



Harbour view | St Ives Cornwall

Cornwall Council

Supporting the local economy

A new funding opportunity tied to local economic development provided the impetus for Cornwall Council to start working with Bloom.

The partnership also helped the Council address a range of issues raised by a review of procurement activity – including challenges linked to tracking funds spent on consultancy services.

To date, Cornwall Council has arranged consultancy services through the NEPRO solution operated by Bloom for a range of projects including a development programme for the Council's Senior Leadership Team, a renewable energy generation initiative and an IT migration to cloud-based solutions.

"Any organisation with a reasonable spend on professional services would benefit from working with Bloom."

"We've set Bloom some difficult challenges and criteria and they've facilitated conversations with suppliers to address our issues every time."

Stuart Hinde, Senior Supply Chain Specialist

80

projects through
Bloom Oct 2016
-Sept 2017

£2.7m

project value

11.8%

savings delivered
against budget

32

days from tender
announcement to
signed contract



OJEU compliant



Local economy



Visibility & control



Reduced risk

The challenge

Cornwall Council's Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) required a framework for procuring specialist services to assess bids for grant funding, ideally from local suppliers. The requirement aligned with the Council's interest in supporting small businesses, and also with the purpose of the grant funding: to develop the Cornish economy.

Meanwhile, Cornwall Council was reviewing its approach to procuring specialist consultancy services, with a view to improving its ability to write clear specifications, track spend on consultancy services across the organisation, manage contracts and go to market more rapidly.

Our solution

Bloom both fulfilled the LEP's criteria and addressed the needs revealed by Cornwall Council's procurement review.

Shortlisting suppliers through Bloom lets Cornwall Council review each bid more thoroughly while reducing spend and officer time spent on each project. The NEPRO solution also allows Cornwall Council to conduct more pre-tender engagement with the market, with assurance of OJEU compliance.

Bloom's cloud-based project management system, Pro-vidé, is helping embed procurement best practice within Cornwall Council. The system requires the Council to focus on outcomes when drafting specifications, set clear milestones, and proactively manage contracts with suppliers.

Pro-vidé also enables the Council to move towards a category management approach: to gain a big-picture view of different categories of spend, and make informed decisions about whether to deliver services with internal or external resource.

Cornwall Council now mandates the use of the NEPRO solution through Bloom for all consultancy services procurement. Some staff were resistant to what they saw as procurement expanding its remit into their areas, but that changed when people realised procurement through Bloom was not the bureaucratic process they had imagined.

Bloom also helped the Council engage with local suppliers about the proposed partnership, with a supplier day in April 2017. While some incumbent suppliers voiced concerns about the change, many smaller, more specialist suppliers saw it for the opportunity it was – to compete on more of a level playing field with larger incumbents.

Objective	Outcomes
Rapid route to market	Bids back within 12 days Contracts signed within 32 days
Developing the local Cornish economy	Enabled to procure local suppliers more efficiently and access local economic development funding
Category management	Pro-vidé enables steps in this direction
Pre-tender market engagement	Bloom and the Nepro Solution's built-in OJEU compliance enables the Council to conduct this activity with reduced risk
Reduce procurement spend	£323,000 (11.8%) savings
IR35 regulatory compliance	Reassurance that all services procured through Bloom are outside the scope of IR35