

Connect Plus Sustainable Business Culture Model

Procurement route

Two Stage Open Book with particular focus on the Intelligent Client



Project details

Client	Connect Plus (M25) Highways England
Project value	£350m
Form of project	Highways asset management programme programme
Main contractor	Jackson Civil Engineering Limited Aggregate Industries Lafarge Tarmac Balfour Beatty (Geoffrey) Osborne Limited Skanska UK PLC
Lead designer & Contract Manager	Atkins Consultancy Services Limited Flint & Neill Limited Connect Plus Services

Key outcomes delivered via the procurement approach

-  regularly updating key stakeholders and local residents about the construction process
-  encouragement of innovation to enable cost-effective solutions
-  enabling data sharing to reduce waste in the design and construction process
-  client works collaboratively with the supply chain to identify and manage risks and opportunities
-  balanced design, programme, resources, and cost through the Collaborative Cost Review
-  environmental responsibility & low carbon emissions

Procurement route description

The Two Stage Open Book is a system of preconstruction phase project processes governed by the early appointment of a full project team. This procurement model sees the Client invite prospective team members, whether for a single project or under a framework or alliance, to bid for a project based on an outline brief and cost benchmark. The Two Stage Open Book model reduces industry bidding costs and enables faster mobilisation. It provides the opportunity for Clients to work earlier with a single Integrated Team, testing design, cost, and risk issues ahead of commencement on site following full project award at the end of the second stage.

Connect Plus has created and implemented an innovative "Sustainable Business Culture Model" through which integrated teams are delivering a highways asset management programme. This is done in an efficient and collaborative manner under the Two Stage Open Book within the 30 year concession awarded by the Highways England in respect of the M25. The Model uses Two Stage Open Book combined with cultural change to align and integrate the client with Tier 1, 2 & 3 supply chain members. Thus, greater transparency, innovation and joint risk management is enabled, while any emergent problems are identified and solved. The implementation of Two Stage Open Book under the Model is supported by Connect Plus' adoption of a collaborative culture in accordance with ISO44001 Collaborative Business Relationships. This is the first example of collaborative procurement through Two Stage Open Book being adopted by a consortium delivering a long-term concession.

Lessons learned

collaborative culture

A number of framework facilitators were selected, trained, and accredited to ensure that there are sufficient individuals with the attitude and competency to deliver a collaborative working culture.

contractor leadership

With the Balanced Scorecard in place, the directors and facilitators feel empowered with skills and behaviours to support and lead the cultural change and role-model collaboration.

early contractor involvement

Allowing Tier 1,2 & 3 supply chain members to contribute with their proposals to improve design, programming, and risk management in advance of start on site to ensure the proposals can be taken into account. This brings added value on a series of demanding projects.

learning from the past

Lessons learned are being discussed at an early stage between the client and the main contractor. This ensures that good practice is repeated, allowing continuous improvement.

Key challenges

early engagement

There was a need to move away from the traditional maintenance processes that require 24 hour traffic management and extensive network closures. Therefore early engagement with the supply chain was recognised to be the solution.

exchanging information

Clear processes for exchanging information on a collaborative manner needed to be set up. The discussions led by Tier 1 contractors, with the support from Tier 2&3, promote the best method of delivering a project.

instil innovation

To maximise the benefits brought in by this procurement approach, it was essential to remove traditional behaviours. The Balanced Scorecard helped immensely in instilling an appetite for innovation and uptake for new, advantageous collaborative practices.

Positive opinions



Regional Operations Director for the East of England

“This new innovative way of working is another sign of our commitment to continually drive improvements on how our busiest roads in the East of England are operated, maintained and improved.



Jackson Civil Engineering

“Conventional methods to replace joints involve lengthy lane closures, resulting in chaos and severe financial penalties. With their framework partners, Connect Plus developed a bespoke solution, a world-first for joint replacement.

This innovative solution has the potential to be used at 28 other locations on the M25. Learning from the past allow us to continuously improve our services.



Client objectives & vision

Connect Plus has sought to create a sustainable business culture for the M25 Community. It sought to emphasise the importance of collaborative working led by an intelligent client in the adoption of a sustainable approach to the Two Stage Open Book procurement route.

Connect Plus were able to make use of its long term M25 DBFO contract as a foundation on which to develop healthy, long-term relationships throughout the supply chain. It was recognised that commercial and technical capability is not enough in isolation to operate the DBFO contract successfully. Moreover, the supply chain will be able to work more efficiently with a better understanding of the work environment as part of an integrated team. The problems created by an ageing brownfield site like M25 cannot be solved by standard risk management approaches alone. Connect Plus needed a model that had buy-in and understanding of a common purpose and strategies to cope.

The reason for this approach

To deliver the Model, Connect Plus engaged Temporal Consulting as its collaborative change consultant to identify what was required to adopt an integrated and sustainable collaborative approach. The leaders of Connect Plus, Connect Plus Services, and the supply chain came together to create a Collaborative Transformation Steering Group. The client wanted to build and maintain a *community* culture that supports collaborative supply chain relationships led from the top. The operation of a Balanced Scorecard system allows for identification of strengths and weaknesses in performance and working relationships. This encourages the honest and transparent resolution of differences. Connect Plus used the Sustainable Business Culture Model to secure emotionally and commercially mature relationships throughout all levels of the supply chain. With the emphasis on creating and maintaining a group of directors and facilitators empowered with the skills and behaviours to support and lead the cultural change, the benefits of the Model are maximised, reducing the programme risks and minimising the impact on the environment.

One of the key features of the Model was the establishment of a key collaborative process in the procurement and delivery of works known as the “Collaborative Cost Review”. This is a milestone within a project, allowing all parties to work together to balance design, programme, resources and cost. It can be used to identify potential risks within particular processes or materials (and associated costs) and help to gain a greater understanding of value as opposed to cost. At the core of the procurement route was a focus on sharing lessons learned from similar projects to instil adaptability and flexibility into the teams.

The difference from traditional approach

- this approach focuses not just on what is delivered but also on how it is delivered, with an in depth face-to-face engagement
- the procurement route enables the supply chain to operate as a fully integrated unit, which creates meaningful contractual performance
- it provides innovation through collaborative working, for example minimising the impact on the environment
- the Model creates a group of trained and accredited facilitators from throughout the supply chain that are responsible for promoting and maintaining a collaborative culture
- the collaborative culture enables the identification of the best solution in respect of design, buildability, and environmental performance
- it helps establishing benchmarks for continuous improvement through the Balance Scorecard System

Client's observations

Connect Plus

“We pride ourselves on working collaboratively with Highways England and our supply chain partners in providing the framework for delivering core operations and maintenance services as well as significant asset renewal and improvement schemes. We value our stakeholder relationships, which is why we've invested heavily in achieving and maintaining accreditation to the internationally recognised standard ISO 44001 for collaborative working.

Together with Connect Plus Services, our specialist and strategic supply chain partner responsible for operations and maintenance, we're passionate about delivering the long-term needs of the M25 and improving the driving experience for all our customers.

For more information on the case study click [here](#)