

BEXLEY COUNCIL

Three Questions with Sue Morton, Assistant Procurement Manager, Bexley Council

> WHO ARE BEXLEY COUNCIL?

Bexley Council is based in South East London and we look after the 21 wards in the London Borough of Bexley including Crayford, Belvedere and East Wickham.

We spend over £30 million a year on construction, building and engineering which includes maintenance work, one-off projects and landscaping.

> WHAT PROCUREMENT OR SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE?

Large projects can often entail expensive procurement processes but we need to deliver our work in a way which demonstrates maximum value for money.

Operating long term framework agreements can cause problems with assessing the financial status of our suppliers. During a construction project the suitability of a contractor may have changed since the point at which they were pre-qualified.

If a supplier that was financially sound suddenly fell into administration then our projects would be left incomplete, which would have a serious effect on both timescales and budgets.

Specialist projects can also create difficulties as finding contractors with niche skills, such as for a one project which required an expert on grass roofing installation, can be time consuming.

> HOW DOES CONSTRUCTIONLINE HELP?

We registered with Constructionline eight years ago as the service provides us with ongoing risk management support as well as allowing us to effectively outsource the pre-qualification process.

Over 80 per cent of the suppliers on our approved lists are registered with Constructionline and the monitoring system means we can perform real time checks on the financial status of these companies.

This has proved to be an invaluable framework management tool especially during the past few years of economic instability. By monitoring the financial position of the contractors on our lists we can avoid being caught out when a company is hit with problems.



// COMPANY PROFILE

Areas of operation:
London

Type of work:
General Building

Telephone number:
020 8303 7777

Website:
www.bexley.gov.uk

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Finding contractors for specialist jobs has also been made easier by Constructionline as their extensive database means we have details of over 21,000 suitable companies at our fingertips. It is reassuring to know that all of these are pre-qualified.

Another service we have found particularly useful is the 'Meet the Buyer' events which give us face-to-face contact with local businesses so we can cultivate new relationships and offer support and guidance to suppliers who we already work with.

Not only can Constructionline help smaller contractors link up with local clients like us but with a typical pre-qualification questionnaire taking up to four hours to complete it saves them from unnecessarily repeating the process.



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