

East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership



East Midlands
Improvement and
Efficiency Partnership

Nottingham City Council moves its Contact Centre in exceptional timescales ▼



Inside the new Contact Centre

The Nottingham City Council Contact Centre moved to a new city centre location in just 75 working days ▼

Just two years after it was established East Midlands Property Alliance (empa) has already built itself a solid reputation for delivering results. Formed by Local Authorities in the East Midlands, empa's role is to improve the delivery of property services; providing guidance on best practice and efficiency savings.

After initially introducing the Framework contracting model to improve procurement and delivery of

projects, empa has now developed a supply chain portal and programme management software designed to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) develop, as well as boosting the local economy.

The funding contribution from the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) has allowed the empa Frameworks to be put in place, which help local authorities to save money and make improvements.

A project through the East Midlands Property Alliance (empa) to move the location of Nottingham City Council's Contact Centre to a convenient city centre location, successfully took place despite the incredibly short timescales set for construction company, G F Tomlinson Group who were contracted to oversee the programme.

In just 75 days, the £1.8 million project, managed by empa and contractors G F Tomlinson Group, moved 130 employees to a new Contact Centre within the City Centre from its existing location within a building due for demolition.

The new building is at the rear of the Central Library, and the programme was completed whilst keeping the library fully operational throughout.

“Despite the almost impossible timescales allocated to a project of this scale, it was a resounding success and the key reason was teamwork. Everyone involved in this project worked incredibly hard, often working very long hours, but still managed to take total ownership for their part in it, which ultimately culminated in its success.”

Alan Coole
Business Development Manager
empa

The SCAPE of the Project ▾

As part of its ‘Workplace Strategy Programme’, Nottingham City Council moved four of its departments, totalling approximately 2000 people to one location at Loxley House in Nottingham. However the Contact Centre specifically wanted a more central location, convenient for customers, within the city centre and a redundant building at the rear of the Central Library was identified.

As well as face to face visitors, the contact centre receives between 4,000 and 6,000 telephone calls every week, dealing with a wide range of issues including housing benefit claims and council tax enquiries. As a key point of

contact for people in Nottingham it was therefore imperative that the Contact Centre remained open and functioning at all times and that the move to new premises was completely seamless as far as the general public was concerned

Contact Centre Manager, Neil Matthews said, “We receive 1,000 – 1,500 visits every week from members of the general public, so it was essential that we had a very central location in Nottingham city centre. At the time of the move public transport links to Loxley House were not sufficiently developed and we felt it was appropriate for us to be in an easier location for people to access.”

The relocation of the Contact Centre was classed as a SCAPE Minor Works Framework project applicable to contracts worth between £500k and £2 million. SCAPE is a wholly owned locally authority company, of which Nottingham City Council is a shareholder and which provides procurement, project management and design solutions for local authorities for construction projects. SCAPE was asked by EMPA to procure and deliver the Frameworks Agreements on behalf of its members.

The SCAPE Minor Works Frameworks also has the advantage of being procured using a route compliant with the Official Journal of the European Union regulations, meaning that there is no requirement to put the work out to tender. Tomlinson was selected from a choice of three potential contractors because they had successfully

worked with Nottingham City Council in the past demonstrating the key skills needed and ability to keep within a specified budget. This successful former working relationship was felt to be beneficial when managing a project with such short timescales.

Nottingham City Council used its own in-house design team, who worked closely with GF Tomlinson in the early stages of the project which set about transforming the redundant building to provide a new modern customer facing facility. The scheme was phased in order to meet critical timescales and ensure that the library could remain open throughout.

The work included asbestos removal, structural alterations, extensive IT installation, new glazed curtain walling, ballistic screening and the installation of a safe room.



The new contact centre site

Key Challenges ▾

Nottingham City Council made initial contact with Tomlinson on 14 April 2010 and the existing Contact Centre had to be vacated before 2 August 2010, just 75 days later. This exceptionally short timescale for a project of this scale and budget was the greatest challenge for GF Tomlinson and the 150 sub-contractors, representing 20 different trades, who were involved in the project.

Another important challenge and a priority for the local authority was to ensure recycling of the local pound by the ‘think local policy’ and to undertake the work using local suppliers and sub-contractors. This was successfully achieved with 30% coming from within a 10 mile radius, 75% from within a 20 mile radius, 85% from within a 30 mile radius and 15% from no greater than 40 miles away.

