

Case Study: An Inspirational & Collaborative Workplace – Environmental and Sustainable Procurement impacts achieved.



Summary

During 2016 Public Health Wales (PHW) relocated from several smaller satellite offices across Wales to one new large open plan office in Cardiff Bay (51,000sft over 4 floors) incorporating the transfer of around 500 staff. PHW wanted to create a unique workplace environment designed to encourage a collaborative, social and learning focused workspace which embedded sustainability as a core principle.

The brief produced for furnishing the building emphasised the need for environmental, economic and social sustainability to be demonstrated throughout the refit. In order to achieve this PHW took a new and innovative approach to procuring office equipment, furnishings and flooring using as much re-used and remanufactured equipment and products as possible. PHW wanted the successful bidder to use as much of the existing office furniture as was reasonable: repairing and refurbishing where necessary and adding new elements as required. The exercise was based on a collaborative approach to securing a required outcome, rather than a detailed specification of numbers and needs, with suppliers invited to provide tenders which, in a variety of means, would meet the client's design and supply needs.

Objectives

PHW, as an organisation dedicated to improving public health and well-being, felt that this objective should extend across all their activities, including procurement of goods and services, and the refit was identified as an opportunity to demonstrate this approach.

They already had a large number of quality furniture and fittings in their existing offices across Wales and it was felt that these items, with some cleaning, refurbishment and re-design, could be repurposed for use at the new office space in Cardiff Bay instead of being sent to landfill. Once refurbished these could be combined with other new or re-used items in a cohesive and functional style appropriate for the new office space.

The tender brief stipulated the need to combine existing, re-used and remanufactured items as a core requirement, along with a design concept fitting with PHW's aspirations for a work space incorporating goals for collaboration, socialisation, learning and focus, whilst meeting the functionality of the space required. Plans also needed to take into account the sustainability requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Making it work

Key aspects of the design

- Use of PHW's existing furniture stock, including those which may need a 'nip and a tuck';
- Sourcing of additional refurbished and pre-owned items;
- Sourcing of new items, only where absolutely necessary, to meet the rationale of the design, using recycled content and / or eco design principles.



Key to a successful procurement response

- Understanding PHW, its functions, its ambition and vision;
- Interpreting and delivering a forward-thinking design for the new office which;
 - maximises the positive impacts,
 - designs out negative impacts, and,
 - majors on sustainable solutions.

A day was arranged to brief potential suppliers and for PHW to better understand if the sector was able to deliver on the project requirements. Suppliers attending the event were given the opportunity to meet representatives from PHW and gain an understanding of the requirements and scope for delivery. All suppliers who subsequently submitted an EOI were then invited to attend a series of focus groups to talk to representatives and staff from PHW to gather

further detail on the needs and requirements of PHW to help inform the development of their tender response.

Pitfalls - Issues to be addressed

- New concept to the majority of the market place;
- Legal issues and current framework requirements;
- Inventory of items available for re-use from existing premises;
- The items to be re-used were in current use;
- Moving away from current procurement scoring methodology with value for money (cost) being given the greatest weighting to one where sustainability had the greater weighting taking up 70% of the scoring requirements.

Procurement outcome

The tender was awarded to a consortia made up of three companies, Rype Office, Orangebox and Greenstream. Their bid demonstrated the most sustainable approach for delivering on the requirements set out by the tender and work began in July 2016.

“What started out as a straightforward office accommodation project, turned into a real opportunity to secure public value and demonstrate how the Circular Economy can have a positive impact on public health.”

**Sally Attwood,
Programme Manager**

Meet the suppliers

Rype Office - A provider of high quality, sustainable furniture options and office design services to collaboratively create individual workspaces. The company believes that workspaces can and should be beautiful, sustainable and cost less. High quality furniture is sourced by Rype Office from existing clients' offices, from external used markets and manufacturers' surplus stocks. High quality used pieces are remanufactured to present an 'as-new' appearance and performance. The outcome of sourcing this way reduces the cost to clients by more than half and the environmental footprint by over two thirds compared to new. The Rype Office ethos is based around the principles of the Circular Economy, tackling waste and creating local jobs.

Orangebox - One of the UK's largest office furniture manufacturers, their in-house design team are committed to ensuring their growth comes from products and services that are as environmentally smart as they are commercially successful. This has included the design of the first office chair in Europe to be 'Cradle to Cradle' accredited, the set-up of an in-house recycling (take back) service and more recently, an Innovate UK supported project looking at adapting the business toward Circular Economy thinking. Looking forward their aim is to encourage the organisation, customers, distributors & suppliers to adopt a more holistic approach to product life-cycles and reduce environmental impacts.

