

LOCAL AUTHORITY

BUILDING & MAINTENANCE



DECENT HOMES REFURBISHMENT INC CIH PEVIEW

closed-loop recycling – renovating voids – management software – CIH 2009

ROOFING, CLADDING & INSULATION

low maintenance steel roofs – eco friendly materials – external wall insulation

DOORS, WINDOWS & GLAZING

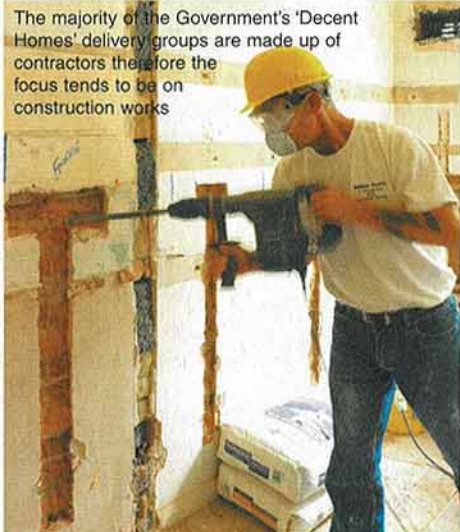
BS8300:2009 – U-Values – weather performance – Green Guide

SCHOOLS & COMMUNAL BUILDINGS

heat pumps – problem gutters – anti-graffiti techniques – panellised timber systems

Information highway

The majority of the Government's 'Decent Homes' delivery groups are made up of contractors therefore the focus tends to be on construction works



Sean Tobin outlines why ALMOs and local authorities should have effective information systems in place to reap the benefits of the current market situation.

The majority of the Government's 'Decent Homes' delivery groups are made up of contractors, therefore the focus tends to be on construction works. However without a focus on information systems in place accessing all types of data and monitoring the performance of each project there is the potential to fail. With organisations already expected to find a minimum of 3% efficiency savings each year as a result of the current Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, many will already be looking at their operations to see if they can introduce cost efficiencies. But the drive for leaner operations does not stop there. From 2010/11 onwards organisations will be expected to identify further savings, as outlined in the Operational Efficiency Programme in the 2008 Pre budget Report.

With multiple tier supply chains, hundreds of suppliers and a variety of individual choices to be made by tenants, the need to efficiently collect information is fundamental to the effectiveness of any 'Decent Homes' delivery programme. Large scale construction projects such as the Government's 'Decent Homes' programme have significant scope for errors and in the past projects have suffered from duplication of orders, wastage of resources and a lack of financial tracking that leads to additional costs. By using simple integrated information systems to draw all of a project's information together, companies from all sides of a programme can obtain up-to-date and relevant information.

Operational delivery

JRP developed a purchasing and supply system which addresses traditional problems and bottlenecks associated with refurbishment projects — the majority of which occur when all the partners are not being involved or given ownership of information. To solve this, the purchasing and supply programme allows the client's project managers to approve purchase and work orders in real-time and allows both the supplier and purchaser to track delivery and invoice status, helping to reduce bottlenecks and let all parties have sight of where they stand.

The system also enables the projection of costs against specific stock data. For example, based on contractors' costs, the

database can produce a bottom-line figure for each dwelling type (two-bedroom house) or per 'Decent Homes' item (kitchens, bathrooms, etc). If a client's budget is then reduced it is possible to undertake quick value engineering to recalculate what the revised budget will be.

To help Hammersmith & Fulham Homes control costs JRP implemented a traffic light system to monitor and track projects. This allowed key project milestone dates to be tracked against planned and forecasted dates so that any changes could be quickly identified. In addition a cash flow modelling tool also tracks monthly and yearly budgets, spend to date and anticipated spends as the project progresses. In order to assist ALMOs to increase tenant satisfaction JRP created an electronic defects database to help increase productivity, speed up responses to queries and increase tenant satisfaction.

Measurement and monitoring

The data collected is not only vital for the success of delivery programmes but with public sector housing clients tasked with reporting on achievements against Constructing Excellence's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) the need for efficient performance measurement is imperative. To help clients meet this need, JRP has developed a simple, user-friendly system that automates clients' existing framework KPIs in a database. The system then helps to monitor all construction partners and contractors individually on a monthly basis, providing personal benchmarks that enable early identification of problems and shortfalls, thereby providing for efficient working.

The universal availability of centralised systems removes the need for visits to tenants' homes and trawling through masses of documents and data. This is a vital part of collaborative working and another example of how private/public partnerships can really benefit their local communities by delivering projects on time and within budget.

■ Sean Tobin is a partner at John Rowan & Partners (JRP)

For more information on JRP's purchasing and supply system mark Readerlink 165