The other main challenges identified were as follows:

- Keeping all the existing library services open and fully functional throughout.
- Minimising the noise levels for the library service as it continued to function.
- Providing safe access and egress for library staff and deliveries, when the only route available was through the site of the new Contact Centre.
- Minimising the potential risk to the programme due to the long lead in times of materials and equipment.
- Motivating the various teams on site who were working exceptionally long hours, 7 days a week.



The fourth floor of the Contact Centre

Timescales ▾

The Tomlinson team worked to the following timescales, many of which were less than half the allotted time normally deemed appropriate for a project of this size.

14 April 2010	Initial contact from Nottingham City Council.
23 April 2010	Initial site visit.
28 April 2010	Attended first design team meeting along with key suppliers to provide input on design, specification and cost.
18 May 2010	Risk meeting to determine risks to cost, time, quality and safety.
18 May – 26 May 2010	Joint target cost preparation (1 week).
28 May 2010	Agreement of target cost.
1 June – 8 June 2010	Mobilisation period.
9 June 2010	Commencement on site just 28 working days since initial involvement.
27 July 2010	Completion of the Contact Centre.
2 August 2010	New Contact Centre is operational just 75 working days since initial involvement.

At the same time on the 2 August, the new owners of the old Contact Centre building moved in, avoiding any additional costs for a building being left empty.

Key Success Factors ▾

There were many factors which contributed to making this project successful. Not only was it achieved within the allocated timescales, but all of the key challenges were overcome. Of particular importance was the minimal disruption caused for

the library staff and users, which continued to successfully function throughout.

Library Manager Gwen Isherwood commented, *“I was very pleased with the working relationship with GF Tomlinsons. This was potentially a very disruptive project for the Library*

Service but site management worked hard to be flexible and sensitive to the customer care element of our service as well as health and safety. We were able to maintain a significant proportion of service provision during this period. Communication was a constructive two way process.”

Procurement: The ability to procure through the SCAPE Minor Works Framework was critical to this project’s success. No other procurement method could have developed the design, agreed the costs and delivered the project within the given timescale.

Teamwork: Teamwork was a fundamental success factor. The team relationships including the key supply chain were established during the design phase with everyone taking individual ownership. These relationships and the collaboration between all parties improved the decision making process and provided the efficiencies required to meet the tight programme period.

Library Participation: The success of this programme was also largely due to the proactive involvement of the library, who met with the GF Tomlinson team for daily site construction meetings to ensure that construction wasn’t interrupting their day-to-day operation. Timed deliveries and the use of a dedicated banks person was put in place to ensure the safe access and

egress for library staff.

Flexible Working: In order to meet the tight timescales, many members of staff had to work long, unsociable hours. The flexibility of the design team, contractor partner and supply chain to undertake extensive out of hours working was key to keeping disruption to a minimum and ensuring the programme was delivered efficiently and on time.

Transparency: An open and transparent approach was taken to this programme, with quotations being shared and suppliers and contracts selected jointly. This meant that the programme was highly efficient and costs were controlled.

Recycling the Local Pound: Where possible local sub-contractors and suppliers were used and as much as possible, local labour was used to stimulate the local economy.

“By using the SCAPE Minor Works Framework for this challenging project has allowed all parties to pull together in the same direction and to focus on a successful delivery. There has been a real feeling of joint ownership and I know that everyone involved in this project has felt a great sense of pride in the work completed.”

Gordon Potts

Manager – Procurement,
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Link to Nottingham City Council film:

<http://www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk/emiep-tv/1/51/empa-project-nottingham-city-council-contact-centre/>

Links to existing empa case studies:

East Midlands Property Alliance (EMPA)

<http://www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk/uploads/EMIEP%20-%20CS13%20-%20East%20Midlands%20Property%20Alliance.pdf>

empa: A Portal to a Healthy Social Economy

<http://www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk/uploads/case-studies/EMIEP%20-%20CS31%20empa%20a%20portal%20to%20a%20healthy%20local%20economy.pdf>

East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Case Studies

The East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) is committed to celebrating the successful, innovative and imaginative project work that exists in the East Midlands region.

The EM IEP Support Team publish case studies showing how East Midlands councils are improving services and delivering significant improvements and efficiencies.

The case studies are intended to inspire councils in the region, and indeed nationally, to transform services and benefit from the processes developed by those councils that have pioneered the way forward.

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