

Balance Brings Best Results for Trafford Housing

As a stock transfer from Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council in 2005 - and founder member of GM Procure - Trafford Housing Trust balances the need for low cost, high efficiency procurement with the responsibilities of being a neighbourhood based landlord.

Trafford Housing Director of Delivery Jane McCall said: “We aim to procure 75% of eligible works through GM Procure; we are close to that target now by procuring planned improvements, gas servicing and investment works via the GM Procure model. Our preference for certain works is to procure in-house; failing that we would use GM Procure, and then our final option is to go to the external market.”

Jane, who sits on the GM Procure Board and is chair of the audit committee, suggested that GM Procure might look for more external opportunities to grow the organisation.

She said: “I believe improved external communications would help attract potential customers and sell the benefits to existing members. The merger with Impact Manchester will help that objective but we particularly need to ‘sell’ the idea to operational staff within the member organisations who may not be fully briefed on the achievements of GM Procure.

“There is a perception in some quarters that GM Procure can be more expensive than using local contractors. We need to spread the word that the consortium may not be the cheapest for each individual contract but they are more competitive in the long run and offer many added value benefits such as training, local labour and community investment.”

Trafford Housing joined GM Procure soon after the stock transfer of 9,000 homes from the council, and, although Jane was not in post at that time, she acknowledges that the board did not need much convincing to join.

Jane said: “The future will probably see us looking at opportunities for new services, such as the fleet management scheme which is imminent. It would be unlikely that we would use contracted labour through GM Procure because we have inherited those repair operatives from the council and have our own successful in-house workforce. We would also like to make more use of the Sense of Place fund but at the moment we find that some of our schemes fall outside its criteria.

“There is no doubt that GM Procure will grow; as long as we keep the scale of purchasing we can drive efficiencies and show new members our successful route to procurement, and demonstrate the added value that being part of such a consortium brings.”