



BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL: ONE YEAR IN ...

From April 2019 West Mercia Energy (WME) became the gas and electricity framework provider to Birmingham City Council (BCC).

We catch up with them to review the first year ...

Switching suppliers on large complex portfolios can be challenging. How was your experience of the transfer process?

BCC has a significant portfolio, well in excess of 2,000 supplies, including corporate sites, street-lighting and schools, so managing this was understandably our biggest apprehension in changing suppliers.

The management of this process was excellent. An 'on-boarding plan' was put in place at the very beginning of the process and regular progress meetings took place between all relevant parties.

Once the transfer application process began, we were provided with regular progress reports throughout. In summary, the whole on-boarding process was a success, which is no mean feat when you consider the size and complexity of our energy portfolio.

What have been the key benefits to BCC since the move to WME?

WME has brought a range of benefits to us as a Council, but also to our 200+ contracted schools. We are particularly pleased with the comprehensive budgetary information provided throughout the year which helps us inform our schools of their upcoming budgets. We receive final pricing in advance of the new FY, this despite us running more than one trading strategy for our portfolio.

In addition, we receive regular MIS reporting from the framework supplier, Total Gas and Power (TGP), which helps us manage our portfolio more thoroughly, particularly our school sites. Billing is timely and accurate, and queries are managed and resolved in a timely manner by a dedicated CRM team.

"The service we have received from both WME and their framework supplier, Total Gas & Power has been first class. We have no hesitation in recommending WME to other public sector organisations"

What has been the biggest challenge to overcome in the first year of working with WME?

The biggest challenge was getting the portfolio in a position to transfer. Managing a large public sector portfolio can be difficult to keep on top of with the high churn of buildings being removed and added to the portfolio. We have a large number of schools who utilise the Council's corporate contract and checking key school contacts took some time and resource.

What advice would you give other Authorities considering switching providers?

Do not stick with your incumbent just because 'you have always used them', there may be better out there.

Also, ensure you have a good grip on your portfolio. An accurate list of meter numbers, site addresses and AQ's etc. Recent actual reads were also useful. Where we had gaps, WME and TGP were extremely helpful in sourcing information from national databases, liaising with our incumbent suppliers as required and supporting us in any way they could to gather any missing information.

How have you found the support from WME's framework supplier, Total Gas and Power?

TGP have been excellent. They have been ever present at meetings and their suite of reporting provides everything we need to manage our portfolio. It is clear that they have an excellent relationship with WME, with each having clear and defined roles to successfully deliver the contract. This has no doubt aided the successful implementation of our new energy contract.

Finally, would you recommend WME to other public sector organisations?

Absolutely. The support we have received from the day we signed the contract to date has been excellent. WME are a personable and proactive company and nothing we have asked of them has been too much. They have gone above and beyond our expectations of what is required to support our contract. We are surprised at the level of support provided under a 'Procurement Only' service provision.

They provide a high quality and personable energy provision and the service we have received from both them, and their framework supplier, Total Gas & Power has been first class. We have no hesitation in recommending WME to other public sector organisations.