Case Study: Project Management: Gateways To Oldham Project
Client: Oldham Council

Background
‘Gateways to Oldham’ is a Round 4 housing PFI project investing £120million to facilitate the regeneration of 3 estates in Oldham. As Project Director, Chris Kelsall led the project to Financial Close in November 2011, the first project within the PFI round 4 programme to do so. His broad role was as follows:

- Leading the procurement strategy and procure all wider support, e.g. financial, legal and technical advisors; and
- Manage the Competitive Dialogue process, i.e. from OJEU notice, outline/detailed solutions and ITSFB through to Financial Close.

Key Deliverables
As part of its role, Chris was responsible for key deliverables as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Stream</th>
<th>How Achieved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outline Business Case</strong></td>
<td>Raising the project’s profile to get key internal buy-in and resources: e.g. Environment, Highways, Planning, Finance and Legal officers. Setting out the vision for the project: namely to establish a new quality benchmark for urban design within Oldham as simply achieving numbers of new units. Sustainability and improved community cohesion were the key drivers of this project.</td>
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<td><strong>Competitive Dialogue</strong></td>
<td>Maintaining bidder confidence through robust project planning and management right through from Outline Solutions Stage through to Final Bids. Strong partnership with CLG and HM Treasury to ensure their continued support and secure timely sign-off and approvals.</td>
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<td><strong>Surveys and benchmark designs</strong></td>
<td>Procurement of detailed surveys for all sites Preparation of benchmark designs in order to address the concerns of local action groups that that sprung up in opposition to the scheme put forward at Outline Planning.</td>
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<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Established a consultation framework for the procurement phase. Clearly this was a very sensitive issue given the plans to re-house over 300 residents and a consistent and cohesive communication plan was paramount. Rather than attend a wide variety of forums, Chris established a single stakeholder group whereby communication could be managed in a consistent and cost effective manner. The group comprised Council members, police, residents, tenants and affected businesses. Monthly briefings to Project Board, Chief Officers and lead councillors.</td>
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<td><strong>Re-Housing</strong></td>
<td>Careful planning of the re-housing logistics and procurement of a dedicated re-housing officer. Key considerations were: Significant advance re-housing so that some sites could be freed up by Financial Close. Balancing the needs of affected tenants – particularly vulnerable tenants or those with specific housing needs – with the need to ensure a viable construction programme.</td>
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<td><strong>Land Assembly</strong></td>
<td>Establishment of a bespoke Land Assembly Group for the sites in question. This included ensuring all necessary reports and documentation were prepared to support CPO’s on two of the sites.</td>
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### Challenges & Issues

During the project, Chris has addressed key challenges as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Issues / Challenges</th>
<th>How addressed</th>
<th>Key Successes</th>
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| **Stakeholder Opposition** | Setting up a focussed consultation and re-housing team. Extensive dialogue was held with local residents and the vast majority of opposition issues were resolved. Opposing residents were fully included in stakeholder meetings and bidders’ expertise was used to bring stakeholders on a journey throughout procurement. In this way stakeholders could see how the regenerations proposals developed and trust in the process and the Council was engendered. Individual meetings held with all tenants and options / timetable fully explained. Sympathetic but consistent communication strategy adopted throughout. | ▪ Strong statements of support from the vast majority of the communities affected  
▪ Positive Feedback from Consultation events  
▪ All objections to CPO withdrawn prior to Public Inquiry  
▪ Applications for Village Green status thwarted  
▪ Over two thirds of residents now re-housed resulting in a much simplified construction programme. |
| **Land assembly** | Key elements of the land required for the project was not in Council ownership  
- Extensive negotiations with landowners over an extended period of time.  
- Backup solutions developed where possible so as to avoid ransom demands  
- CPO proceedings instigated to enhance negotiating position | Valuations now agreed with all land-owners and opposition to CPO has been withdrawn |
| **Site constraints** | Further development of design solutions following Outline Business Case revealed that estimated densities could not be achieved.  
- Working in partnership with Planning Officers to ensure that densities could be maximized but still meet stringent quality standards  
- Identified and appraised additional sites that could make up the shortfall | Outputs stipulated in the Outline Business case have been achieved. |
| **Affordability** | The scheme contained sufficient flexibility so that any loss making elements of the project could be removed without compromising the overall vision and objectives.  
Extensive negotiations were held with bidders in order to reduce construction costs without impacting upon quality. | As the Council prepares to close dialogue it is in the fortunate position of having two high quality but affordable bids. |