



Lambeth Schools Consortium

Due to Government changes to central funding, the provision and management of primary school meals in Lambeth was delegated to schools in 2013.

With this, schools were given the autonomy to individually procure their own catering service or form a collective whereby each school would benefit from economies of scale. The decision was to form the Lambeth Schools Consortium (LSC) comprising 40 primary schools.

The catering contract was successfully awarded in 2014 and universally provided all schools a superior school meal service at a considerable price reduction from what had previously been levied by the council.

Background

Due to the scale and required level of technical expertise in public procurement, LSC appointed Litmus Partnership to tender the group contract to ensure 'best value' was achieved for all participating schools and that the process was fully compliant with OJEU procedures.

Brief

The six objectives Litmus was briefed on were:

- ▶ Managing the process of and preparing the LSC catering specification;
- ▶ Managing the entire tender process in line with OJEU procedures;
- ▶ Providing strategic direction and making decisions on behalf of participating schools;
- ▶ Providing a forum for raising issues and facilitating problem solving;
- ▶ Acting as a consultative body for Headteachers and other stakeholders; and
- ▶ After the tender, providing ongoing dedicated monitoring of the contracted service to ensure compliance with the contract.

Approach

Simon Biggs, the Litmus Partnership, said: "We appointed a dedicated team to manage the entire tender process and in turn were invited onto the LSC Management Board to ensure good governance and reporting protocols. This ensured we were working as one, united team.

"The tender followed a 'Restricted Procedure' involving six bidding companies and took 12 months in duration to complete. Our involvement didn't end once the tender was complete – following the tender, we appointed a full-time dedicated Contracts Manager to monitor the financial and qualitative performance of the contracted service. This has meant we can ensure the best possible results on an ongoing basis."

Outcomes

The catering contract was successfully awarded in 2014 and universally provided all schools a superior school meal service at a considerable price reduction from what had previously been levied by the council.

Through Litmus's ongoing stringent management of KPI's and contract compliance, the catering contractor has consistently made year-on-year improvements in food and service quality, coupled with maintaining a market competitive meal price that continues to deliver 'best value'.

▶▶ We are deeply grateful to Litmus for the level of expertise and professionalism they applied to managing the complexities of the tender process and securing the best possible outcome for all our schools. We are confident without their ongoing support and guidance we would not have the quality of school meals we enjoy today.◀◀

Chair, Lambeth Schools Consortium



For more information about Litmus get in touch:

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