Greenstream Flooring - A third sector organisation whose vision is to be the most resource-efficient flooring company in the UK. It aims to provide the least-wasteful, most resource effective options for flooring, including re-use of discarded carpets as carpet tiles.

The company directly supports low-income and long-term unemployed people in areas of high social deprivation ensuring that commercial flooring

services provided to clients leads to direct benefits for the local community.

Re-use and Remanufacturing

The bulk of the furniture used for the new office was either re-used and re-manufactured from existing furniture or sourced from elsewhere, many of these items, had they not been re-used, would have been destined for landfill. In the refit 1,143 individual items were re-used; these items were cleaned, repaired and reupholstered. A further 1,270 pieces were re-manufactured, which involved taking the long life elements of high quality used furniture (like metal frames), checking and resurfacing them, and rebuilding the rest of the item around them. Items included:

- Office chairs, canteen and meeting chairs
- Carpet tiles
- Office pedestals
- Desk high storage cabinets
- Sofas, white boards and coat stands.



Key Facts

Around 2,563 items were used for the office refit:

- 45% of the items being re-used
- 49% being re-made
- 6% of the items were sourced from new stock.

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A mix of new and re-used carpet tiles were used to carpet the offices floor areas; in total 4685 sqm of carpet tiles were installed with 670 sqm (14%) of these being re-used. The percentage of re-used carpets was relatively low due to consistency of re-used stock rather than general availability. In addition the flooring concept was designed to be accessible to all users with a number of the walkways designed with bespoke colour contrasts; this design feature meant that a greater percentage of carpet tiles needed to be sourced from new stock to meet the design needs. Both new and re-used tiles were supplied and fitted by the third sector organisation, Greenstream Flooring, who provide job training and career pathways for the unemployed. The flooring therefore, made a significant contribution to the project and aligned closely with PHW's overarching aims and objectives of extended community benefits. Although the ratio of re-use to new was lower than first anticipated, the use of re-used tiles supplied and fitted by the third sector organisation, Greenstream Flooring, made a significant contribution to the project as it aligned closely with PHW's overarching aims and objectives of extended community benefits.

Delivering Carbon benefits

Based on the re-use of **729 office/meeting room desks** – **50.04 tonnes** of CO₂e has been saved.

Based on the re-use of **979 office/meeting room chairs** – **57.70 tonnes** of CO₂e has been saved.

Based on the re-use of **522 office pedestals** – **20.67 tonnes** of CO₂e has been saved.

Based on **670sqm of re-used carpet tiles** – **5.7 tonnes** of CO₂e has been saved.

In total the project **saved** around **134 tonnes of CO₂e** which could fill up 804 double decker buses and is equivalent to traveling around 400,000 miles by car, or taking 41 cars off the road for an entire year.

Waste to landfill

Waste to Landfill - 41 tonnes of waste has been diverted from landfill.

Interested in finding out more?

If you wish to find out more about this case study example or if you are a Public Sector organisation that would like to receive support then please get in touch with the **Business and Markets team on 02920 100 100**.

References:

Estimated environmental impacts of re-using selected products in the UK: WRAP (2015) Benefits of Re-use calculator
<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/partnerships-are-key-success>
<https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>
http://www.rutland.gov.uk/climate_change/act_on_co2_and_your_footprint/whats_a_tonne_of_co2.aspx
http://www.leics.gov.uk/calculating_our_carbon_footprint.pdf
<http://www.interfacemiddleeast.com/webapp/wcs/stores/GetMediaBytes?mediaReference=33242>
Furniture figures and Photos provided by Rype Office
Carpet tiles figures supplied by Greenstream Flooring

Factors to note when looking at case study calculations used for CO₂e savings:

1. *Preparation for re-use is when an item is discarded as waste and then brought back into use*
2. *Direct re-use includes exchange for money, exchange for free and charity shops.*
3. *The figures allow for 100% displacement rates. The assumption is that PHW are deliberately procuring re-used in place of new items.*
4. *This update covers 92% of the re-used / refurbished furniture items involved in the PHW fit-out. We don't hold specific data for some items.*
5. *All desks and tables are treated as office desks*
6. *All chairs are treated as office chairs.*

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