

**OCTOBER 2010**



## **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

Over 200 delegates descended on Old Trafford Cricket Ground on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September for the 2010 Procure Plus Annual Conference. Contractors, manufacturers, suppliers and RPs from across the North West came together at the event, which was the first since the merger between GM Procure and IMPACT Manchester earlier this year.

Following the merger, and with changes in Government firmly in mind, the conference focused on 'The Future', looking at how Procure Plus members can work together going forward and how social housing is likely to develop.

The day began with an introduction from Procure Plus Chair, Ian Perry, who outlined the company's journey so far and key milestones since the merger. This was followed by a passionate, thought-provoking talk from the day's keynote speaker, Wayne Hemingway. In his talk, Wayne challenged common practices within the development and construction of social housing schemes, encouraging RPs to create great places to live, rather than homes.

Wayne's insightful speech was followed by a forward-looking presentation from Chief Executive, Mike Brogan, during which he spoke of the potential for Procure Plus members in the new build sector, as well as opportunities in the retrofit market.

Lee Parkinson, Chief Executive Officer of Efficiency North was next to the podium to discuss the importance of joint working in the housing sector, and its work with Re:allies, a strategic collaboration between housing consortiums Procure Plus, ne procurement and Efficiency



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North. Lee's presentation fed nicely into lunch, and encouraged attendees to use the break to network with their peers.

Procure Plus' Brian Tarmey began proceedings after the break, providing a comprehensive overview of the company's systems and processes. Brian was joined on stage by colleague Gwen Heap who outlined new services available through Procure Plus, including its developments in fleet, merchant and voids, and Vicki Murcott from Valueworks who gave an insight into the e-Procurement system.

Kate Parker, Community Investment and Training Manager and Fiona Sharp, Corporate Social Responsibility manager at Procure Plus, chaired the penultimate session of the day, which focused on 'the plus' delivered by the organisation.

To provide a firsthand account of its Sense of Place scheme, Kate and Fiona were joined by Ian Gregg from Parkway Green Housing Trust, Tree of Life Centre Manager, Adam Webb and Karl Colyer from Stockport Homes. During each of their talks, the representatives described their work with Procure Plus and how they had benefited from the fund. Closing the session, Fiona provided an overview of new CSR opportunities available including corporate giving and tenant involvement.

Vice chair of Procure Plus, Nigel Wilson, concluded the day's proceedings, giving thanks to the event's organisers and hosts. Nigel also paid thanks to AFTA Thought, the training company which brought the key themes of the day to life through a series of drama performances.

The Annual Conference delivered a perfect balance of informative and stimulating sessions, which will give attendees food for thought ahead of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review later this month.

**For more information on the conference, contact Procure Plus on 0303 030 0030.**