

# PLAYING TO WIN

## Interserve

**John Godfrey** of Interserve speaks to *GO* about their recent contract bid with St Helens College for the design and redevelopment of the college.

**Q What does your contract with St Helens College involve?**

**A** Interserve has been named as preferred bidder for the design and construction of the new St Helens Town Centre Redevelopment. The existing buildings which currently comprise the College's town centre campus will be demolished and replaced with a new build which will provide an enhanced learning environment in a world-class building. The new build will be in line with Learning Skills and Council aspirations, with flexible space to provide themed learning areas for discrete cohorts of learners.

The work will be carried out in two phases: demolition of three existing buildings and replacement with 9261m<sup>2</sup> of new build, and the demolition of remaining buildings and replacement with 7328m<sup>2</sup> of new build.

**Q What is the contract worth and how long is it for?**

**A** This contract will provide revenue for Interserve of around £45 million and will be undertaken over a three and a half year period.

**Q How were considerations on key public procurement issues such as sustainability, ethics and value for money taken into account in your bid?**

**A** *Sustainability* – The bidding process required us to undertake a qualitative response combined with a pricing exercise. Part of the qualitative bid was in respect of how we would deal with sustainability, and

indeed we understand some of the funding was dependent upon this new build achieving certain sustainability criteria. Therefore for our bid to be considered as a serious offer we had to tick all the sustainability criteria boxes.

*Ethics* – As part of the tendering process we had to sign a certificate of assurance of bona fide tender. We also demonstrated that we are an Equal Opportunities employer, by making available copies of our policies and procedures. *Value for Money* – The bid for St Helens College was a combined quality and price submission.

As part of the quality bid we had to demonstrate that we understood the College's key drivers and deliverables and describe the service we could offer to satisfy their aspirations; and then within the price, demonstrate that we could provide and maintain the resources necessary to deliver the services described. We offered a solution that gave the College what they wanted at an affordable price.

The bidding process is in two stages, the second stage being a combined exercise with all the partners to the scheme to procure the work by assembling works packages, identifying the most suitable organisations to tender for the works, tendering them and then appointing the specialist subcontractor who offers the best solution taking account of quality, time, cost, health, safety and environmental issues. The work is thus being

procured at current market rates and competitively bid.

**Q What was the greatest challenge you encountered in the tendering process?**

**A** Striking the right balance between the quality submission and the price, such that we were able to offer an excellent service that is sustainable with the moneys included, yet still remains competitive.

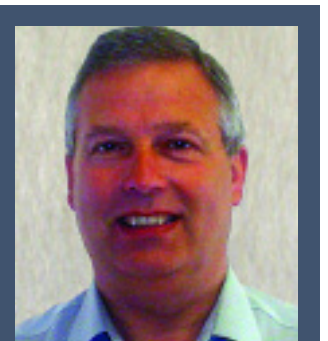
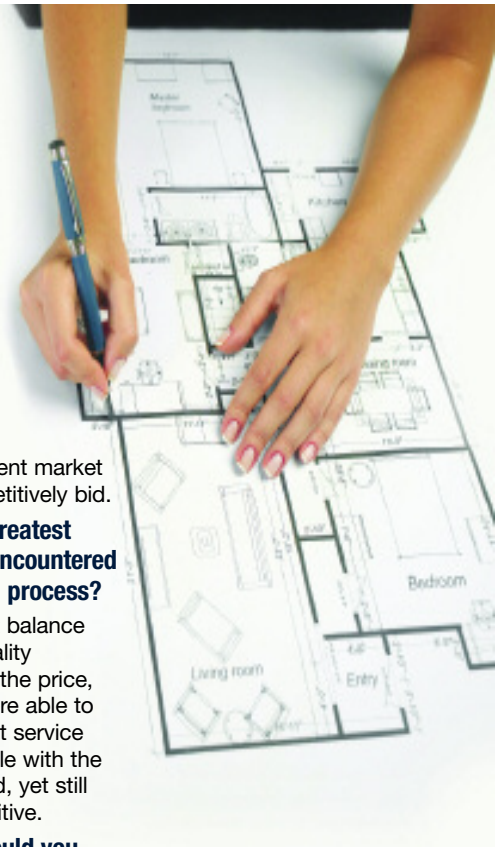
**Q What advice would you give to others embarking on a public sector contract?**

**A** Understand the client's key drivers and what it is they are trying to achieve. Don't make assumptions; talk to them to get a better understanding and put a strategy in place to deliver the contract.

**Q What feedback have you received from the client?**

**A** In terms of the scale and value of the project, differences within the priced element of the bid between the various bidders were minimal. Therefore the key element for selecting the preferred bidder was the qualitative response.

Quality gave Interserve the edge, and all through the bidding process, including the post-tender interview, we were able to field a team which had just successfully completed a similar college scheme and was available to move en masse onto the St Helen's College project. The client's team feel very comfortable with our people and believe they are people with whom they can work to successfully deliver their project over the next three and a half years. 



**John Godfrey**

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Interserve Project Services

If you or your company wish to share your tendering successes with *GO* readers, please email: [feedback@govopps.co.uk](mailto:feedback@govopps.co.uk) for further information