



Mears & North Somerset Council

Project synopsis

Mears was awarded a 7-year, multi-functional contract with North Somerset Council in 2020, which covers 213 sites. The contract provides reactive and planned maintenance, compliance testing, and minor works across the whole of North Somerset. Within the contract, Mears is responsible for the full compliance of facilities that include schools, shelters, cemeteries, housing and industrial estates. Across the 213 sites there are 60 different areas that cover emergency lighting, domestic hot water supplies, water treatment equipment, nursing staff call systems and fire alarms.

The schools across the county can also opt-in on a framework to use our services which means Mears needs to be able to meet demand at short notice and we have seen the number of schools that use this framework increase since we started.



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Delivering services during COVID-19

The contract began at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic when the country went into a national lockdown. This meant that an already multifaceted contract would need to become even more flexible and adaptable, changing with each new, untrodden step the pandemic would un-veil.

To enable Mears to successfully deliver a contract like this during such unprecedented circumstances, the framework had to be continuously reviewed and the processes changed to ensure they were still working as effectively as possible. To facilitate this, Mears utilised its in-house computer aided facilities management system, Mears Contract Management (MCM), alongside complementary mobile solutions (Mears Enable app) that focus on the capture of data for fully transparent works management to North Somerset Council. These innovative solutions are tailored to Council's contract specifications and KPI's; with the ability for us to reflect bespoke processes without incurring delay or the cost associated with a third-party provider providing the best value to the client.

Mobilisation of a large project like this always requires staff to be collaborative and flexible. Affects from the pandemic meant staff furlough, businesses changing how they worked, and people working from home, but key areas like the areas covered in our scope of works remained open – highlighting our need for flexibility and a one-team attitude.

What were the outcomes?

Mears' helpdesk was logging task priorities, scheduling, and monitoring tasks. Self-monitoring and reporting between North Somerset Council and Mears kept everyone engaged and informed, enabling changes to be made when needed as quickly as possible.

Flexibility from all Mears staff was essential to this project. The team restructures and TUPE of staff meant the team had to learn quickly to work alongside new colleagues, all whilst still performing at their highest level.

The successful deployment and engagement of this contract required full collaboration and a working partnership between North Somerset Council and Mears. Mears worked closely with the Council to amend the mobilisation plan, as buildings within the contract were closed under the lockdown restrictions which prevented asset and condition surveys from being completed.

Meetings were held weekly via Teams which enabled Mears to be flexible and accommodate the Council's plan for facilities being open or closed. It required support from all areas, moving with new restrictions and also the availability of services. Mears staff showed flexibility, hard work, the ability to work collaboratively as a partnership, and determination allowing them to mobilise successfully within the timescales originally predicted despite the climate they were working within.

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