

Housing association streamlines works management transactions with Tradex

Causeway's Tradex eInvoicing solution is helping Gloucester City Homes to streamline the management of supply chain transactions, reduce costs and improve service delivery to tenants.

GLoucester City Homes

GCH is an independent housing association which owns and manages nearly 5,000 properties, comprising mostly residential properties of various types with some commercial units. With such a large property portfolio, the organisation undertakes a variety of repair, maintenance and small works activities which, until recently, were outsourced to external contractors.

These works are now managed in-house and, since April 2017, Tradex has been used to manage the majority of supply chain transactions. These include issuing of **purchase orders to key suppliers**, **processing of credit notes**, **order confirmations** and **goods received notes**, as well as **automated validation of invoices against purchase orders**. The Tradex system also provides automated archiving of all transactions.

GCH's Assistant Director of Asset Management Nick Brown recalled: *"With using external contractors all labour, plant and material costs were included in a Schedule of Rates, so we didn't deal with any material transactions. With the decision to bring this service in-house a key requirement was to avoid the large volumes of paper invoices that are typically generated by transaction management."*

GLoucester City Homes

Gloucester City Homes (GCH) is an independent registered housing association which owns and manages 4,450 rented homes, 270 leasehold properties, 60 shared ownership properties, 30 commercial units and 52 homeless units. They are recognised as one of the best housing providers in the UK through independent accreditation.

"To that end, we wanted to work with merchants that could offer electronic transactions and, through the recommendations of the East Midlands Procurement Club, are now working with Jewson and Graham from Saint Gobain group, which were already using Tradex", Nick Brown continued.

"Implementing an invoicing solution ensures GCH is able to manage supply chain transactions with optimum efficiency. Just as importantly, Tradex provides GCH with control of the material that the labour force is purchasing, which means we are now focusing on efficiency of service delivery" Nick Brown explained.

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NICK BROWN

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ASSET MANAGEMENT

Another key requirement was integration of Tradex into the GCH's existing IT systems. *"Our housing management system isn't as flexible as Tradex but the Causeway team did a really good job of integrating the two systems seamlessly and had the system up and running in a very short space of time,"* Nick Brown observed.

"Our system also has quite a restrictive format so we need to receive information in a different format to that used by Jewson and Graham. One of the things that impressed us about Tradex was its ability to 'translate' from one format to another so the data arrives in our system in the format we need," he added.

The Tradex system is configured to offer GCH **considerable flexibility for different types of transactions**. For example, when van stock is used, it is recorded on a mobile device and the information is sent to the GCH system. Once stock levels fall below a pre-set minimum, a purchase order is generated and sent to the merchant via Tradex.

However, there are also large core items – such as baths, WCs, basins etc. – that cannot be stocked on vans and are purchased over the counter without a PO. A goods receipt note is then sent from the merchant to GCH through Tradex, which prompts a retrospective PO to be generated and held in the Tradex system until the corresponding invoice is received. Tradex then automatically validates the invoice against the PO.

SUMMARY

GCH is currently using the Tradex system to exchange documents with Jewson and Graham, accounting for about 90% of all supply chain transactions. Looking ahead, GCH hopes to roll the system out to other suppliers and to sub-contractors in the near future.