Case study

BARKERS
COMMERCIAL CONSULTANCY

SEVEN POLICE FORCE COLLABORATION

Driving Multi-Force Savings and Social Impact: A Seven Forces Collaboration

Sector: Public Sector. Contract period: August'20 – March'22

Coordinating seven police forces for their first major collaborative FM procurement was an ambitious undertaking. With multiple stakeholders, complex requirements, and the added challenges of remote working during COVID-19, the Forces needed expert support to deliver savings, social impact, and strengthened procurement capability.

Summary

Seven Police Forces needed capability and capacity support for developing category strategies and conducting complex OJEU procurements for new, high-value FM contracts. The first major contracts were successfully delivered as a Seven Force collaboration, achieving £5.4m in immediate savings, setting up a further £1.7m of future savings, and enabling £29.6m of social value contribution over the life of the contracts.

In addition, Barkers provided category and SRM training, established an SRM framework, delivered assurance consultancy services, and—through an integral approach with Seven Forces teams—assisted with additional projects such as managing a third-party co-located datacentre.

Business Challenge

Seven Forces required support to enhance the capability of their procurement and SRM teams and access category management expertise to run their first three major collaborative procurements.

Their primary objectives included:

1. Understanding key priorities across all seven police force authorities and recommending a review of the tender pipeline and broader opportunities to agree joint priorities.
2. Collating disparate data from multiple authority stakeholders to produce consistent statements of requirements.
3. Manage the delivery of complex FM procurements with multiple force requirements and stakeholders
4. Ensuring adherence to Public Procurement Regulations 2015 and Seven Forces governance.
5. Upskilling procurement and SRM teams.

Delivering this work during COVID-19 restrictions added significant complexity. The team had to work entirely remotely, meaning no face-to-face workshops with stakeholders or suppliers, no on-site visits, and limited opportunities to clarify requirements in person. Coordinating across seven different police forces, each with its own priorities and systems, required innovative approaches to communication, data collation, and consensus building.

At the same time, there was constant pressure to deliver substantial savings within very tight timescales. The first major collaborative contracts needed to meet ambitious financial targets while also laying the foundation for long-term social value and operational improvements. Balancing these demands required agility, meticulous planning, and a highly coordinated approach between Barkers and the Seven Forces teams.

Our solution

Barkers provided experienced senior procurement and analytical resources, led by a programme lead to ensure seamless client interaction. Their approach focused on guidance, pipeline exploration, and project prioritisation.

A specialised FM and OJEU procurement team collated stakeholder data, drafted specifications, developed category strategies, and conducted procurements in full compliance with Public Procurement Regulations, supported by daily calls and weekly progress reporting.

Recognising the high-profile nature of the collaboration, Barkers prioritised savings delivery and social value contribution, monitored through fortnightly and monthly reporting with a dedicated savings tracker.

An SRM framework was established, SRM opportunities identified, and training modules developed and delivered interactively to upskill the client teams. Additional projects—such as supplier ERP selection, payment term reviews, and national benchmarking—were managed by experts and coordinated by a senior managing consultant leading the programme.

The results

Barkers' approach delivered measurable outcomes across savings, social value, and team capability. Key results from the collaborative procurement and category strategy work include:

- Delivered £5.4m in savings to Seven Forces' three-year £10m target within six months (waste and recycling, cleaning, and grounds maintenance contracts).
- Established a further £1.7m in future savings through market analysis and category strategies (water utilities, waste SRM, utility billing recovery, and construction consultancy JCT contracts).
- Generated £29.6m in social value across three new FM contracts.
- Upskilled category and SRM teams with interactive, targeted training highly rated by participants.
- Provided supplier assurance advice on cloud options, accepted by Seven Forces.

Social Value

Social value is an integral part of the Seven Forces' supply chain strategy. The Forces aim to ensure communities and local suppliers are actively engaged and benefit from social value investment. Their tendering process evaluates potential suppliers on how they will contribute to and work with the local community. Police Commissioners have a vested interest in creating social value within their communities, and contribution to social value forms an important part of each Authority's Police and Crime Plan.

For the three main FM procurements, Barkers selected appropriate social value criteria from the National Themes, Outcomes, and Measures (TOMs) Framework, in line with the principles of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. Specific themes were chosen to ensure winning bidders embedded relevant social value within their supply chains.

Barkers enabled the delivery of tender outcomes across the three new major FM contracts, resulting in commitments to deliver £29.6m of social value over the next four years. This covered multiple areas including:

- Increasing local employment opportunities
- Greater engagement with the community through donations of materials or manpower to local projects
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Creating opportunities for disadvantaged people
- Promoting ethical procurement

Additionally, Barkers devised a waste management category strategy aimed at delivering a consistent approach across the Seven Forces regions. This included a requirement for winning bidders to use at least 50% SME sub-contractors within their supply chains, further enhancing social value and local economic impact.

> "We selected Barkers primarily for the depth of their procurement experience but also because their ethical approach and commitment to the creation of social value differentiates them from other consultancies. The Barkers team worked alongside our staff to enhance the team and accelerate our delivery of budget impacting savings and the creation of localised social value."
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> David Levy, Head of Strategic Procurement, Seven Force Strategic Collaboration