. This is followed by a question and answer session allowing open discussion, prioritisation and action -planning. Since commencement of the contract, 10 panels have convened.

Every six months a high-profile bus tour is conducted by client representatives, customers and Pinnacle to assess condition of maintained areas.

In addition to consulting with recognised residents representatives, Pinnacle has also been represented at 16 public/open meetings to raise awareness and allow customers to shape service delivery.

Details of IT

By combining our technology system with rigorous supervision and high-profile inspections, we have introduced a highly accountable and transparent service which gives the client the best of the old and new. The advantages include:

- Up to 500 tasks inspected every week by each supervisor;
- Minimum of 10% of team manager inspections checked by the contract manager
- Clear and accurate information
- Accountability to the client - progress can be assessed and measured
- Easy access to Pinnacle's FM 24 hour call centre
- Clarity of specification and tasks
- Production of method statements, risk assessments and health and safety at work procedures
- Training requirements identified and updated from the corrections list
- Improved supervision and management
- Quick response to problems and complaints, with pro-active task completion
- Overall improvements to service delivery, as the system is demand led

Linked to our electronic system we have our monitoring categorization. In essence the system works as Gold - we exceed the specification; Silver - meets all contract requirements; Bronze - identified a number of service defects that can be remedied in defined time-scales; Unclassified - several service failures

Pinnacle's corporate FM target is to achieve 90% Gold and Silver. Within the Trafford contract we currently achieve 92%, however it should be noted that our self-scoring regime is extremely challenging.

Use of Specialist Equipment

Pinnacle staff are certified for the safe use of a wide range of equipment including:

- Stump grinders used to remove tree stumps below ground level eliminating trip & striking hazards
- Chippers which use returns of green waste back to the shrub bed enhancing weed suppression and ascetics
- Side arm flails which are effective for combating difficult and neglected areas quickly bringing them back within contract specification

How the Supply Chain is Managed

As a national company, Pinnacle has a dedicated procurement team which can take advantage of bulk discounts and regional variances. We have long-standing partnerships and excellent terms with nurseries and horticultural engineers.

Pinnacle prides itself on putting something back into the community through a number of initiatives including our charity Elevate, Working Links and local employment. We have 100 per cent local employment within this contract.

Added Value to Contract

Pinnacle has contributed a number of articles to Trafford Housing Trust customer newsletters in the form of a gardening advice column answering customer queries.

Pinnacle personnel were invited to judge the annual residents' horticultural competition in Stretford in 2006 and 2007. 2008 sees the competition going borough-wide with Pinnacle being one of the principle sponsors, demonstrating our value and commitment to customers, clients and communities.

Pinnacle have been awarded eight Northwest in Bloom prizes judged by the Horticultural Society. These events and awards generate awareness and demonstrate our high standards in improving/designing areas. Another example is Victoria Court which scored an outstanding 123 out of possible 140 points. Comments from judges included *"a good example of community involvement"* and *"excellent formal bedding and baskets"*.

Pinnacle have also participated in clean-up campaigns, designed a number of schemes and created a variety of community gardens: Vine Court Patio, School Walk Clean Up and Wardle Close.

Pinnacle has a passion for excellence in service provision including best in class, exceeding contract specifications, responsiveness, communication and partnership working. As a result, clients, customers and even competitors look to us for our experience and approach.

We offer a 24-hour facilities management call centre to all our customers. All callers are promised a call back or visit within 24 hours. Calls are recorded and detailed logs of all calls are provided to clients.

Pinnacle standards have also been introduced to the contract including our Environmental Charter, Grounds Maintenance charter and Codes of Staff Conduct.

Problem Solving

The first issue encountered at the commencement of the contract was the condition of estates. As part of our mobilisation, we met with client representatives and customers to identify quick wins and priorities. Our approach was to ensure high visibility and activity in the early stages to build confidence and tackle priorities.

Dog fouling, litter and general anti-social behaviour near trees, shrubs and hedges was a particular problem. Rather than using this as an excuse, we actively worked with residents, client representatives and enforcement teams to identify perpetrators, repair damage quickly and raise awareness/standards.

Access to maintenance areas for teams and equipment was restrictive and hampered performance. Over a period, we compiled a list of actions and worked with client repairs and estate management staff within limited budgets to identify and prioritise solutions.

Pinnacle have worked very closely with residents, Community Police Officers and housing staff to identify areas used for unlawful activities. Action was taken to remedy the situation. For example, gangs of youths congregating and upsetting elderly residents were hidden from

CCTV by shrub beds. After consultation with Police and Housing Officers, the area was cleared leaving nowhere for youths to hide.

Please provide evidence as to how your plans and actions have contributed to Continuous improvement as demonstrated in the above points.

Performance monitoring since June 2006 has provided evidence of continuous improvement of the condition of maintained areas. Improved satisfaction levels and reduced complaints demonstrate that the service has continually improved.

Client satisfaction has continued to grow and as a result the client has regularly invited Pinnacle to undertake additional works and special projects. This demonstrates the confidence in our ability to deliver.

Confidence in our ability to exceed the contract and continue to improve the environment is also evidenced by some of the positive feedback from customers and clients below:

"The residents of Clyne Court would like to thank Pinnacle for the wonderful job on our gardens. They have given our residents a new lease of life and they now have great pride in their gardens. No job is ever too small for their contract manager"
Sheltered Housing Residents – Clyne Court.

"Pinnacle started at a very low point in terms of condition of sites they inherited but have made a fantastic job of turning sites around". "Each enquiry is met with an incredible enthusiasm to not only meet but exceed our expectations"
Stephen Lynch – Neighbourhood Impact Officer

Further information and clarification from:
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